

Sosei

by Veronica Purcell

A Step Forward

Dorian sucked in a deep breath and slowly exhaled as he pulled down his hood; exposing his mug to the crisp urban morning flecked with pure pink-white cherry blossom petals that drifted along the gentle sky and littered the footpaths to his new school - Ayanagi Academy.

"Ohayōgozaimasu!" he said with a jovial smile and raised his arms to capture the warmth of the waking sun into an embrace.

His arms dropped to his sides when he noticed the giggles from a group of school girls were directed his way. He bowed awkwardly towards them, turned and hurried down the path to his school.

His cream-green blazer felt too tight around his swelling chest that was pained with heart palpitations by the time he had passed through Ayanagi's sentry gates. He paused before a display board that contained key school information among musical theater and other performance art promotional materials.

His heart calmed at the sight of his father's poster face within a concert advertisement for Japan's #1 charting boy band - *Chikara*. His old man's presence would always be around no matter where he was. The thought propelled his courage and calmness.

"Hey isn't that Tsukigami Kaito's little brother?" Dorian heard a boy nearby whisper to another.

"Little brother? No - no, I heard he's Tsukigami's son."

"An Ikeman?"

He faced the gossiping students with a polite smile before turning away to resume his way toward the grand theater for the entrance ceremony.

Of course he had no problems of being the famous Kaito Tsukigami's one and only son. It was the trouble that usual came with it that was bothersome. He felt sure that Japanese students were a lot kinder than those from his last school.

His hands instinctively reached for a spot on his lower back at the thought of the taunts and grief he had suffered from other kids in the playgrounds of his past.

"No - that's the past. As Papa would say, 'Positively pushing forward is the strength of a man.' He wouldn't recommend me to this place if it was going to be another problem," Dorian reassured himself with firm conviction that everything was going to be alright.

He heard his naming being called, turned and saw his father's friend (Rui Tatsumi-sensei) making his way toward him.



"Tsukigami-kun, welcome," Rui greeted Dorian cordially.

"Um, er, thank you, eh, um Sensei?" Dorian responded awkwardly.

He was still coming to terms with the quirks of Japanese customs. Especially, being referred to by his last name and a honorific was a particularly strange concept for him.

"It's a start. Don't forget to bow when paying respects to your elders okay?"

"Oh, um, sorry," Dorian apologized and felt blood rush to his brain when he bowed in response.

"Great. Now I can reassure your father you're well," Rui said kindly.

"The entrance ceremony is starting soon. Don't be late. I suppose you'd be interested in auditioning for the Musical Department?"

Dorian cocked his head to one side with a perplexed expression. Musical Department? What was that and why would he be interested in it?

An expression of surprise tensed the soft features of Rui's face.

"I see. Well, you can apply for various departments in this school. Their names make them self-explanatory. "

Rui explained the different departments that students were encouraged to apply for. Dorian felt his interests torn between his father's old department that was the Musical Department and the Composition Department.

"If you're interested in joining the Musical Department you need to submit an application form after the ceremony." Rui left Dorian with those words.

Dorian didn't notice the trail of whispered gossip that followed him into the grand theater and his seat for the Entrance Ceremony. His mind was too preoccupied with the department choices.

"So that's Tsukigami-san's son?" Whispered the boy in the row behind him.

"Woah, looks so different to him. He's an ikeman too." Another responded.

"I heard he was raised in another country." Some other boy added on.

This caught Dorian's attention.

"You sure? Tsukigami-sama looks too young to have a son our age."

"Doesn't his son have a pretty girly face? Wouldn't expect anything but an Ikeman from Kaito-san." A boy snickered.

The term 'Ikeman' was becoming a common word tagged to Dorian's name. Dorian figured it meant he looked like a sissy to these guys. He frowned at the thought of his manhood being questioned.

"Oi! Will you shut up; the ceremony's about to start!" hissed the Blond Haired Brute seated next to Dorian.

All chatter fell silent.

Dorian glanced discreetly at the stern looking boy and saw why his words were able to quiet the other guys. He had the angriest pair of eyebrows he had ever seen. A bushy pair shaded with fiery gold. He felt grateful for the boy's intervention and exhaled away the rest of his irritation.

He had crossed oceans to be there, having decided to take a step forward from his old life. So the ignorant reactions from others weren't going to bog him down.

Still, it was concerning that the one person he was hoping to be with on his first day wasn't seated in the theater with him. He felt certain his cousin was somewhere in the school, and they had just missed each other. So he allowed his mind to soak in the welcoming feelings of the school's Entrance Ceremony.

His hope came to fruition when he was surprised attacked by his cousin as he was filing out of the theater with the rest of the students.

"Whatdup player!" Dorian heard his cousin's voice yell out behind him and felt a hearty whack to his back.

"Raideen you Fob! Where the hell you been?" Dorian turned around with his brows knitted together in a deep frown at the happy-smug face boy.

"Come on my brother from another mother. I'm here aren't I? Damn - Papa didn't say this school was big. Took me ages to work out the layout," Raiden said and swung his arms over Dorian's shoulder.

"Fair enough," Dorian sighed with understanding. "You missed the ceremony."

"Did I miss anything worth missing?"

"About a quarter of an hour," Dorian joked.

The boys shared a laugh.

The call to class bell rang, breaking up friendly chatter.

"Oh - I'm gonna go to the admin block for a couple of department applications." Dorian said and recounted the information about the departments to Raiden, which also piqued his cousin's interests.

They both picked up the required forms at the administration office. Unsure of their choices, they decided to leave the decision up to fate and go for both.

First up was the auditions for the Musical Department.

