

# YGG MAGAZINE

ISSUE 3 March 2014

愛 Ai



## COVER STORY- Ai Press: It's About Love

SINFUL  
PLEASURE

EMMANUEL LANG

Sauce  
FACE

Backstory-  
Free! Iwatobi Swim Club  
The Tyrant Falls in Love

HIS  
BEAUTIFUL  
SAMURAI

WRESTLING  
WITH LOVE

Con Report-  
Anh!Con 2014

Reviews-  
Crimson Spell  
Priceless Honey  
Soy Sauce Face

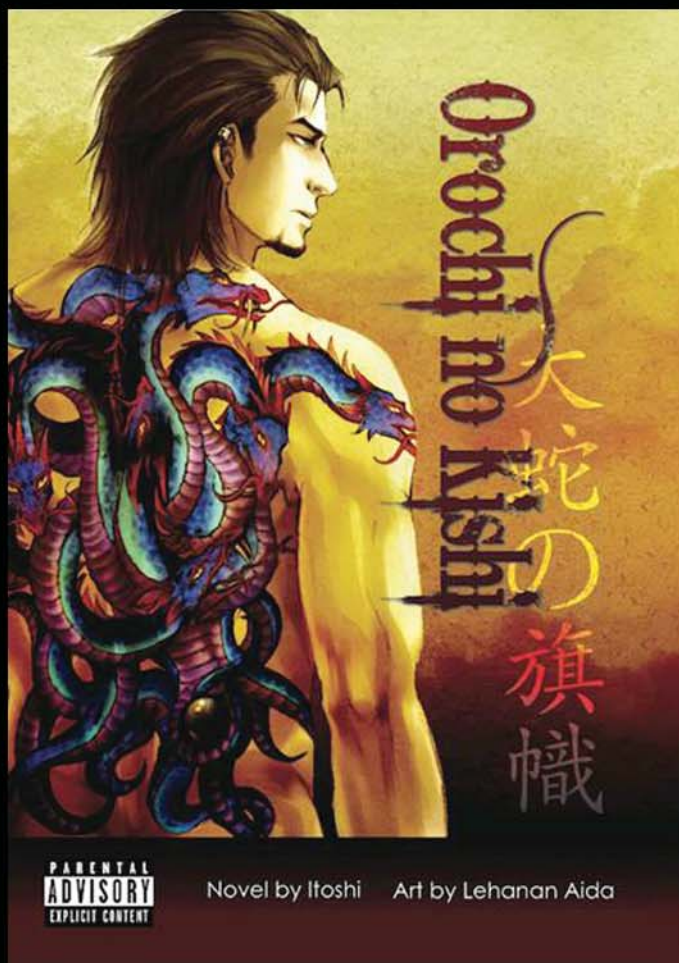
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D. H. STARR

# YAOI REVOLUTION



Set in the American West in 2071, intolerable heat and violent weather trends have driven the population from the Southwestern states, leaving the people who cling to a fringe existence in this wilderness prey to gamblers and thieves. Chief among the lawless are roving clans of racers who travel as outlaws in this new Wild West. Funded by wealthy stakeholders, the racing clans set new rules of justice within the circle of the banners they fly. Mouse, a talented small town motorcycle mechanic, finds himself kidnapped by a gang of Japanese bikers led by a formidable clan boss, Sadao Koga. The two form an uneasy alliance in a country without borders under the shadow of the Orochi banner.

<http://www.yaoi-revolution.com/>

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Editrix-in Chief  
DL Warner  
Editrix  
Marie Lecrivan  
Graphic Design  
Jon Cunningham  
Photography  
Marie Lecrivan  
Jon Cunningham  
Contributors  
EAB  
Simon Barnsby  
Brian L. Majic  
Amanda Hagen  
JadenZest  
Vinh-Luan Luu

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Contact YGG:  
Letters to the editrix  
sybpress.com/ygg  
sybpress@gmail.com

Submissions:  
Do you have a story idea or review or an issue for Panel Topics? Send us an email detailing your idea to the address above. Please put the kind of idea being submitted in the subject line of the email. Allow five business days for a reply. Sybaritic Press does not currently pay for submissions.

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### ***In This Issue*** —

#### **2. Cover Story — Ai Press: It's About Love**

A very independent writer decided to give her genre the loving care and attention it deserves. The result is a press that explores the wilder sides of m/m love.

#### **6. Backstory — Free! Iwatobi Swim Club/The Tyrant Falls in Love**

#### **10. Interview — Con Report: Ahn!Con 2014**

The founders of the biggest yaoi con in the Midwest tell YGG how they came to the conclusion that such a con would work and what it took to get it off the ground.

#### **15. Fiction — Cataclysm by EAB**

A bittersweet and complex story of love and lust and family where nothing is quite what it seems.

#### **23. Fiction — What it's Like for a Uke by Simon Barnsby**

A story that peeks into the life of someone who gave up himself in order to find true freedom.

#### **24. Fiction — Love in the Fast Lane by Briar L. Majic**

A coming of age story about two young men who find acceptance when they finally face who and what they are.

#### **26. Panel Topics — The Closet Uke by EAB**

Are these big bad Some of iconic yaoi tales actually longing to bottom?

#### **30. Panel Topics — Fanservice & Shipping: A Pairing of Mutual Convenience**

Yaoi fans are often accused of shipping to the extreme, but recent evidence points to provocation from a surprising source.

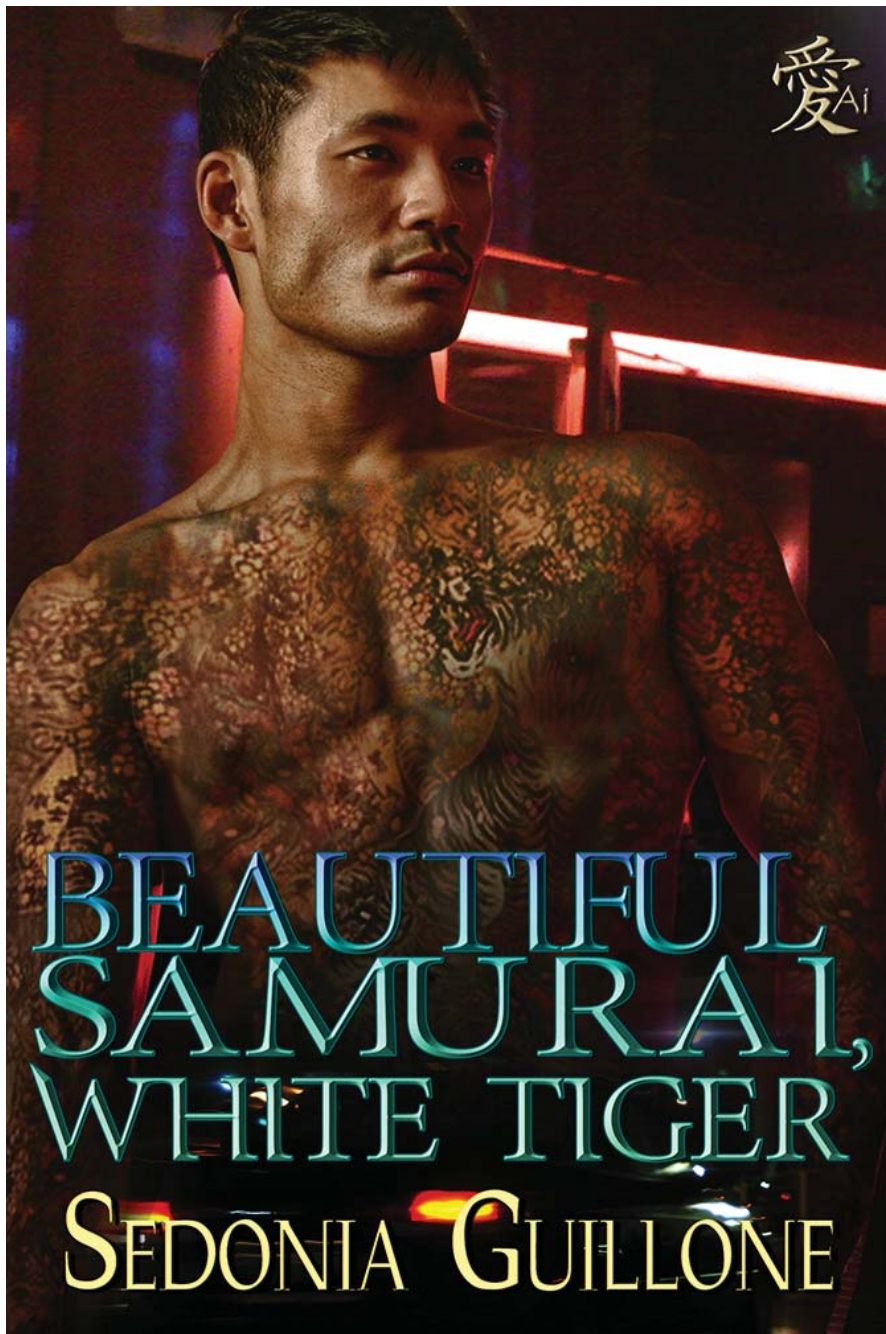
#### **34. Cosplay — Alfred Xiaolay**

This gorgeous, hard working coser is always a delightful surprise with each character he takes on.

#### **36. Reviews — Crimson Spell/Priceless Honey/Soy Sauce Face**

In depth reviews of the newest and classic manga and anime titles.

## Cover Story



*YGG: How did Ai Press come into being?*

Sedonia: Back in 2005, I was relatively new as a published author and loved it, but the man in my life saw my entrepreneurial nature (of which I myself was not yet aware) and suggested that I go into publishing. I was afraid to at the time because I felt I didn't have enough knowledge of the business. However, five years and 50 books later, I felt ready and took the plunge. Since by this time I was writing many yaoi style romances set in Japan, I was inspired by the culture and language and sought to incorporate it into the name of the company I was starting up. I felt the word "love" was perfect to represent the brand I was creating and hence, Ai Press was born.

*YGG: What kinds of books does Ai Press publish?*

Sedonia: Ai Press publishes predominantly erotic romance e-books in short story, novella and novel length. We offer most of our novel length titles in trade paperback as well. Genres include gay romance, ménage, paranormal (including vampire and shape-shifter as well as the occasional psychic, ghost-style paranormal), historical, sci-fi and space opera, YA and New Adult, and of course Yaoi inspired M/M romances in the Tokyo Beat line. Our other imprint, Kokoro Press, offers GLBT romantic fiction

# Ai Press: *It's*

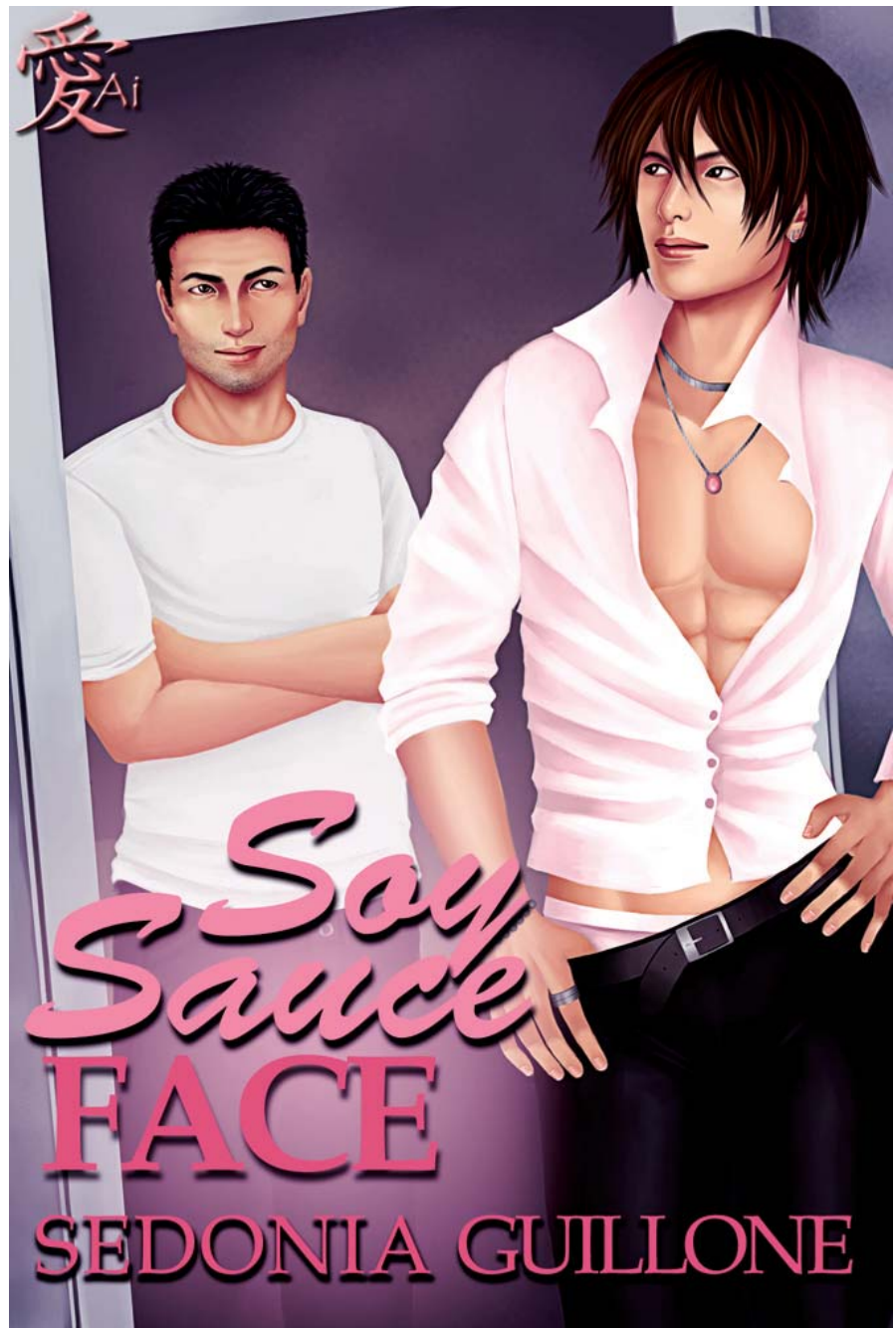
that does not fit into the box of erotic romance as well as mainstream fiction. Both imprints are available on the Ai Press webstore site.

*YGG: What are the challenges that Ai Press has faced and how is it addressing them?*

Sedonia: Ai Press has faced basically the same challenges as any small business starting up in a competitive world. It takes time and work to gain recognition and confidence in a brand and so we continue to work on building our reputation as a publisher of high quality fiction from wonderful authors both established and new.

*YGG: How does it find its writers and artists?*

Sedonia: Ai Press has found its writers and artists through several venues. In the beginning, I approached several of my favorite authors and asked them personally if I could publish their work. One of them is John Burdett, my favorite mystery author who has written the popular detective series set in Thailand, (Bangkok 8, Bangkok Haunts, The Godfather of Kathmandu, etc.). I was really excited about that! In other instances, I've accepted submissions through the regular submissions process. A few authors have been acquired when authors already published and (thankfully) happy



# s About Love

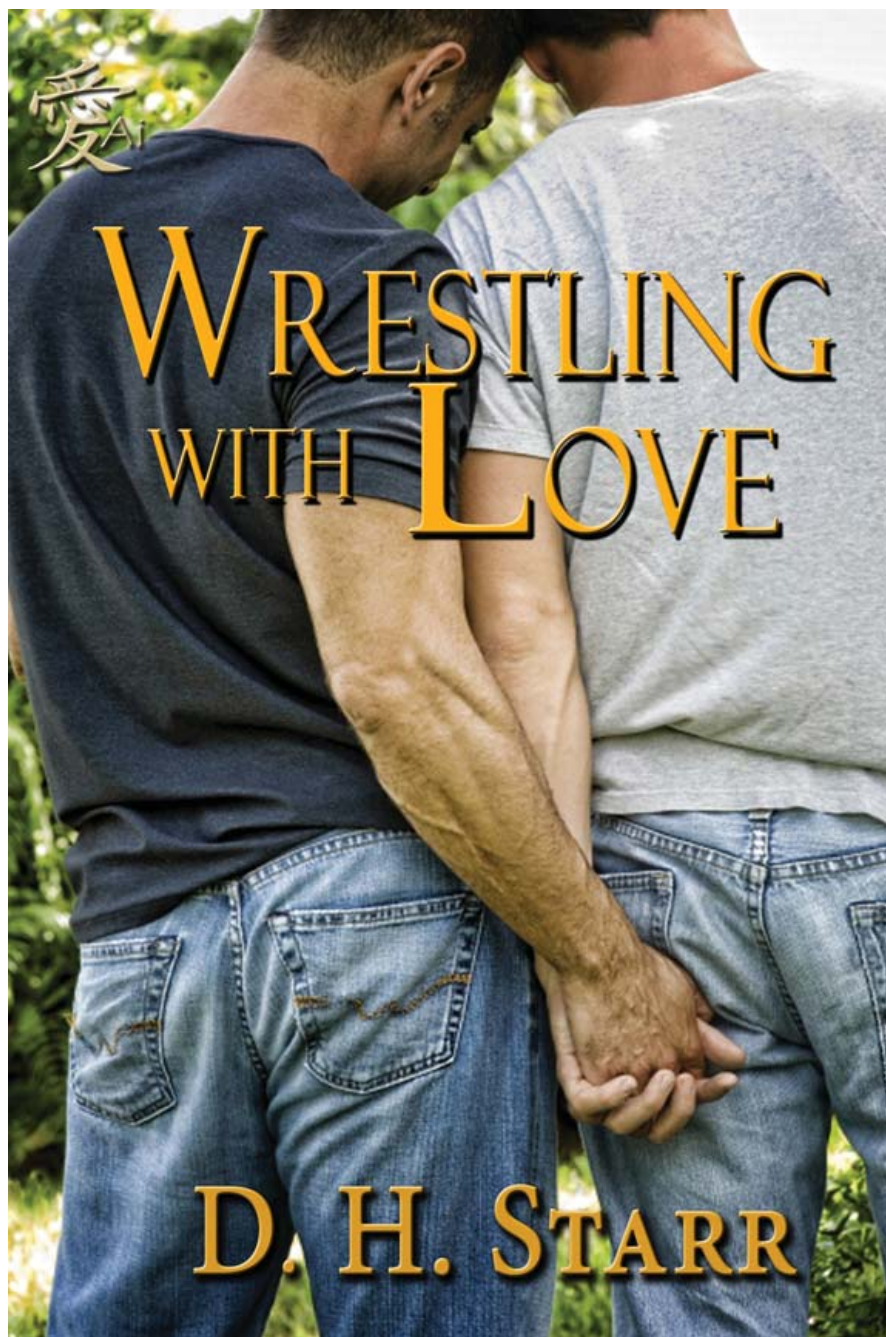
at Ai Press have urged their fellow authors to submit. THAT is a really big compliment when it happens. I am really blessed to have the collection of authors there is now at Ai Press and Kokoro Press.

*YGG: Tell us about the online shopping site. Why was that created when you could be selling the books through Amazon?*

Sedonia: The brand new webstore with all the trimmings went live on New Year's. It's beautiful, easy to navigate, and offers visitors everything that a webstore should, i.e. discounts, safe and secure checkout, the ability to buy gift certificates, keep a wish list for future purchases, review books they have purchased, etc. While Ai Press titles do sell at Amazon, Nook, Kobo and All Romance Ebooks, in today's cyberworld, it's also really important to have a home base on the web where people can come and see everything we have to offer and most importantly, to get special prices that they won't get on Amazon or at the other retailers. Having a good webstore is crucial to be able to offer readers a place to get as many deals as possible. They are coming and spending their hard-earned money on our books, it's important to offer them the best in return. As time passes and we get more established, there will be more goodies to come as well and I'm thrilled to now have the proper facilities to provide those things.

*YGG: What has the reception been for the books published through Ai Press?*

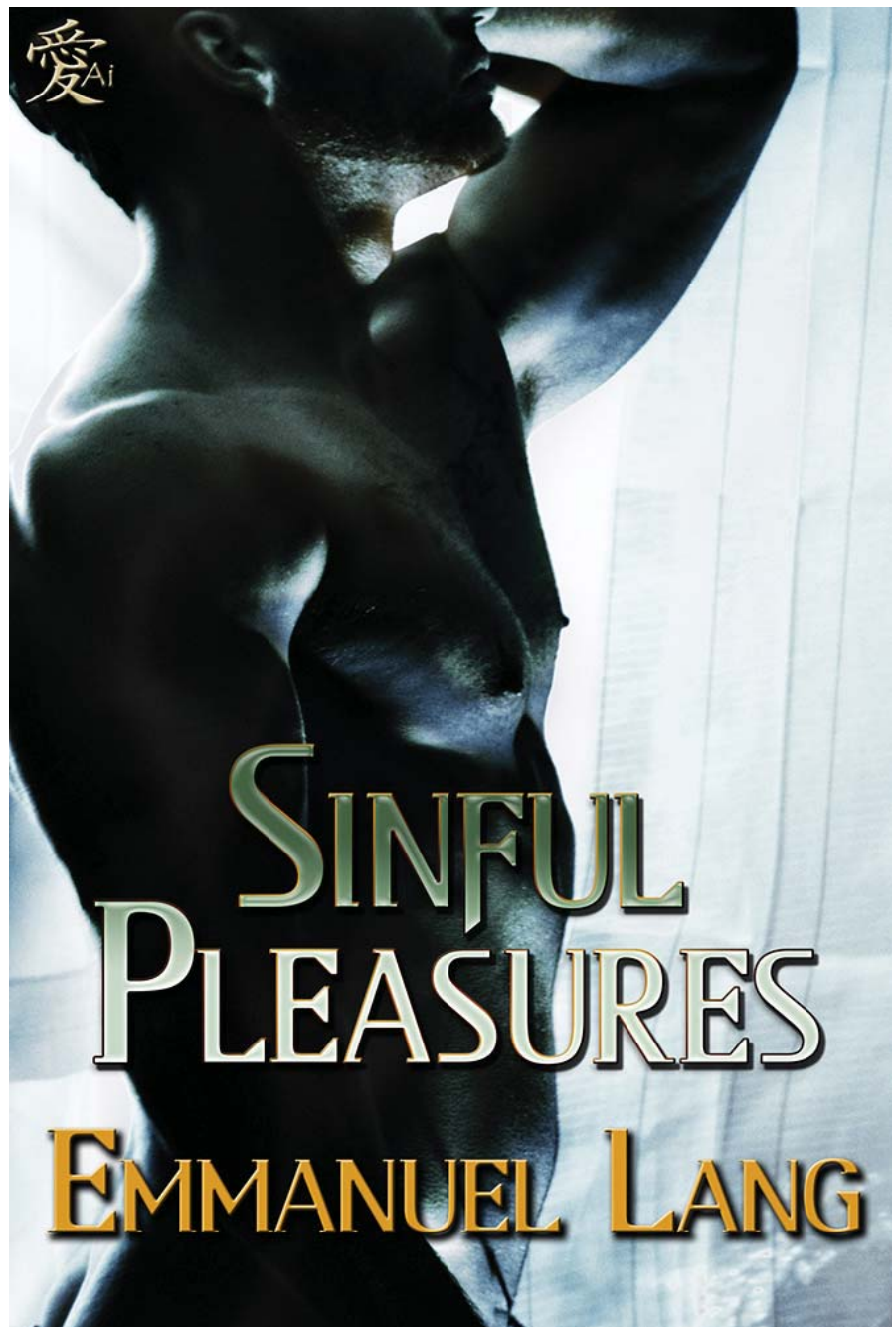
Reception so far has been wonderful! Since, Ai Press has been fortunate enough to offer titles by such M/M authors as D.H. Starr, Jeff Erno, Katsura and Yuramei, John H. Ames, AJ Llewellyn, Mya et. al. it has been earning its place in the selection of erotic romance publishers now in existence. As I mentioned earlier,



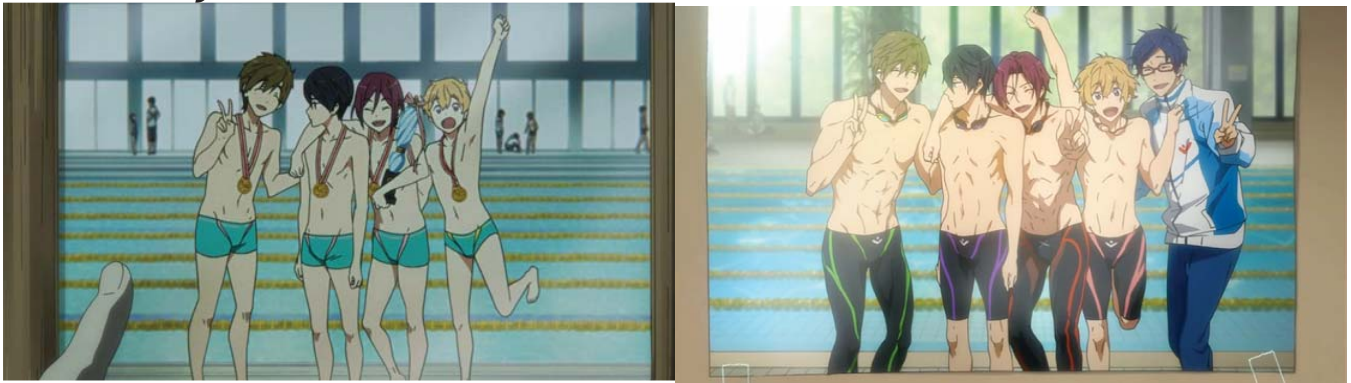
the big challenge has been gaining name recognition. With a wonderful inventory of titles and authors, I am now focusing on pushing Ai Press to a higher level of exposure. When that happens, hopefully the reception for Ai Press titles will continue to be positive and grow.

*YGG: Is there anything you'd like to add for yaoi fans?*

Yes, there is! Ai Press is a yaoi-loving press. I myself write yaoi-inspired romances and created Tokyo Beat Yaoi line especially for Ai Press both to showcase my own titles and to make a special space to continue to grow the number of yaoi titles offered. I also have some ideas for fun things in the future. I have had the great fortune to befriend a few people who **TOTALLY** fit the image of the beautiful yaoi characters we love and want them be the faces of the Tokyo Beat line. They are adorable and perfect but I can't reveal them yet until it's worked out. It will be a fun surprise though!



## Backstory



# Free! Iwatobi Swim Club

Free! Iwatobi Swim Club is the story of four boys—Haruka, Makoto, Nagisa, and Rin. It begins when they are in elementary school. The four become friends during their time on the swim team. For each boy, that time is a wonderful memory as they won a championship meet swimming the relay together. Shortly after that Rin departs Japan to continue to train as an Olympic Swimmer in Australia. Meanwhile, Haru and Makoto move on to high school. Their original swim club closes. Years later, Haruka, Makoto, and Nagisa reunite when Nagisa enrolls in their high school. Nagisa is shocked to find out that neither boy is swimming and that the school doesn't even have a pool. Filled with nostalgia, Nagisa drags Haru and Makoto to their now deserted swim club. There, they encounter Rin who is distant and almost hostile. He

challenges Haruka to a race and wins, but seems to be unsatisfied with the result. However, the race re-ignites a yearning long suppressed in Haru to swim again.

When Nagisa mentions creating a swimming club and cleaning up the run-down outdoor pool to use, Haru agrees. Nagisa badgers a track star, Rei, into joining the club, so they have enough members to be sanctioned by the school. The Iwatobi High School Swimming Club is formed. The boys along with Rin's sister, Go, work together in making the club a success. Rin's victory over Haruka means nothing to him as he realizes that Haruka has stopped swimming competitively and is not in top shape. He claims that he cannot get over the fact until Haruka competes against him for real. The members of the revived Iwatobi Swim Club later enter

a swimming competition against Rin.

The series is about more than swimming though. It's about facing fears and overcoming burdens placed upon these young men by others. And it's about how important real friends are above all else. The series is reminiscent of a Miyazaki film not just because its beautifully drawn characters and gorgeous colors and elegant movement but also because of the potent drama found in ordinary struggles.

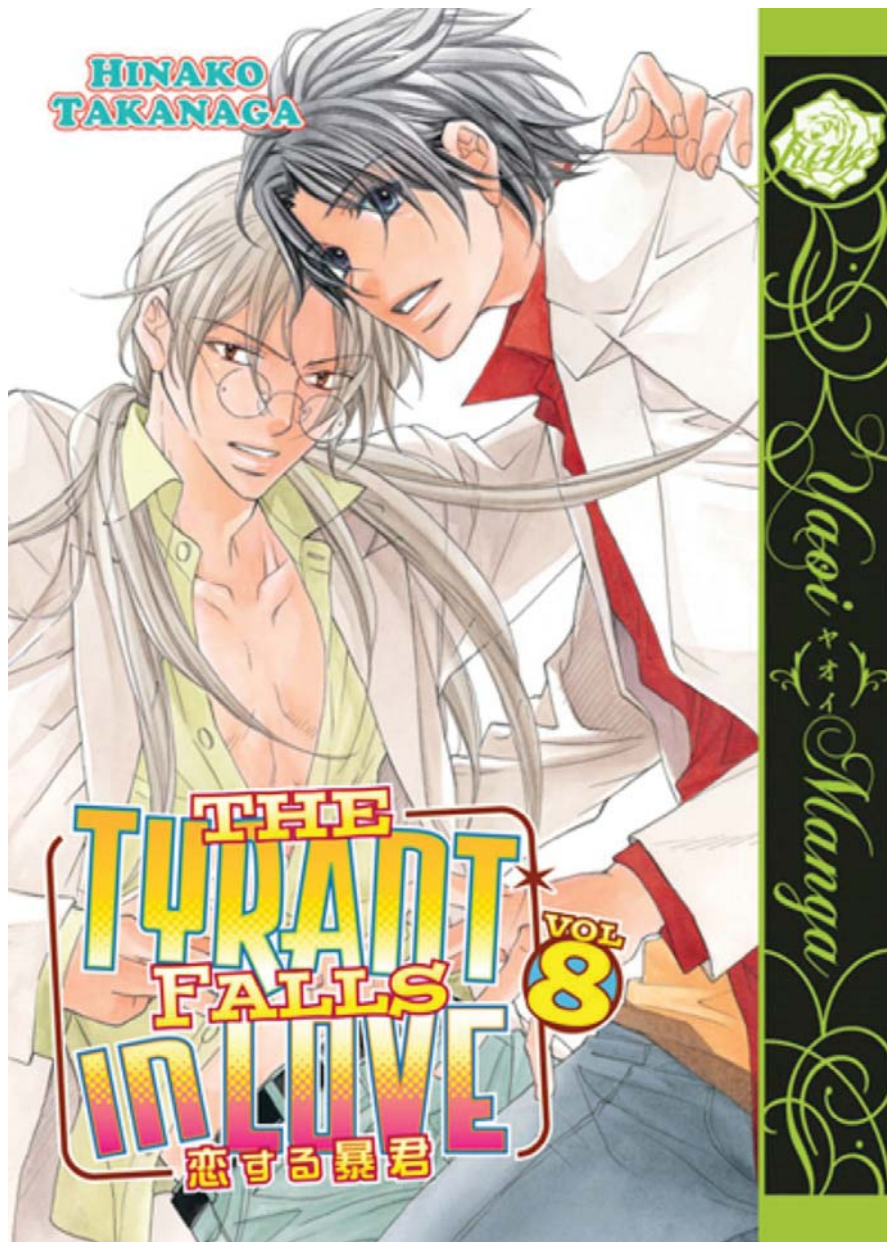
Fans love this show because of the epic amount of fanservice with these really gorgeous bishies.





# The Tyrant Falls in Love

Koisuru Boukun 恋する暴君



Hinako Takanaga's story of highly dysfunctional romance follows the lives and relationship of Tetsuhiro Morinaga, a university student with a four year crush on his senpai, Souichi Tatsumi, whom he assists with his research projects. The pair were introduced in a previous manga, *Challengers*, where Morinaga rescued Souichi from a professor intent on raping him. This is where his psychotic homophobia stems from. Toward the end of that manga, he inadvertently confesses that he is gay and in love with Souichi. Following this, he believes that Souichi now hates him since he is homophobic and says he will leave school, but Souichi insists that they just forget about it and remain friends. Their story ends with Morinaga convinced that his feelings will never be reciprocated.

Things come to a head between the men when Souichi hears that California has just legalized gay marriage. Souichi furiously calls his brother to tell him that he should not get any ideas about getting married. Further, Souichi runs around yelling that he's going to go to America and kill his brother's lover and get a green card so he can become the Governor of California to re-ban gay marriage. Morinaga convinces him to calm down and drink with him instead and so he goes Morinaga's apartment to drown his sorrows. After Souichi drinks all of the alcohol they had bought, he demands that Morinaga goes out to buy more. While Morinaga is out, Souichi searches Morinaga's apartment for any alcohol he may have and finds a hidden aphrodisiac filled wine bottle that Morinaga was given by a friend and drinks it, not

knowing it is drugged.

At first it appears that it has no effect and Morinaga believes that he was tricked by his friend. They go to sleep, but Souichi wakes up during the night to find himself aroused. He tries to sneak off to relieve himself, but trips and wakes up Morinaga due to be weakened by the drug. Morinaga offers to help him relieve himself and even though Souichi refuses, he still goes through with it. After he has released, Souichi is still aroused and Morinaga, unable to restrain himself any longer, has sex with Souichi even though he tells him to stop.

The next morning, Souichi terrifies Morinaga out of his own apartment. He later calls Souichi and apologizes and swears to never appear before him again. At first, Souichi thinks nothing of it due to being furious with him. However, Morinaga soon completely vanishes for two weeks and his classmates and friends begin to ask Souichi if he knows where Morinaga has gone, not having contacted anyone. Souichi is shocked, having thought that Morinaga has simply been avoiding him. He begins to grow extremely worried and anxious, searching for Morinaga and going to his apartment every day and night to see if he has come home. Morinaga eventually returns to his apartment to pack up his belongings so he can move away when Souichi finally finds him. Souichi lets it slip how frantically worried he was when he vanished and Morinaga is deeply touched. Souichi tells him to never go away again. Morinaga only agrees after Souichi, consents to having a relationship with him. The two begin a highly dysfunctional partnership which develops slowly into a real romance over the course of the series.

Fans like this pair because they are very beautiful together and really comedic when they are fighting. Images of them can be found all over yaoi fan pages.





# Con Report: Ahn!Con 2014

*YGG:* Can you give me the history of the convention? For example, who are the founders? How was it founded?

*Jared Presler:* My partner (both romantically and in business) Matt and I actually met in the yaoi section of a local anime store, (thereby hangs a tale, see Matt's response) so the yaoi fandom has always been near and dear to us, and we have always had a desire to bring the amazing art of yaoi to the wider LGBT community. In that sense, the idea of starting Ahn!Con came up as early as 2009, when we started planning our first general anime convention, Motaku. Having adult programming has been a part of our mission statement for Motaku since the very first year. We wanted to represent Japanese tradition and pop culture and how it

has been incorporated and adapted by American geek culture over the years, and hentai and yaoi have always been a large part of that.

In early 2012, when we heard the sad news that the two-day slash con over in St. Louis was not continuing, we decided the time was right, and, with the St. Louis con's blessing, took up the mantle and started actively planning on holding our own yaoi con the following January.

*Matt Weston:* Ahn!Con was founded in 2013 by Matt Weston (me,) Jared Presler, and the staff we built up with our anime convention, Motaku (which was founded in 2009, and occurs in August.) But there is a rather long story, which goes like this:

Once upon a time there was an anime and manga store, Mo Iikai, located in Independence, Missouri.

Matt was friends with the store clerk there and when he ran into her again in college, she introduced him to yaoi. Being an openly gay teenager, he thought it was the coolest thing ever, and began making weekly trips to the store. One day, another friend from high school choir came into the store with a group of people he didn't know (one of which was so hot.)

While catching up with her (in the yaoi aisle because she liked it too,) one of her tall male friends (yes, the hot one) began flipping through yaoi, and showing the more explicit bits to Matt and saying things like "Oh this looks fun," and "We should try this sometime." Being like 6' tall with a goatee and no fashion sense, Matt thought he was one of those obnoxious straight guys that like to lead gay guys on (he had met several,



yes they exist) and ignored him. Finally, the tall guy gave up and went to another part of the store.

Matt asked his friend who the guy was, she responded “oh, that’s just Jared.”

“He’s hot, too bad he’s straight.” Matt said.

Jared heard him, and responded with “honey” in that sassy tone some people have perfected, and proceeded to give Matt his number.

Matt then waited almost a month before calling, because even though he might have fallen in love at first sight, he didn’t want to come across as desperate. Then he lost the number and had to call other people to track it down all quietly lest Jared think he was a disorganized flake.

Lots has happened since, but I will summarize: Matt and Jared have

been together for almost eight years now, have owned businesses together for five of those years, own a home together, and have been engaged for about three years (Matt would like to remind Jared that engagements expire, and it’s time to propose again.)

Anywhoo, Matt wanted a midwest yaoi con to become a reality to share the experiences that had brought he and Jared together. About this time one popped into existence in St. Louis, but ended after only three years, so Matt and Jared (with permission of the previous con’s founder, and the support of the Motaku staff) took up the mantle and created Ahn!Con. The name of both cons came from the pun filled mind of Matt (it literally just popped into place one day, and that was it,) and the logo work was done by Jared (I’ll let him get you

more info on that process.)

A friend of ours, Greg Wicker, introduced us to Ruby Boiko of Beautiful Androgyny, and E.K. Weaver. They all knew each other from living in Texas and had been friends for sometime. These connections have been vital to Ahn!Con, with E.K. being the artist guest of honor year one and Ruby pointing us to some sponsors.

YGG: How was the name chosen?

Jared: There was a short list of possible names from the beginning, and Ahn!Con \*wasn’t\* on it. As with Motaku, the name came quite unexpectedly to Matt after we had wrestled with what to call the thing for days.

As to the meaning of the name

(Yes, we have had to explain to many what the name means.): “Ahn!” is the sound effect that is most often uttered by an uke upon the moment of penetration, especially in the older doujins, so it was a great fit for the con. Not only was it was generic enough to work as a catchy name without being overly niche and running off people in the wider LGBT world who would likely have a great time at the con: but it was also a great funny in joke for those of us in the older yaoi community who knew the term’s use.

YGG: Who created that clever logo and how was it created?

Jared: The logo was designed by me, along with all the brand and publications materials for both of our cons. Logo development is a process that is hard to nail down and describe outside my head, so brace yourself for randomness. I always start with free association about what the logo is going to represent, what the organization values are, who the logo needs to resonate with most, and a myriad of other details that are impossible to list. The whole process is very fluid for me.

I knew early on that I wanted it to bring to mind not just yaoi in the strictly Japanese sense, but also resonate with the American comic market, which was ultimately the deciding factor along with the dynamic, exclamatory look of the typeface I chose (thank you blambot.) It needed to speak to the wider LGBT audience (one of the big goals of the con in general) while not alienating the core female yaoi fans that are our main demographic.

As to the rest of the logo, the term “Ahn!” is \*always\* accompanied by an exclamation point whenever it is used in doujins, so the bulk of the logo being an exclamation point was a natural progression. I chose to pay homage to the Japanese roots of the genre by putting the title in katakana



inside the down stroke; it also makes for more visual interest.

I also knew it needed to be playful, fun and more than a little bit irreverent, and the exclamation point made an ideal opportunity to subtly suggest the phallic nature of the content without being X-rated, so I used the interlocked male symbol in the dot not only as a symbol of gay romance, but also to add just that little subconscious “This is a penis, isn’t it?” the logo was missing.

*YGG:* What is the mission of the convention?

*Jared:* We believe that missions need to be constantly under review, and change with the needs of the people we are serving while sticking to the core values of what we set out to do. So while there isn’t really a mission statement per se (though I think we might have one on the website), the core of what we set out to do is two fold:

First, to create a welcoming, accepting, safe space for the wonderful fans of yaoi, and other fringe and adult elements of geek culture, not only for fans, but also for creators. To create a space where the creators of these wonderful comics and art have a place where they are center stage, without any stigma or marginalization they are often used to at general anime conventions (often in the name of being family friendly).

Second, to the best of our ability, we aim to foster new relationships between the existing yaoi fandom and the wider LGBT community. Not only do we want to introduce the amazing art of yaoi to many who are unaware of it, but also to foster lasting connections with geek culture and gay culture. There is a lot of overlap, but far too often we are asked to be gay or be a geek, rarely both. We strive to create a space where we can identify as gay geeks. There are those in both communities that are unaware

of what the other has to offer, and we want to be the ones to realize that potential.

*Matt:* The mission of the con has not been formalized (we are in the process of doing so,) but the overall themes are to give yaoi fans a centrally located convention in the US, to provide a safe place for yaoi fans to gather and share their experiences with other likeminded individuals, to facilitate an interaction and exchange of ideas between the gay community and the yaoi fandom, to showcase the skills and talent of artists whose work reflects yaoi/lgbt themes, to educate the public and attendees on Japanese and LGBT culture, and to have a really great time.

*YGG:* How many attendees and vendors came this year?

*Jared:* Boring demographic data: We had an amazingly diverse group of 330 attendees and exhibitors from 17 states, including Canada. While the most common age was from 20-24, attendees ranged in age from 17 to 63. Attendance was 63% female, 28% male, 9% other.

*YGG:* What is the thing that makes your convention special?

*Jared:* Asking me to narrow it down is a lot like asking a parent which of their children makes their family special. This is going to sound like a non-answer, but bear with me: the whole package is what makes Ahn!Con special. From the details in the physical presentation, our amazing family of panelists, to the things we include in the name of offering a complete, weekend long, convention experience like a tabletop gaming room, video gaming rooms aimed at more than babysitting boyfriends for the weekend, and a showing room focused on yuri. But it’s also the less tangible things like the sense of inclusiveness and acceptance that presides for the whole weekend, the

openness with which artists are able to present their hard work to the public, and the enthusiasm and freedom with which the fans pursue the convention, from shopping to panels.

*Matt:* There is a lot that makes Ahn!Con special.

We have a manga library that travels out to us from Wichita, bringing over 2000 total volumes, including over 400 yaoi and sounen-ai. We also have a large video gaming room, with everything from an Atari 2700 to a WiiU, and a tabletop gaming room (with our own yaoi version of Cards Against Humanity.) We wanted to include these features for two reasons; one being that a lot of yaoi fans are female and want to bring their boyfriends with them, so there has to be something for them to enjoy (which is also part of why we have a burlesque show and a yuri showings room,) and the second being that we want things that geeky gay men can enjoy, since we want to introduce yaoi to other people like us.

Jared and I both have theatrical experience, so we invested in the best sound system we could, and have stage lighting for the gameshows and the dance party (and rainbow uplighting under the registration table.)

*YGG:* How are your guests of honor chosen?

*Jared:* Matt and I decided from the beginning that we wanted Ahn!Con to be as inclusive as we could manage, and focus more on the american end of the yaoi and BL genre, so generally tumblr, comic listing sites, social media, y-gallery, and many other sites are all used to find amazing artists that we would like to feature the work of. We also take recommendations from staff and other guests and artists and attendees at the con as to who we should have out.

Year one, a friend of ours connected us with E.K. Weaver, and we are ever thankful that she decided

to give us a shot. We connected with Alex Woolfson of Yaoi911 through his website about bringing Artifice programming and merchandise, and he reached out to Winona Nelson. All have blossomed into wonderful friendships since. We plan on inviting them back in future years, as they have new material they want to promote.

*Matt:* We take recommendations from staff (including Jared and I) attendees, and other guests as to who we should invite as guests. We do have a few voice actors on the list as well as webcomic artists.

Jared and I decided early on that we wanted to focus on the artists who don't get highlighted by other cons. All of the Guests of Honor at YaoiCon are manga artists from Japan, which is awesome, but we wanted to highlight some of the more local people, like E.K. Weaver, and the team behind Artifice, Winona Nelson and Alex Woolfson. We wanted to highlight the people behind the webcomics that so many people read every day, yet do not often have the chance to meet or interact with. Eventually we want to highlight some of the international people who do fantastic work, but don't get much recognition since they aren't from Japan, groups like Deja Blue Circle, which are based in Spain.

*YGG:* Who have been your guests of honor?

*Matt:* Some boring history statistics:

2013: Artist Guests were E.K. Weaver (The Less than Epic Adventures of TJ and Amal) Alex Woolfson (Artifice,) and Hazel & Bell (Always Raining Here.). Winona Nelson (Artifice) had to cancel due to an emergency on Thursday. Greg Wicker was our guest Emcee and gameshow host. Additionally we had That Bawdy Blonde Bitch as a guest for some burlesque. We had 225 attendees plus artists and vendors. We had 13 vendor booths and eight artist tables.

2014: Artist Guests were Winona Nelson (Artifice,) Hamlet Machine (Starfighter,) and Lesser Key Studios (Ianua.) Peter Pixie was our guest Emcee and gameshow host. That Bawdy Blonde Bitch returned with some friends to do the BBC themed burlesque show. We had 275 attendees plus artists and vendors. We had 17 vendor booths and 11 artist tables.

*YGG:* What would you like to see happen for the convention in the future?

*Jared:* Oh, we have plans...we have had a list of themes and guests that lasted for the first five years, so we have no shortage of ideas for who we want to invite, and how we want to focus the con's content from year to year. The biggest thing that I want to see happen is to grow enough to implement programming tracks, and include other marginalized geek cultures past the core yaoi group who may need a safe space to celebrate their fandom. As I said before, we strive to open the convention to the wider community, and I, for one would love to see the convention include some sort of pan-fandom party to help that along. We also hope to invite a more varied group of guests in future years as we have the budget. For 2015 we're working on a voice actor, and there are several international guests (from three continents) that we would love to have out sometime.

*Matt:* There are so many things I want to see this con do, and we have so many awesome plans. We should grow enough to break even in 2015, and after that the budget will allow for a lot of those plans to happen. We have some brilliant themes thought up by our staff, some of which have some very special guests attached to them, so I hope we can start executing some of those concepts. I really want to see the con grow to the size of YaoiCon, I really want to start bringing in some international guests, I want to add

some catered events (catering was my job before I met Jared,) and I want to have tracked programming that targets some additional fandoms and groups of people.

Right now I am focused on bringing in a voice actor for Ahn!Con 2015, and I am excited about some of the possible artists. The theme for 2015 is Game Ahn!



# Cataclysm

by EAB

He sighed. The entire night felt like someone else's life. "I'm an idiot," Kaede thought as he turned his head to the cool side of the pillow. Fujikawa's arduous narrative ran through his exhausted mind lying in the hotel room.

I watched as they laid my younger brother to rest, his casket fading into the Earth slowly. The world departed him with warm sun and blossoming flowers. *Manato*.

I could not even remember how long since we last talked. I left my suburban home for the city when I was sixteen and never looked back. I'd had enough of the rice growing, the late sunsets, and the dry earth betraying us each year. The people bored me. The night life did not exist. My parents "disowned" me one time too many.

"There isn't much to come back to," I admitted, kicking a few scattered rocks under my designer patent leather shoes with many solemn

faces looking back at me. My younger brother was truly loved by many.

How many would mourn my end? Some queens, some ex-lovers; perhaps even a girl or two I'd fucked from the past. In this town everyone showed at the funeral. I needed a cigarette immediately.

"How unfortunate," I thought reading the obituary far away from the crowded burial ground. I knew Manato left a young wife and child behind, but reading it made even me feel penitent. I chuckled at my own self-reproach.

I never met Manato's child. A boy I believed, who had to be around six now.

Dear Brother,

It's been too long. My son was born last night. 6'11 ounces. He's really perfect, Aniki. I don't know what to name him. Karin likes the name Shouta. I think it's too common. Fujikawa and Manato are such unique

names aren't they? I think our parents would agree he needs an exceptional name. I think this will be our first married quarrel, Aniki. Anyway, please write. I miss you very much.

"Why didn't you respond Boss?" Kaede asked. Fujikawa lay stretched out in the passenger's seat of his black Lincoln.

"I had nothing to say," Fujikawa answered. He pursed his lips smiling how he always did when he lied.

"Fujikawa nii-San?" I heard a woman's voice and felt a light hand on my shoulder. "You're Manato's brother right? Fujikawa Satsuma?"

I sized her up slowly. A plain looking woman--Glasses, limp hair, puny. "Karin?" I asked even though I already knew.

She nodded eagerly. "I'm so glad you remember me Aniki." Her smile made her cheekbones rise against her bloodshot eyes.

"Of course," I told her smiling back. I did not really remember her, but not all things are necessary to say. "I'm sorry...meeting like this after so long."

"Empty condolences," Kaede thought listening to him. Boss was not the type of person to be sorry he did not meet you. If he wanted to see you he would. His fleeting nature only made people want to contain him. It was in this condition that Kaede found himself sitting in his ex-boss' old Lincoln that evening.

"Yes. Manato...he really would have loved to see you here."

*What a simple thing to say,* I thought, but still smiled.

"Oh yes Fujikawa nii-San, there's someone you should meet."

I watched her walk away, thinking Manato's taste level in women was disturbing. After a few words to her huddled family, she came back gently holding a tiny boy's hand.

"Meet Fujimoto." She presented a small boy to me ceremoniously as

if I'd asked to see him, pushing him towards me a little forcefully. The impression was clear.

"Fujimoto?" I laughed. "I guess Minato found a name after all huh?"

I came down to my nephew's petite level and stared back, looking for the bland reflection of his mother. I was surprised to see more of my own face staring back at me. He was enchanting. Dark blue wide eyes, dark brown hair, and an enticing pout graced his face.

"You guys look a lot alike," Karin added pointlessly. She rubbed the boys head. "Honestly, I didn't really believe Manato when he said that, but seeing you two together, you two really could be father and son."

I looked up cutting my eye towards her curiously. Really?" I asked standing up slowly. I think he looks so much like you Karin," She tried to smile, but what came was a grimace of sorts. Undoubtedly, Manato had not left much to take care of his young family. Manato sold the farm when our parents died, but that money could not sustain them for long. Manato's impulsive nature contrasted our parents conditioned sagacity.

"Incidentally, now that Manato has passed, what are the plans for his future?"

I pulled a cigarette from my black trench coat. No more pretending now that the issue at hand was on the table.

"Well...Manato...I don't think he expected for this to happen." Karin started in trepidation.

"Naturally," I replied clicking the lighter to ignite the stick. *Moron.* "One usually doesn't prepare for such a thing as death." I inhaled lightly, and looked down at the boy between us, holding the cigarette loosely in my hand. "I suppose that means you two don't have much..."

I spoke with Karin casually, but my stare intensified, drinking in the boy's frailness, frowning my brow

impatiently. He did not look at me once. Fujimoto looked utterly disinterested in the whole conversation. He stood, nonchalant, and watched a bird on the end of a tree limb, hands tucked away in his black pants' pockets. Perhaps he wasn't quite old enough to understand that I, his uncle, held his fate in my delicate hands.

"I will look after the boy then... financially of course." I replied slowly. "He is my brother's child, I owe him that much."

"I did not want thanks for finally keeping a promise. I was Fujimoto's uncle; I couldn't just leave him in the arms of his daft mother. Of course what I felt for the boy wasn't obligation."

"What then?" Kaede asked him turning his head towards Fujikawa. Kaede eyed him with a mingle of sympathy and relevance. Fujikawa never spoke about his deceased younger brother. "Family responsibility?"

"Family? What did that really mean to me?" Fujikawa scoffed closing his eyes, "I hadn't seen Manato in years, and I hoped our parents were cold in their graves. 'Maybe next year, perhaps in the spring.' I never came back Kaede...I would lie every year and Manato would believe me."

Kaede nodded slowly gripping the wheel and turning away from Fujikawa. Was he boasting or ashamed? Kaede could not tell. This was the most Fujikawa ever talked to him in their twenty-five year friendship.

Kaede had met him when he turned twenty-one years old working as a bar-tender in the first club Fujikawa opened. He visited often, occupying counter space.

"You're too pretty to be working at the bar," Fujikawa had teased holding his glass for a refill.

Kaede grabbed the top shelf scotch, tickled to his core by the compliment, and filled it to the top.

"That'll be 9.50." Kaede told him smirking.

"My ass," Fujikawa scoffed.

"Are you offering?"

Fujikawa had studied him narrowing his eyes. "You don't want my ancient ass, Kaede."

Kaede shook his head grinning, and wiping the counter. "Why don't you let me decide that?"

"You won't get a promotion for fucking the owner." Fujikawa jeered. He guzzled the scotch knocking the glass on the counter twice for another.

Kaede's lip churned. "Right," he answered replenishing the empty glass.

Here I was in the spring with a strange analogized chill. I stared at the boy one more time before plucking my lit cigarette away. Fujimoto finally jolted out of his lethargic trance and quietly observed me with wondrous night blue eyes. He was terrifying.

"I'll be in touch," I told him and waved walking towards my black Lincoln. I wrapped my scarf a little closer to my flushed face.

"Family..." Fujikawa whispered.

Kaede peered out of the window, tapping his finger on the steering wheel.

"Family." I laughed loudly as Fujimoto placed the letters on the scrabble board.

"That's actually a good word," I admitted patting my nephew's head.

"No uncle, it's a great word," the young man answered smugly. A scrawny, but tall twelve year old sat at the other end of the board grabbing six more letters.

"I will admit you're getting better," I counted the points. "Fifty-two..." I poked out my lower lip and nodded with approval. "But you still have to beat the master." I placed "Quick" on the triple word score.

Fujimoto pouted, lowering his chin on the table. "How could I leave

that space wide open for you?"

"You were too concerned with trying to get those points, Moto-chan."

"Don't call me 'Chan,' uncle," he replied, moving his letters. "I'm not a baby...and I'm not a girl."

"Six years passed since I met my nephew at my brother's funeral. I thought that I would fade in and out of Fujimoto's existence, financially supporting him, and stopping by occasionally. However, to my surprise and honest amusement, I could not bring myself to forget about him."

Kaede did not turn towards him. He sensed that Fujikawa was not finished talking.

"Perhaps it was the similarity in our appearance. I could not deny the resemblance, though I would never acknowledge the likeness to Karin. More importantly, I felt an abnormal attachment to Moto."

Kaede turned towards Fujikawa and watched him lower his head. He remembered those times well when Fujikawa would shut himself up for days with Moto. He no longer came to the bar on weekends, and Kaede did not hear from Fujikawa until his nephew left.

"I'm aware you're not a woman Fujimoto," I answered laughing a little. I found Moto's rebelliousness those days rather cute. "I think if you were a girl, I'd probably like you less," I admitted grinning.

"That's silly," Moto replied laughing a little. "You're a man right? Women are...well they're ok." Moto shifted uncomfortably sliding his leg underneath of his bottom.

I scowled at him tilting my head. "Ok huh? Seems like you're thinking about one right now." I examined the game tiles carefully.

Moto looked up at me and then turned his head away blushing. "I'm not." he said simply, placing his word on the board. "Girls can be quite silly can't they? Why do people want to be

together with them?"

I considered Moto, narrowing my eyes. "Well..." I contemplated my reply. "Girls can be cute, too," I finally replied staring at him.

"Excluding your mother, there are actually quite beautiful women in the world Moto."

"Initially, I told myself it was the love of a father. I was glad Moto visited the city on weekends and called me daily. Hearing his voice made me feel better."

Fujikawa's once brown hair now had specks of grey through it. Kaede sighed and leaned his head back on the headrest, defeated. They did look a lot alike those two.

Moto-san, he'd met only twice. Once when Fujikawa came to the bar for an emergency, and the other time when he visited Fujikawa unannounced.

Kaede walked towards Fujikawa's apartment that night in resolution. Even if Fujikawa rejected him, he was going to tell him. Fujikawa brought him home many times after the bar closed to drink more, but never to solicit sex. Initially Kaede had felt insulted, but as he learned more, he understood Fujikawa's jagged character. He would fuck anonymously, but never a friend. Kaede's virtue for Fujikawa was in friendship and the entire excursion was a gamble. He tapped on the door and stared directly into the peephole. His knuckles whitened around a bottle of scotch.

When Fujikawa pulled the door open, he looked more tired than usual. His usual jauntiness seemed dimmed and bedraggled.

"Kaede?" He asked.

"Boss..."

Fujikawa stared angrily closing the door and forcing Kaede back as he stepped out fully.

"What are you doing here?"

"You didn't come to the bar tonight," Kaede revealed the scotch in his hand. "So I bought you a treat."

Fujikawa stared callously and Kaede felt submerged in ice water.

"I thought...we could talk," Kaede swallowed feeling foolish. "I-I thought that-"

"Uncle? Everything ok?"

"Fine Moto..." Fujikawa called hastily.

A young man with a cracking voice walked out of Fujikawa's apartment. If he did not call him uncle he would have mistook him for a lover. Kaede hid the scotch behind his back. "This was a mistake," he thought feeling the tension stretching from Fujikawa.

"Alright then, I'm going to bed." Their smile was identical until he closed the door.

"What are you thinking?" Fujikawa glared.

"I didn't realize..." Kaede stepped back. "Your nephew- he's getting bi-"

"Don't." He uttered crisply. "Just go."

Kaede nodded and smiled turning over the scotch. "It's a good year-"

"Keep it." Fujikawa turned his face away.

Rejected-

"Thanks Satsuma-san." Kaede zipped his jacket and began to walk away, his heart throbbing.

"Oh and Kaede," Fujikawa called before he entered the apartment.

"Yes?" A small flutter of hope palpitated.

"Don't come here again. Ever." He disappeared into the apartment.

Moto laughed loudly and counted his points. "Then why don't you have one...a wife I mean," he asked, picking his letters.

"I prefer giving my attention to you."

Kaede's heart pounded in his angular chest. Some things were not necessary to say, and Fujikawa choosing Moto over him was one of them.

"I knew my nephew would not understand. Spending my weekends playing scrabble with a twelve year old boy who I desired- that, I understood, was not normal." Fujikawa uttered.

"I'm glad, though. I think being with uncle is nice," he looked down at the board in search of a spot to place his letters. "And I always thought that...I thought that uncle was beautiful too."

"My heart danced to the beat of a death drum."

What would you do...if you knew?

"How cruel," Kaede thought staring at Fujikawa intently. He could not impugn Moto's innocence too much, for even now, as man of thirty-five, he also thought Fujikawa very beautiful.

"His face still had the innocent glow of pre-pubescence that I couldn't take away from him with the truth of this dishonoring lifestyle. Moto's pouty lips, and twilight blue wide eyes; his toffee like hair caressing his thin neck. I created a world for us where we could be together. I built a world where I could feed my sick predilection innocently, and without contrition."

Fujikawa stared directly ahead of him and his eyes watered.

"Don't say stupid things Moto," I replied looking away.

"I was a fool Kaede."

I looked away when my nephew stepped out of his mother's car and walked towards me. His long elegant frame became less scrawny each year. I thought perhaps God was tormenting me those days.

Moto hugged me tight and I swallowed hard, hugging him back. I rubbed the back of his head gently as my fingertips ran through his soft brown hair and his scent ensnared me. I had not felt his arms in forever it seemed, and I gave myself liberty

to indulge.

"How's school?" I asked him quietly. I looked at my nephew I adored, sitting in his impeccable uniform. Had so much time had flown between us? When did Moto become so... virile? I knew the demands of secondary school, yet I still could not help feeling chagrined about his three month absence. Why haven't you come to me?

Moto laid his head on the kitchen table turning his cheek to the cool marble.

"Is it that bad then Moto?" I poured more water into a green mug. I reached out to rub his hair slightly.

He sat up and grabbed my wrist. "No... It's alright." Moto answered. He watched me with damning eyes and sipped tea quietly.

"He pulled away..." Fujikawa told Kaede quietly grimacing.

Kaede nodded slowly, and bit his lip.

"Then what is it... you seem down," I asked politely. My heart was pounding as I clenched my hand underneath the table.

'He pulled away...from me Kaede.' That was the same thing Fujikawa told Kaede when he came to him that night drenched in rain. Kaede distinctly recalled the memory.

"One of the girls at school..." Moto started.

My face was deliberately blank, but my cognizance stuttered on the word. "Girl."

"She confessed to me," Moto continued stirring his tea.

"Well...I'm no expert on the matter, but I'd say that's pretty good for a freshman," I stood and turned towards the kitchen sink. My body trembled a little, and I exhaled silently, leaning over the sink and tightening my jaw.

"I tried to chain the resentment in my heart, but my mind reeled with envy."

"It's not that uncle," Fujimoto

replied sounding a bit drained. "It's just I don't know anything about... that kind of stuff."

I turned on the water and cooled my face, grabbing a paper towel to wipe. Then I stepped towards my black coat hanging on the rack, and grabbed my cigarettes. Even moving slowly, my socks could not deafen the sound of my heavy feet. I sat down at the circular kitchen table watching Moto as I clicked for the flame of light for my cigarette.

"Ecchi shit..." I said crudely and simply. I inhaled the quill of the cigarette, tempering my unwarranted anger. "What do you want to know?" I raised my eyebrow.

"I know my tone was jaded even for a man like me, Kaede, but if Moto wavered I could forget that it ever happened. If he pulled away then, perhaps things would have been different."

"How do I know if I like her like that?" A gentle pink tint tint across his cheeks.

I already knew he liked her. This was...getting approval from Ojisan. I leaned in towards the table and ashed into the glass tray, staring through him.

"You sound like your mother Moto," I said matter-of-factly. "Saying such stupid things..." So this was why I saw less and less of Fujimoto these days, wrapped up in imprudent love. I scoffed at my own cynicism. "You go out together don't you? On dates to the movies? Hanging out after school together?"

"Moto's timid trance washed over me like acid rain. I wanted it to go away- that caustic twinge at the end of every question, but if my anger mitigated, my voice would quiver."

Kaede swallowed hard hearing him speak validating the truth in his words. Fujikawa's voice was shaking, hysterically.

"So what do you want from me? Want me to teach you how to fuck

her?" I mocked.

"Uncle..." Moto looked back me furrowing his brow in confusion. "I'm not...trying to score," he looked down at his tea.

"Then you're an idiot," I replied coldly.

"Everything in me constricted, but the words flowed as if independent from me."

"If I was you I'd get as much as I could get," I added untruthfully, inhaling once more. Baiting a child like this...I'd reached rock bottom. The smoke at the ache of my throat was making my eyes water a bit.

Fujikawa pulled out a pack of cigarettes from his coat pocket searching for his lighter.

"Here." Kaede handed him the silver lighter he'd taken from him years ago.

Fujiawa huffed and began to speak again. "That was why right? That tears well in my eyes?" He wiped the tears from his reddening face with the end of his scarf.

Kaede reached out to him again, but pulled his hand away determinedly staring at him. Fujikawa-san- this darkness in him that he'd always seen but was never brave enough to enter.

"C-continue Fujikawa," Kaede uttered sternly.

"Then how about you then Uncle?" Moto asked me plainly. "I don't see you with any women." He continued unabashed. "People say..." He hesitated. "People say...you're a faggot."

I gaped at him, feeling the stab of reality through my gut. I wanted to scream, but I only laughed manically. "A faggot?!" I barked inhaling the cigarette one more time and standing up from my chair quickly.

"Fag?" Kaede asked him apprehensively.

Fujikawa laughed nasally at Kaede's offense.

"A fag I was ok with. A fag would never feel like that- that worming foul

inside of me."

I pulled Moto from his seat and slammed him to the wall forcibly.

"What do you think Fujimoto?"

"The narrow of my eyes was threatening. I wanted him to be afraid. Fear what I feared."

Kaede was afraid. Fujikawa's hollowed eyes looked possessed, red from the quiet tears.

"Violate me..." I thought.

Moto stared at me silently breathing heavily.

"Hate me Moto..."

"Yes!" I yelled when Moto didn't reply. I held my nephews face squeezing his cheeks between my thumb and index finger, as if scolding a naughty child. "Are you afraid now being touched like this Moto? Do you hate me now?!" I breathed ragged, shaking from the adrenaline coursing through me.

"Tell me I'm nothing." I thought.

I pounded my fist next to Moto's face. "Yes I'm gay!"

"Kick me, punch me, push me away..."

"I wanted to end this unnatural feeling I had with my blood and now almost man. End the dreams, and the vulgar thoughts. If he pushed me away, I could despise him like the others. No lust could be that strong to make me cling to a child!"

Kaede gritted his teeth hardening his face.

Moto stared at me unblinking and then turned his face away as he began to cry- not like a man with strength, but like a hurt child, ashamed.

"Fujimoto..." I exhaled as his eyes widened seeing my beloved's tears.

"The unforeseen effect made me tremble."

I leaned in towards him and kissed him as tenderly as I could; holding back the lust in my heart and the resentment in his mind. My whole body ached.

"Watching him grow up,

feeling a strange bond between me and Fujimoto. Not an appropriate relationship like a father and son, but a dependent one.”

Kaede racked his brain trying to remember everything that night. Fujikawa had indeed come to him, but unlike usual where they slept together peacefully, Fujikawa was like a beast in heat. Kaede turned away from Fujikawa again.

Fujikawa knocked on the door that evening already wasted. Unlike the times before, Fujikawa said nothing to Kaede as he entered the apartment swaying.

“Fujikawa-san!” Kaede called grabbing him from a nasty fall.

“Ge’ orff,” Fujikawa cried pulling his arms away from him. He walked to the couch and plunged.

Kaede rubbed his head feeling the wet strands of hair through his fingertips. “You’re- a mess.”

“I’m shit...” Fujikawa groaned turning his chest towards him. His eyes were still closed breathing heavily. His suit was soaked from the rain.

“You’re beautiful,” Kaede told him staring into his fastened eyes. What a fucked up individual he yearned for. Fated to friendship, when Kaede was sure he could complete Fujikawa, expose his exquisiteness.

“Aha-“ Fujikawa chuckled. “Ahahahahahahaha,” he chortled loudly coughing on his spit drunkenly. “Beautiful,” he laughed so hard there were tears forming in his eyes. “Lehme.. tell you a secre’ Kaede.” Fujikawa stared into Kaede’s grey eyes pulling him close. “You,” he huffed sniffing and wiping his eyes. “Are an idiot.” He pulled Kaede’s face licking his bottom lip. Kaede felt his body moving autonomously.

“Boss...” Kaede’s body shivered feeling Fujikawa’s wet mouth enticing him.

His heart ached. He remembered now.

“I stroked myself lewdly thinking how it would feel to be taken by my flesh and blood. Wanting him physically and emotionally... purging my body of the lust every night.”

“And that night?” In the darkness, the hungry passion he shared with Fujikawa.

Fujikawa turned away from him inhaling against the tip of his cigarette.

Fujikawa shattered the only memory he had of real tenderness, when he came to him, drenched and vulnerable. “Don’t pull away, don’t pull away,” Fujikawa whispered to him that night, and so Kaede had held him tighter in his arms.

“That night Fujikawa?!”

“I closed my eyes and heart to reality and drowned in impiety: I felt you, but thought of Moto licking my neck, Moto rubbing my chest with his soft hands, Moto’s mouth on me, sucking me, licking my lewd physique.”

Kaede stared at him blankly, each word crushing his heart. That night they made love for the first time, and Kaede thought that was the beginning of their relationship, but he was wrong. Fujikawa became even more distant after that. He no longer visited him to simply sleep together; he no longer looked to him for comfort after that night. Their friendship was devastated in one night of lust.

“The Moto in my mind did vulgar things easily –pumping me hard and fast, making my toes curl and heart race- tying me, binding me forever. I-”

“Stop it-!”

“I would cum to these thoughts and cringe at my own disgusting perverseness to the boy.”

“I SAID STOP IT FUJIKAWA!” Kaede pounded the steering wheel as the horn beeped causing the black Lincoln to rock gently. He did not

want to hear this. He thought he knew Fujikawa, but this- even he couldn’t!

Kaede clenched his white knuckles engulfing his fury. His most precious memory...was a nightmarish reminder for Fujikawa, of his depraved lust for his nephew.

“How pathetic I am,” Kaede whispered.

Fujikawa stared at Kaede pitifully.

“Old, alone, and broken... that is my life.” I whispered.

“Uncle...” Fujimoto gaped at me and wrapped his arms around me unknowingly. Moto whimpered, hugging me tightly.

“Uncle!” Moto exclaimed hugging me tightly. “Thank you for coming.”

I hugged him, rubbing his back tenderly and running my hands through his short brown hair.

“Moto is much taller than me now,” Fujikawa told him happily.

Kaede sneered gripping the wheel.

“Thank you for inviting me,” I replied politely smiling.

“The wedding was quite elaborate especially for Hashida. Champagne, a polished hard wood dance floor, and plated dinners on every blue draped table with large vase filled with white lilies posited in the center of each,” Fujikawa continued, impressed.

“A lovely wedding,” I exclaimed buoyantly.

“Angela’s doing,” Moto nodded grinning.

“Oh yes, the American actress!” I noted with a bit of sarcasm Moto grasped immediately.

“Theater teacher Uncle,” Moto corrected me.

“It’s been ten years since the night I told my half-truth.”

“And you never talked after that?!” Kaede did not want to hear anymore, but he could not help

himself. Fujikawa drew him in like a spider. Luring him and sucking the nerve from him.

“Only briefly.” Fujikawa smiled empty.

“I sat down at the table with strangers I did not know, listening to the band play music I did not know.”

“Married,” I chuckled under my breath. I leaned back in the white lace draped chair and read the program.

“Joining Fujimoto Satsuma and Angela Radcliffe.”

“Radcliffe,” I mocked placing the program down. I turned his head towards them high table where Moto’s wife sat happily talking to Moto’s mother.

“You know, I once thought that I could keep Moto to myself. Not touch him-“ Fujikawa continued abruptly seeing the appalled look on Kaede’s face. “Just to have him- forever.”

Kaede’s grey eyes narrowed and he lowered his head feeling sick.

This kind of love...I’m a fool.

I stood up wrapping my scarf around my face to hide my tearing eyes.

“Uncle!” Moto called grabbing my shoulder. “Where are you going?” He asked frowning.

“Cigarette,” I answered grabbing my lighter out of my pocket to show him. Moto pulled my lighter from me grinning.

“So you can’t escape.” He smirked.

I smiled knowingly and moved to him quickly. I kissed his cheek tenderly patting his back. “Congratulations Moto,” I muttered pulling away.

Moto smiled slightly, and released me when I pulled away.

Fujikawa walked outside in the cool night air leaning his head against the cold brick of the outside of the hall. He lifted his head and looked up at the dark sky. The street adjacent to the alley he stood in was eerily quiet, and the frigid air made him shiver a bit. He would not come back to

Hashida.

“There’s nothing here for me here, I’d almost forgotten that.”

Fujikawa told Kaede lying next to him. Kaede held Fujikawa closely in the king size bed of the hotel Fujikawa begged him to stay in. He did not respond. He lay disillusioned.

“We should have gone out tonight. I need a scotch and a smoke.”

Pretending like nothing happened. The same thing happened after Fujikawa casts him aside at the apartment that time. He walked into the bar Monday night as if nothing happened.

“Sleep Boss,” Kaede whispered huskily.

Fujikawa was silent for a moment, and then turned towards Kaede clutching his shirt. The cologne Fujikawa wore clung to his clothes and body.

“You’ll be gone in the morning.” Fujikawa replied calmly. “So- I don’t want to sleep just yet.”

Kaede’s heart clenched. He opened his hazed eyes staring at the ceiling fan whirring above them.

Fujikawa woke the next morning to in an empty King bed. He laid staring at the whirring fan above him. “Ha-” he scoffed, and rolled out of bed towards his coat grabbing his cigarettes.

“Lighter?” he grumbled checking his pockets. “Shit,” he huffed sliding on his loafers. He grabbed his coat quickly about to put it on when the shine of the end table caught his eye.

The silver lighter he gave Kaede, left abandoned. He grabbed it and flicked igniting his cigarette. It dangled at the end of his pouty lips as he wiped a tear from his eye. He exhaled feeling the achingly sweet release. He tossed the lighter on the mahogany.

“Good bye Kae-” He turned his head watching the door swing open. Kaede came through with coffee, pastries and pack of cigarettes.

“Are you hungry Boss?” Kaede

asked grabbing the lighter and pocketing it.

Fujikawa’s tint blue eyes gaped incredulous. “Aha,” Fujikawa lowered his head as he held his breath sobbing. Why did he come back?

Kaede walked towards him deliberately. “All of our memories have been terrible.” He held Fujikawa’s head.

“Let’s change that Boss.”

Fujikawa’s throat tightened as he moved to stand. He reached out to grab Kaede’s shirt. “You idiot,” he breathed hoarsely. His grip tightened as he laid his head against Kaede’s chest.

***Fiction***



# What it's Like for a Uke

by Simon Barnsby

I hate going outside. The city is a tangle of noise, smells, and unnatural textures that assault my ears, nose, and skin. It's not so bad in the car; at least there I can filter out most of the garbage and focus on the important things, like not crashing.

Once at the store, I check the list He gave me, trying not to let my hand shake. The swirl of carts and their temporary owners slowly parts enough to let me through, my small hand-basket seeming ludicrously inadequate in comparison. It matches my frame of mind as I carefully pick my way through the aisles. Some of them I'll have to come back to later, as there are too many people in them now.

Without thinking, my free hand reaches up to touch my collar. The large steel ring faintly sings as my fingers brush its surface, lending me His strength. I take a breath and keep going, focusing on the shift of the leather around my neck as I move. Almost done, the list is nearly complete as I wander into the frozen aisle. I stand slightly longer than I have to as I take a bag of frozen peas, enjoying the sharpness of the cold wind over me.

I hastily step aside when another shopper appears next to me, his sudden arrival masked by the misty glass door. He glances at my collar and says nothing as he roots around for whatever it is he came for. I am relieved to escape so lightly, and quickly vanish into the Chinese food section. The fragrant spices and colorful packaging are a welcome distraction from my inner turmoil. I pretend to read the instructions on a ramen packet, buying time to calm down before I hit the registers. I find a decently quick checker and fish my items out of my basket, avoiding eye contact with everyone. Finally, I swipe the card and collect my bags. I silently pray that none of them break on the way back to the car; the plastic is pathetically thin and tears a little more with each step. Somehow I make it home in one piece. Once inside, I lock the door behind me with a sense of satisfaction.

I'm safe in here. I unpack the backs in the kitchen, setting aside some treats for later. Finished, I make my way to the bedroom. It's always dark and quiet in here, as long as the TV isn't on. I ignore the remote sitting on the dresser; what I want isn't visual.

I close my eyes and lay down, pulling my phone from my pocket.

I press the buttons from memory, not having to see them as I navigate the voicemail system. I press the button once more, and His voice comes through for me. Just hearing Him is enough for right now; His virtual presence lets me relax and let go of most of my inner tension. I close the phone with a smile and hit the shower. I like to be clean when I cook, and there's always the chance to get dirty again afterwards.

I've just finished setting the table when His key hits the lock. As the door swings closed behind Him, I immediately drop to my knees and clasp my hands behind my back. Eyes down, I murmur the words of welcome he's been waiting for. I find myself trembling slightly as His fingers firmly grasp the ring in my collar, easing me to my feet. Nothing else matters but this. Nothing exists but those eyes, those hands, that burning kiss that leaves me aching for more and unable to speak. He smiles, and my world is complete.

# Love in the Fast Lane

by Briar L. Majic

Saxan Olsen walked alongside another boy showing him around before the bell rang. It was his first day at the new school and he was nervous. He'd been getting bullied at his last one, prompting his parents to remove him.

"So over here is the restroom."

Coming out of his thoughts he looked to his left. "Ah, restrooms. Thank you."

"You're welcome. Now your first class, which was what again?" the other boy asked.

Saxan looked at the paper he held. "Ummmm. History with Mrs. Potter."

"Oh, that's what I have. Her class is down this way."

The boys walked down the hallway full of lockers, making small talk. Sax was glad he was never asked why he left his other school. How could he tell his possible new friend that he was gay? It'd been hard enough coming out to his parents. They still loved him though.

"Hey! What are you doing to my friend?"

Sax stopped as he heard shouting. Looking straight ahead, he saw a young man covering his face as another stood in front of him, shoving a blonde away. Saxan was mesmerized by the one protecting his friend. He watched the bully walk off after being threatened by a punch.

"That's Ferrari. You want to stay clear of him. He doesn't play nice."

*He's really cute.* He thought as they started walking their way.

Ferrari had an arm around his

slender friend to help steady the young man and as he passed Sax, he did a double take that had Sax inwardly preening. Actually, neither seemed able to take eyes off the other.

Saxan held his breath as he felt an instant connection. Once Ferrari broke the eye contact, they both looked separate ways. *Wow. That was intense.* Saxan could tell how much he cared for his friend or was the other one his boyfriend?

"Come on, it's almost time for first period." the other boy was tugging on his arm.

"Oh right. Let's go Lance."

Later during lunch break, Saxan stepped out of the bathroom and was heading back to the cafeteria to join Lance to finish lunch, when he heard singing coming from the music room he had started to pass. Stopping, he peeked in and saw five boys around his age singing and they sounded great. Then he realized one of the boys was Ferrari. His new crush. *And he sings, too?*

"I'm sorry guys. My mouth is still sore."

"It's all good, A. I'll get that guy for punching you in the mouth."

The one called A, touched his mouth where his bottom lip was split. "He was only picking on me because of her. Apparently everyone enjoys picking on her. I'll protect her no matter what."

Outside the door, Sax couldn't keep his eyes off of Ferrari. So much so that he didn't hear the boy from

earlier approach him, until he was slammed against the wall beside the door. He hit the wall so hard that the back of his head hit the wall.

"Ow."

"What are you doing? Huh? Watching the five dorks sing?" Laughing, the bully was smacking him.

"Stop please. I was just passing by. What is your problem?" Saxan attempted to walk away, but his left arm was grabbed tightly.

"No, you stay..." his grip tightened even more. "I know you. You're that new kid. I saw you eyeing Ferrari and his boyfriend as they walked by. If you were a girl I'd so take you."

"No girl in her right mind would want to date you and for the record he is not my boyfriend. A is one of my best friends. Now let the new guy go." Ferrari had come out quietly from the music room.

Saxan's mouth became dry, heat flushing his cheeks. *Keep cool.* Ferrari was cuter close up, and right now wasn't the time to fan boy over someone he thought was probably a delinquent. "Please, let go."

The boy holding him against the wall smacked him. "Shut up. I'm not done with you scaredy cat." he laughed.

"Hey, Paul. Let go because you're pissing me off." Ferrari looked at Saxan and mouthed the words *Follow my lead*.

Saxan nodded. He would do anything to get out of this mess.

"Paul, let him go now. I'm not

joking anymore.”

“What is he? Your boyfriend?” Paul laughed cruelly.

The half-Korean boy took one of Paul’s fingers and began pulling it back. “That’s right. He’s my boyfriend and today is his first day. I haven’t properly welcomed him here, because of you.”

Paul let go of Saxan’s arm and stepped back holding his hand. “All right. Prove it then. If he’s your boyfriend, then kiss him.”

“Fine by me.”

Saxan blinked as Ferrari embraced him, slender pale fingers in his short brown hair, and that was when he knew that he fit perfectly in these strong arms. His own arms wrapped around the other’s neck.

“What are you waiting for? Kiss him already, Ferrari.”

Ferrari chuckled. “You have no idea how to be romantic do you?”

Sax was speechless. *Romantic? To me? Even my first boyfriend wasn’t romantic to me and we didn’t even last that long.* Before he could speak out loud Ferrari’s lips were already claiming his and he melted into the kiss.

Paul gasped as he watched both of them react to each other. He seriously didn’t think Ferrari would do it. “You’re...You’re gay?”

Breaking the kiss, Ferrari pulled away and turned to Paul, sneering. “Yeah. I’m gay, tough guy. Wanna do something about it?”

The bully backed up. “N-no. I heard about what you did to the last guy who teased you about being gay.”

“Oh yeah. Simon. He should be getting out of the hospital soon.” Ferrari grabbed the front of Paul’s shirt and yanked him close. “Want to join him?”

“No. You messed him up bad. I want no part of it.”

Letting him go, he smirked. “Now. Are you going to leave my friends alone?”

Paul nodded.

“Good choice.” Placing his arm around a still shocked Saxan, Ferrari smiled. “Let’s go babe. I’m starving.”

In the cafeteria, Saxan was still dumbfounded by the kiss. Ferrari sat beside him as he ate and nobody bothered them. The other students gave them questionable looks but nobody said a word to them. Saxan drank his soda as Ferrari passed him a cookie.

“I know we just met, but I like you.”

“You don’t even know my name.” Saxan replied.

“What’s your name? I’m Ferrari Kim.”

“Saxan. Saxan Olsen. Are you a delinquent?”

The other laughed. “You got a problem with that?”

“No. But you seem like one. No offense.” Saxan felt a surge of excitement. Did he like this sort of thing then? He’s never liked bad boys before. He always liked the quiet, book wormy ones.

“Yeah. I came out to my family recently and they weren’t happy. They kicked me out.”

“I’m sorry.” Saxan reached over and touched his hand lightly. “Where are you staying?”

“It’s cool. I take turns staying with my friends.”

Saxan was appalled. How could a family do that? His family accepted him with open arms still.

“So if I haven’t scared you off, would you like to go out on a date?”

“Live with me.” The words just left his mouth.

Ferrari stared at him. “What?”

“Live with me. You should be around people who accept you and you shouldn’t be moving from house to house. That’s no life at all.”

He couldn’t say how these feelings developed so fast from one kiss, but Saxan felt such a connection with this boy. He held his breath as Ferrari gave it thought.

“I’ll move in with you, but on one condition.”

“Which is?”

“Go on a date with me?”

“Yes.”

Ferrari gripped his hand gently and pulled him over the table. They met halfway and kissed again. It lasted longer this time and he heard the chairs scrape against the floor and low voices that said Ferrari’s friends had arrived. Sax pulled back, breaking the kiss as Ferrari introduced them.

“Guys, meet Saxan Olsen.”

“Hey.” They all greeted in unison.

“So, new boyfriend already?”

The one named Case chuckled.

“Well, this one is cuter than the first one.” Denim cut in.

Ferrari scooted his chair next to Saxan. “What can I say? I’m smitten with him.” His hand ran down his arm. “I’m head over heels for him and I can’t explain it. I feel like he could be the one.”

Saxan twined their fingers together. “I feel the same way. The first moment we locked eyes this morning. I felt something that I never felt for my first boyfriend, but I’m a little scared too. You see we only lasted two months as a couple, because he was cheating on me.”

“My first boyfriend did that to me too. We lasted only a month. But Saxan, I feel this connection with you that I can’t explain.”

“I feel it too, Ferrari. So you’ll come home with me today?”

“Yes.”

Saxan let Ferrari explain the new living arrangement and his friends couldn’t be happier for their best friend. They hadn’t seen him so happy few weeks and they knew he deserved it, along with a family that would accept him and love him and with a boyfriend who would be faithful.

# The Closet Uke

by EAB

Where there is yaoi, there will always be seme/uke, bottom/top, but what exactly does this mean? Traditionally, the bottom is an effeminate, overly shy twink, OR the fire breathing tsundere who squeaks at the first sign of a cock. Thank goodness many authors are transforming these archetypes. However, there is another bottom that is slowly making their debut in the yaoi world, and they're called "closet ukes." Now I know what you're thinking: What's a closet uke? Well essentially they're "sems" who haven't had the opportunity to be topped yet. Think, Cain from Starfighter. Aggressive, rugged, violent as hell, and a moaning bottom getting pegged by Abel's twink ass. *That* was a shocker even for me to be completely honest, but I can see the development in Hamlet's mind. There are three seme's who I think fit into this "Closet uke" category.

### Reed from Teahouse



After reading my copy of Teahouse Chapter 2, it is in my humble opinion, that Reed is actually a "closet bottom."

Evidence: Rory's freakishly huge cock is the reason he wants Rory. He tells Rhy's this in an "extra" in the chapter. Now, I'm no expert on the matter, though I've had my fair share of ass, but why would a top need a bottom with a big cock? What's in it for him unless he's planning on using said erroneous, erection.

Evidence: Reed's evaluation of Rory while he's jerking off is very... specific:

"Lips too thin, arms and legs too skinny, his chest isn't broad enough." To put it bluntly, Reed wants a manly man, not some skinny twink.

Evidence: My final proof is when Rory is jerking off and he cums fast. Reed thinks "*Oh, he's fast, we'll have to work on that.*" Now this can be interpreted more ways than one. It's better if the bottom isn't cumming really fast, because well, it takes a minute for a guy to get it back up after orgasm. So I can understand Reed not wanting that "wait time" between Rory's premature ejaculations. *But*, his face as he was thinking this was very: Beyoncé: I am Sasha Fierce.

Closing: Give Rory about three years to finish puberty, and he will be humping Reed's ass all through that tea house.

### Iason Mink from Ai No Kusabi

\*Hears the gasp as you're reading\*

Yes, Iason “So Icy” Mink. Let me start by saying, I’ve read all eight books of ANK, and watched both original and remake OVA’s multiple times- not that I’m bragging of course.

Evidence: Iason’s Cock worship. I have never seen a seme so infatuated with his uke’s penis, since well... Reed



from Teahouse. Putting a pet ring on your uke is one thing, but this dude loves grabbing Riki’s package.

Now the argument can be made that he’s just “pleasuring his uke”, but that claim doesn’t really make sense if you think about the dynamic in this relationship. When they meet, Riki is this smug little punk who Iason wants to teach a lesson to. So why pleasure Riki’s cock instead making Riki pleasure his own? Even Riki questions this in the novel. *“The foreplay could not possibly be thought of in terms of mutual satisfaction. Loathing the one-sided nature of the frottage, he tried to shrug it off. Deliberately and surely, Iason forced a full comprehension of his tenaciousness on Riki’s consciousness.”*

Iason is obsessed with Riki’s brutal, edgy personality, and the power of his spirit. Why? I can understand if he was the aggressive type that

liked to fight it out, but Iason liked to control Riki without violence. When Iason finds out Guy mutilated Riki (Spoiler!!! By cutting off his dick to get the pet ring.) Iason goes all kinds of crazy. It was that Mortal Kombat chest punch that sent Guy flying after Iason found out about the pet ring.

Evidence: Dat Hair flip! You



know the one I’m talking about. \*\_\*

Now don’t get me wrong, any man can have a moment of fabulousness *once* and a while, but Iason is beyond the one time diva.

You can’t even get that eyebrow arch in a Dominican threading salon in Harlem. He’s sexy. And he knows it. His body is *much* more tantalizing than Riki’s. His hair is platinum and long with that Farrah Faucet bang at the front, and the fashion sense of Tanagura cat walker. Honestly, the dude looks like a 90s supermodel, and beyond his outward sexy, his inner uke shows all throughout the Ova and novel. This leads me to the final evidence.

Evidence: Iason’s really just a high class Uke. His main grief throughout the entire novels and OVA’s is Riki’s bloodline. Riki is, well, a mongrel: a low class, an “undesirable.” It’s one of

the main conflicts in the story. If Riki was a born citizen of Tanagura, Iason would definitely let Riki hit that firm ass. Everything he did to Riki, down to taking Mimea away from him, boiled down to jealousy. And why was he so jealous? Because Mimea got that D he was feigning for. A great excerpt from the novel is, *“For the man [Iason]*

*was aware that at the base of his haughty convictions, there swirled a whirlpool of twisted jealousy towards Mimea.”*

Iason is a very insecure uke too. He worries - a lot. You would think a man who has everything: wealth, status, power, wouldn’t have that much to be insecure about. However in the novels, we see that’s just NOT the case. Iason is the one yearning for Riki. Iason is the one acknowledging his love. He is the one raging against the status quo. In the final showdown between him and Guy, most people see Seme versus Seme, I see uke versus uke. They’re fighting for Riki’s heart, not his body.

Conclusion: Don’t misunderstand me, if they would have ended up together, Iason would not have bent over begging Riki to fuck him, at least not right away. With Iason, everything

is baby steps. When he and Riki first meet he refuses to take off his clothes, then he refuses to have sex with him, then he refuses to let him leave the tower. He eventually gives in to all of these temptations, and I truly believe his final pillar is that ass of his. Good luck Riki. In my fanfic dreams you've conquered it.

### Fumihiko from Elektal Delusion

I don't even know if this one needs to be outed. Fumihiko is the classic uke. The only reason Shunpei hasn't gotten Fumi's ass yet is because he's an idiot, and hasn't seized the opportunity. Fumihiko and Shunpei ALMOST switch in Vol. 3 chapter 14, until Fumihiko's mom walks in on the two of them. Note that Fumihiko was



VERY disappointed looking.

However, we love Fumi and we want to see his glorious uke moments anyway.

NUFF SAID!!!



### Final: Fei Long from You're My Loveprize in Viewfinder

Fei Long-Fei Long-Fei Long. Most people consider him an "extra" character, but he's pretty much the main antagonist in more than half the Finder series. Now a lot of people have conceded that Fei Long is definitely seke (top and bottom). However, I'm here to oust him as the closet uke he is.

Evidence: He's in love with the

God of semes. I'm talking about Asami in case you, I don't know, have never read the yaoi bible *You're my Loveprize in Viewfinder*. Asami is your classic overzealous, aggressive, possessive, "I will kill you and throw your ass in the pacific," yakuza seme. Their initial interaction Fei Long was seen giving Asami the most severe side eye I've ever seen in a manga. The "bitch, you tried me", after Asami took Akihito from him. Speaking of Akihiko, the only bottom we see Fei Long with, was he *really* ever into Akihito? There was a lot of lazing and idle time between them when they were together. The initial relationship was pure spite against Asami, but then Fei Long grew to like Akihito as a friend. This scene kind of sums it up perfectly.



Emie Translation: Dude, every time some shit goes down with Asami

or your shitty job, you always want to fuck *my* ass. Stop fooling yourself, my hole is not going to satiate the desires you have.

Note: In my mind these two are besties.

Evidence: I know what you're saying; well of course he's going to be uke with Asami. Yes! True! But he was also uke in his dream with the older Tao.

And by "knows you better than anyone," he means "know you want the D." Fei Long has Misaki (Jounjou Romantica) style uke pheromones wafting from him. There was that security guard, clearly seme, (confessed to him in Vol. 5 chapt. 30) and there's also there's the Russian guy Mikhail (minor eye candy) who is all over Fei Long's ass.

Final Evidence: Asami says it so it must be true.

Yes the God of seme's pretty much says "you're an uke in seme's clothing."

Did you see that ass twitch? That was Fei Long's ass saying "Ah! Yes!"

Conclusion: I think this is one of those fine line situations. While Fei Long would never uke with someone like Akihito, he definitely prefers the bottom. This is why he and Akihito seem more friendly than romantic,



because Fei Long was just “not that into him.”. Two ukes can’t work, and not only that, he realizes that Akihito feels the same way he feels about his beloved seme Asami. He treated Aki the way he did initially because he was jealous, and after that because he was lonely. *But-* deep down inside, Fei is just a dying to get his cherry popped uke.

“Emie, you just want to believe these men are bottoms for your own personal fantasy”. While that is absolutely true, I also genuinely believe these points to be valid, and my assessment to be true. After reading all of this, if you still think my arguments have no basis, and I’m just a rambling fanboy reaching for a root for his theories, I’m here to tell you- you’re right. Ha-ha!



## Panel Topics

# Fanservice and Shipping —



There is a lot to criticize about the way Yaoi fans go about shipping characters.

Shipping is defined on Wikipedia.com as: *derived from the word relationship, is the belief that two people, fictional or non-fictional, would be interesting or believable (or are, or will be, or should be) in a romantic relationship. It is considered a general term for fans' emotional involvement with the ongoing development of romance in a work of fiction.*

I will use the term ship or shipping though other terms like pairings or couplings are acceptable.

## A Pairing of Mutual Convenience

The criticism stems from the habit of many who write fan fiction to ship characters regardless of all sense and reason and evidence to the contrary. One meme going around the internet states that whether the characters like each other, hate each other are ambivalent to each other or never met each other, there are ways that they can be shipped. This can and does get ridiculous. Thus, it is understandable that fans of adventure shows or sports shows who just want to enjoy what is being presented, really don't want to see the strange combination of characters doing the full blown nasty on show related sites or conventions.

That said, the extreme hostility shown to BL and Yaoi fans of shows like *Kuroko no Basuke* and *Free! Inatobi*

*Swim Club* is unfair. These fans are not weaving their view of those characters out of thin air. In fact, I posit that there is a deliberate effort by anime producers to infuse BL fanservice in these male oriented shows to attract a broader audience. The Bishonenifying™ of male characters and behavior that is more than a little unusual for straight young men has become way, way more common than it was in anime of the 70s and 80s. Back then, fanservice meant hot females in towels or without towels and panty shots. I know that it still means that, but it has ALSO come to mean the showing of bishonen flesh and clenches that do not happen between straight guys of this age. Yeah, yeah, I've heard the arguments



Wait — These are both dudes?



that that behavior is cultural in Japan. It's not. I'll get into that later.

### Why Yaoi/BL Fanservice?

Yaoi/BL fans are a rapidly growing audience, particularly in the West. They are also very, very active on the Net. They share images from their favorite anime everywhere and love talking about it beyond the pairings. This tends to draw fans of all stripes to the anime that might not have heard of it otherwise. Japan no longer does shows aimed solely at its own countrymen. Like any other entertainment industry, they covet the extra money that the foreign markets bring. Thus they are interested in showing what the most active fans are looking most for. As it is true everywhere, sex or sex appeal sells.

I had heard of and saw images from *Durarara* over a year before the show aired in the US, and from what I saw and heard, I could have sworn it was a Yaoi anime. There were not manipulated images. They were screen grabs and clips. Naturally, I saw mostly Shizuo x Izaya images. That intense buzz about the show was, in part, what prompted the interest in US distributors to dub and air it here. The

same can be said about *Black Butler* (that airs on premium outlets). Both shows rely on heavy BL innuendo at times with characters in *Durarara* openly discussing the Shizuya pairing. Likewise, the buzz for *Tiger & Bunny* was really intense in the West. The image of that pair was everywhere on the social networks and talked about in every forum. Bunny was so Bishie that he really looked like a girl. I'm very familiar with the real 70s. Guys had long hair, but not Farrah Fawcett hair. And then there was all the princess carrying of Tiger in the advance images and the trailer. That anime managed to get a simulcast here on Hulu. Side note – Hulu thinks enough of the Yaoi audience that it is currently running the full on Yaoi, *Junjou Romantica* and beginner yaoi, *Gravitation*.

### Locker Room Fun

There is fanservice that is hard to ignore. *Na. 6's* foundation is a BL relationship, something the US distributor does not deny. But no one will call it that. But nothing is more out there for blatant yaoi/BL fanservice while still in the closet than the sports based anime *Free! Inatobi Swim Club*.

True, *Kuroko no Basuke* has a lot of well built guys and lots of fanservice (this season, there seems to be no fewer than four love triangles – all between the male players). But nothing beats *Free! Inatobi Swim Club* for a show of skin and frequency of fanservice. The day that the first trailer turned up, the internet was on fire with Fujoshi losing their minds. The buzz was so intense that it became the topic of our weekly webconference meeting with my manga publishing company. The publishers were fairly certain that it wasn't a yaoi but didn't know how it couldn't be with all that skin and loving shots of muscles. The next ones grew more intriguing, because instead of hinting at the actual plot of the series, it hinted at the relationships between these very, very, beautiful characters. For plot, we were left to read the press releases. There was full blown shipping going on before one episode aired, because that's what fans were lead to do. The result of this international net freak out? There were net campaigns to raise funds to make the show seen in the preview. There were petitions to known distributors to sign it up. In the end, fans in the US got simultaneous streaming with



Old School



New School

Japan. That super fanservice preview was all about building an audience for a show that was already in the works.

### Evidence

Anime guys have gotten prettier over the decades. I call it Bishonenifying™. Male characters in these allegedly male oriented adventure shows have markedly changed since the 1970s shows I grew up watching. They guys in the lead roles then were cute. I couldn't call them pretty like I can now. I think the best direct comparison I can make from one era to the other is Leader Dessler from *Space Battleship Yamato*. Leader Dessler has definitely gone through a change. Not that the first one was ugly, but this one is very pretty. You can see in him the change in how male hair is drawn. It is also animated with the same loving care and lighting as a female character. And now, the guys get equal time with the show of skin and backs and butts.

And then there is the behavior. Back in the day, when a guy is going to threaten or fight another guy, it was clear that that was going to happen. Any rolling on the ground between men was accompanied by punching. There was no staring deep into the opponent's eyes while on top of said opponent. There was not staring nose to nose for long moments as music played without someone ending up

with a black eye.

So this behavior is somewhat new. It is also unusual behavior for straight men around other men. No, this is not how Japanese men behave around each other. As I said, this sort of behavior is relatively new (10-15 years). Because this notion is so adamantly held by fans, I conducted some research. I asked my U.S. male friends about the clenches and locker room tickling and other things that happen on shows like *Free! Iwatobi Swim Club*. They thought I was kidding. The funniest response was from a friend who said guys try hard not to even look at each other too long in a locker room. They may see something or people may think they are looking at something. I asked a number of Japanese men whom I know through business as well as the expat fathers of mixed sons who

live in Japan. The fathers said that their sons were too busy trying to overcome being mixed to act in any way that may be perceived as gay. The Japanese men also said that there was a lot of pressure all through school to not be too different. Being gay was way beyond being merely different. Even guys who were gay didn't want to be thought of as gay. Extended staring or touching a guy would draw a lot of really unwanted attention. These men also had brothers whom they kindly asked the same questions. The most responses were, "No!" No one wanted to look gay. And that was just something they did in anime for fujoshi. I must point out that though Japanese pop culture spawned yaoi, the culture actually does not approve of homosexuality. It is so taboo that it is difficult to get interest in events like Gay Pride. There is a fear of



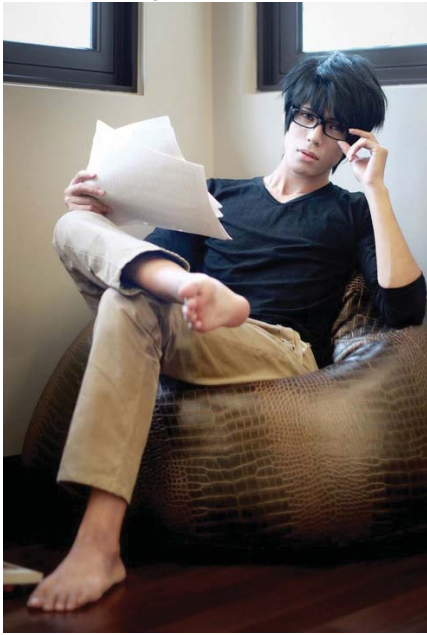


backlash. It is a country that values appearances. No one wants to be too different. So guys who are at an age when they are most self-conscious are not going to be holding and clenching or kissing or exchanging rings with their buddies.

What summed it up in my head, ironically, was a snarky email sent to me by someone less than pleased at seeing a Yaoi a GoGo post on their newsfeed. Before I banned him, the man accused me and all these other horny women of gaying up anime for everyone. There were hardly any panty shots or big eyed chicks in tiny towels anymore. It's all one big sausage fest. I think he may be right, but we aren't happy in this perpetual state of tease. If we had our way, we'd gay it up big time so that there is no doubt that these shows are aimed at us.



## Cosplay



# ALFRED XIAOLAY

MALAYSIA

This gorgeous, hard working coser is always a delightful surprise with each character he takes on. Please, follow his progress on these pages:  
World Cosplay Page - <http://worldcosplay.net/member/AlfredXiaolay>  
Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/alfredxiaolay>  
Twitter - <https://twitter.com/AlfredXiaolay>  
And make sure you like his photos and tell him how well he is doing.

*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* – Masamune Takano  
Photo by Micho Teh Photography



*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* – Kou Yukina: Alfred Xiaolay  
*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* – Shota Kisa: Naokunn (<http://worldcosplay.net/member/naokunn/>)  
Photo by Micho Teh Photography



*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* – Zen Kirishima  
Photo by Micho Teh Photography



*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* – Masamune Takano: Alfred Xiaolay  
*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* – Ritsu Onodera: Wei Vaan  
 Photo by Micho Teh Photography



*Free! Iwatobi Swim Club* – Haruka Nanase  
 Photo by Yukito



*Free! Iwatobi Swim Club* – Haruka Nanase  
 Photo by Simple Photography

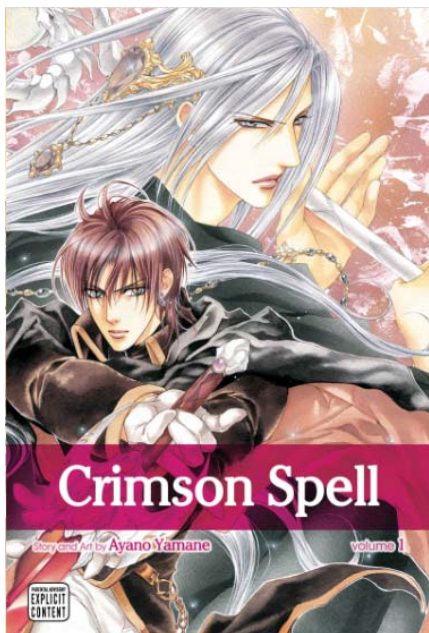


*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* – Kou Yukina  
 Photo by Micho Teh Photography



*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* – Zen Kirishima:  
 Alfred Xiaolay  
*Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* – Takafumi Yokozawa:  
 Wei Vaan  
 Photo by Micho Teh Photography

## Review



### **Crimson Spell** – Ayano Yamane

I love all of this manga artists work but this manga I love more than all of her other works put together. The plot and storyline are absolutely perfect. Although the manga has yet to be completed, I have really enjoyed it thus far. I can't wait until the next update! I like how the uke, in this manga, isn't depicted as a normal girly uke (who at times appears useless when it comes to dangerous situations) but as a strong individual who can defend himself without the aid of his seme. Adding to his strong personality, he is also very innocent when it comes to anything sexual but that is what makes his character that more enjoyable and at times insufferable. I also enjoy the seme's personality, where he can be aggressive and possessive at one point, and understanding and forgiving in another; adding to his funny personality and you have the most wanted seme a uke can want. Even though, he takes advantage of the uke many times throughout the manga (which seme doesn't?) he is still an amazing character. There are many situations where he helps the uke through tuff ordeals and many of which are self-sacrificing. The other characters in the story are really funny and enjoyable as well.

The storyline/genres that are in this manga is amazing, it is a mixture of fantasy, adventure, action and of

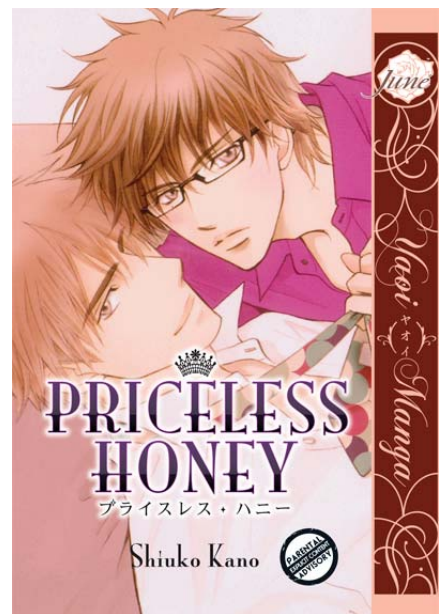
course romance. There are little funny scenes (extras) in this manga that are pretty enjoyable to read because the end result is hot! Of course the funny scenes are usually between the uke and the seme. The action in this manga is pretty intense it varies from sword fighting to spell casting fights. The fantasy part in this manga is really awesome because there many scenes where they have to defend themselves from dragons, to other mythical beasts. The storyline is basically the uke trying to rid himself of his curse with the help of his seme but of course there many difficult obstacles they have to face before they can achieve it. I really enjoy these types of genres on a yaoi manga, since they are really hard to come by, especially when they are trying to put too much of one genre rather than equaling them out. But when mixed together perfectly, they make a fantastic yaoi manga, very much like this one. The character's design are amazing as well, the designs and artwork that were used, makes this manga much more appealing to read. Also, who can forget the sex scenes? they are really great...better than great, they are hardcore! The sex scenes are really hot! They are really graphic and the majority of the time they leave you blushing and having nosebleeds throughout the whole time. There are sex scenes in almost every chapter, you don't really get a break! Not that you would want one of course. If you want to read a manga with great characters, plot, and great (graphic) sex scenes then this is the yaoi manga of your dreams!

*Plot: 5 stars!*

*Characters: 5 stars!*

*Sex scenes: 5 stars!*

-JadenZest



### **Priceless Honey** by Shiuko Kano

*Priceless Honey* is an interesting manga. I'm going to try not to be to prejudice, since I'm not a big "one shot" fan, which is what this manga consists of. As a whole I feel like they tend to be too rushed. That being said, Shiuko Kano does a decent job at making things feel as though they aren't TOO rushed. The manga consists of 5 short stories, with a few extra's thrown in. The stories are straightforward and fairly cookie cutter. A few of the characters in the mini stories have backstory with each other, which is always nice. Things move quickly, as in almost all one shots and I had to re-read a few things here and there to make sure nothing was skipped. The characters are fun and there is a variety of them, but they can't get developed too deeply.

My favorite thing about the manga was the art style. Yes, it's fairly common manga style, but the crazy faces that she makes her character do sometimes can be hilarious. The sex scenes were also good. While some of them were censored, others weren't, really, and it made it more realistic. One of my big pet peeves with yaoi is when they censor everything. All and all, without trying to be bias, I would say that I don't know if I'd buy it. It was decent, but nothing out of the ordinary that you couldn't get from a lot of other yaoi out there. If

## Review

you have a little extra money, might as well give it a try if you like some quirky humor, and short stories, but if you are looking for real depth, this probably isn't for you.

*Plot: 3/5*

*Characters 3/5*

*Sex: 4/5*

*Overall: 3/5*

-Amanda Hagen



### **Soy Sauce Face** by *Sedonia Guillone*

First off, I'd like to say that when I read the title *Soy Sauce Face*, my first reaction was 'what?' I've never heard the term before and thankfully it describes in the first page of the story. I'm not going to tell you, because it's a surprise! Anyway, the story itself is 69 pages total, with the actual story and prologue taking up about 53-54 pages of it. It's decently sized and if you aren't a big reader, you probably would groan. Well, don't worry. You start reading, and you don't stop. That's about what sums up my feelings on it. The author, Sedonia Guillone, states in her author's note that she wants the story to not only be about male sex, but emotions, and she pulled it off nicely.

Now to the review. The story was pretty darn good. Some of the yaoi that I read likes to follow the same pattern of boy meets boy, boy gets feelings for boy, boy and boy become angsty because they like each other, and then sex. Profit! This one is different in that regard. The characters already have a history, which I like and while it starts of kind of predictable, after you get about a fourth of a way through it, things pick up. You are genuinely drawn into the relationship that these two have and what they are going through. This is at the point where you can't stop reading. At all. I tried. Really, I

did, but failed. Another thing that I loved about it is that it was done in first person. A lot of novels now a days use a third person perspective. It's great to break that mold and read something different and adds to the "personal level" of the story, as well as what the main character, Tomo, is going through in his head. If you are looking for a super silly story, this probably isn't for you. While there is a few parts that are entertaining, it's a more serious, mature novel, based a lot on emotions, inner turmoil, and the like.

The characters both have flaws, a past, and great character development, which is something that I believe everybody should look for in a story. They are completely different from each other and that much is made apparent right away in the story. Sedonia does a great job describing them during various parts of the novel and the detail impressed me. You end up feeling for them and all the things they have been through and at the end, when all is said and done, you end up going "d'awww." Now the fun part. Sex. Woo! She did a fabulous job on it. Probably one of the most detailed scenes I've read. Granted, I haven't read many yaoi novels. I always love when authors put detail into everything and Sedonia puts her all into it. You can tell she loves it. It was hot, heavy, sensual, descriptive, and I got all fangirly from reading it. All and all, I am extremely glad I got the pleasure to read *Soy Sauce Face*. It is well written, breaks the mold of third person perspective, very detailed, you get attached to the characters, and end up rooting for them. Oh! There is also a prologue which is adorable, but I won't say anything. Spoilers. J It is well worth the money and I would definitely read it again on a rainy day.

*Plot: 4/5*

*Characters: 5/5*

*Sex: 5/5 (I'd give it a 8/5 if I could)*

*Overall: 5/5 – Good job Sedonia Guillone!*

-Amanda Hagen

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