

LOVE Has NO Boundaries



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THREE'S A CHARM

CR Guiliano

Contents

Love Has No Boundaries	3
THREE'S A CHARM.....	6
PROLOGUE.....	8
CHAPTER 1	11
CHAPTER 2.....	15
CHAPTER 3.....	18
CHAPTER 4.....	20
CHAPTER 5.....	23
EPILOGUE.....	29
Author Bio.....	30

Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

THREE'S A CHARM

By CR Guiliano

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love Has No Boundaries* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a free gift to you.

What Is Love Has No Boundaries?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what they do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love Has No Boundaries*.

Whether you are an avid M/M romance reader or new to the genre, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

This story is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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THREE'S A CHARM

By CR Guiliano

Photo Description

Three Asian men are shirtless and intertwined with hands lovingly touching, connecting them intimately—in love with each other. The men are thin, delicate and beautiful, with exotic looks and breathtaking features.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

*The three of us have been best friends since forever. We were always outsiders, but that didn't matter—we had each other. After we graduated from high school, we all moved in together and all the pent-up feelings between us just erupted and we became so much more than just friends. **So** much more! The sex was beyond hot, but that was only part of it. The most important part was our love for each other.*

We became like one person, our hearts beat in tune with each other. But lately, I've felt one of my lovers moving away. I don't understand. He says he still loves us just the same, but it's like he's slipping through our fingers. Is he jealous? He's never seemed to be before... Has he met someone else? Is he just tired of us? One of us or both of us? I wish he would tell us, because my heart is breaking...

*Please, **no** BDSM, non-con or dub-con! I don't think that the mood in this picture would inspire to that, but I'd like to add that anyway.*

And I do like stories that contain explicit sex scenes, though I also realize that my prompt might inspire an author to a more romantic kind of story. But if possible, please include some sex! ;-)

Sincerely,

Asynia

Story Info

Genre: contemporary

Tags: ménage, Asian, erotic, martial arts

Content warnings: extortion by a secondary character

Word count: 8,076

THREE'S A CHARM

By **CR Guiliano**

PROLOGUE

“I told you, I don’t have any money!” Akira and Yuu heard Joji’s strident and frightened voice and looked at each other for a second before they broke into a run, careening down the empty hall of their high school. They rounded the corner to see three of the football jocks surrounding Joji, one pinning him against the lockers. Akira heard the almost silent growl that issued from Yuu and knew if he didn’t defuse things quickly those jocks were going to learn the meaning of pain. He and his two best friends might be small and look helpless, and certainly Joji was, but Yuu had a black belt in Karate, and was well able to deal with these bullies.

When Joji saw them, the relief on his pale face was instant. The jocks turned, sneering over at them. That was a mistake. Akira grabbed Yuu’s arm.

“No, we don’t want to make a scene.” His harsh whisper didn’t even register as Yuu yanked his arm from Akira’s grip, and with cat-like grace, began to circle around the jocks. They tracked Yuu’s progress, calling out taunts and slurs, most centered on Akira and his friends being fags. Akira closed his eyes, praying for patience, and followed Yuu. As his friend drew the attention of the big football players, Akira made his way quietly towards Joji, who was trembling against the lockers trying to look smaller than he already was. Despite both Akira’s and Yuu’s martial arts abilities, Joji was scared.

“Are you thugs incapable of picking on someone your own size? Well, how about you try me?”

Akira wanted to curse. Yuu’s voice was low and controlled and it only got that way when he was livid. It was too late now. There was no way Akira was going to stop Yuu from teaching these morons a lesson. A lesson they weren’t going to forget anytime soon. A lesson that Akira secretly thought they deserved. Both Akira and Yuu were very protective of Joji. He was small and

beautiful, and if things weren't so complicated with school and Joji's parents, Akira would have wanted to make Joji a lover, and some day, he would. Joji was that beautiful and Akira loved the slighter man. He looked over at Yuu, thinking he was just as lovely. The way Yuu got into his defensive position was a huge turn on, and Akira's heart sped up. He couldn't *wait* until they were out of high school.

All of them had been saving every penny they could scrape up to rent a place for the three of them to live together. Yuu already had a job lined up with the local Dojo as an instructor for the ten- to twelve-year-old group. Yuu loved kids, so he was going to be happy with that job. Joji's parents were trying to get him to work at their little store, but Joji had refused, even with the "family honor" guilt trip they had tried to lay on him. Joji was an artist, through and through. If he wasn't drawing or painting, he was nearly impossible to be around. Akira had a sketch Joji had done of the three of them that tripped his heart every time he looked at it. The love in Joji's eyes when he'd given it to Akira was hard to ignore, not that Akira wanted to. Joji was so very sweet and thoughtful most of the time. He could be a real brat at times, too, but Yuu could usually get Joji to calm down.

As Yuu moved in closer keeping his sharp black eyes on the three morons, Akira skirted around to be closer to Joji. He gave his friend a nod, letting him know he was being taken care of and Joji started inching his way towards Akira. Yuu was going to do some serious damage because these jocks had messed with what belonged to Yuu. And there was no mistake, Joji—and Akira—belonged to Yuu without a doubt. Nobody messed with Joji or Akira without Yuu wanting to beat them down. And they were in the halls of the school, so an administrator or teacher could come by at any moment. This was not a good thing.

"You know what, you pansy-ass? Your scrawniness ain't even worth the bother. You want your butt buddy? Take him. Fucking faggots!"

As the biggest jock spoke, he grabbed Joji by the arm before he could escape into Akira's embrace and shoved him right into Yuu's arms. In a flash,

Yuu patted their friend down and then pushed him behind his back towards Akira.

“I suggest you never touch him again.”

Akira almost wanted to laugh at Yuu's warning. Unless these idiots got a taste of what Yuu was capable of doing, they weren't going to stop their bullying or take Yuu seriously. No one took any of them seriously because they were “too pretty”, or so everyone said. Akira walked forward and hugged Joji against him, moving them both back in case Yuu decided he wasn't going to let this go. Just as the jocks started cracking knuckles, they all heard the voices of the principal and a couple of teachers coming towards them. In complete silence, Yuu backed away, never taking his eyes off the bullies and then grabbed Akira and Joji, gently hauling them off down the corridor and out through a side door.

Joji was clinging to Yuu, his trembling just as bad as when he was pinned to the lockers.

“I'm sorry, Yuu, I'm sorry. I tried to stay away from them. *Yurushite kudasai?*”

“Of course, Joji love, I forgive you.”

Yuu murmured the words and kissed Joji on the temple, keeping his slim body close. Akira was on the other side of Joji, keeping as close as Yuu. Joji was fragile, and he and Yuu would both protect him no matter what. That's what you did when you loved someone. Akira knew without a doubt that he loved Joji, just as he knew Yuu did, too.

CHAPTER 1

“When will he be home?”

Akira looked up at Joji when he entered the kitchen. “I don’t know. He called and said he’d be late.” Akira went back to chopping the vegetables he was preparing for dinner. It was happening a lot lately, Yuu calling to say he would be late. Akira wasn’t stupid. Yuu was an instructor at the Dojo, and so there was no reason for him to be late so much. Akira leaned back a little as Joji came up and wrapped his thin arms around him and kissed the nape of his neck.

“We could have a little fun to pass the time.”

The low purr from Joji had Akira hardening in an instant. But it didn’t seem right to make love to Joji without Yuu there. At least not while Akira was upset with Yuu.

“Please, Akira?”

Akira carefully put the knife down, his hands beginning to shake at Joji’s plea. Man, he never could deny the man. Joji was just too sexy, too sensual, for Akira to resist, Yuu or no Yuu. He turned in Joji’s embrace and gazed into the half-lidded brown eyes he loved so much.

“You want to do this without Yuu?” Akira had to make sure. The balance between the three of them was fragile and complicated, though Akira would not alter it for anything in the world. He loved Joji and Yuu with all that he had and would be destroyed without them. Maybe that’s why Yuu being gone so much was weighing heavily on Akira’s mind. He was really trying not to get suspicious, but what other reason could Yuu have for not coming home to his lovers?

Joji pulled Akira toward their bedroom in answer, and Akira let his lover tow him down the hall, his heart racing in anticipation. Out of all three of them, Joji was the most erotic and kinky. Yuu was more the aggressor, generally topping unless Akira or Joji wanted to, which wasn’t often, almost never with Joji. Akira himself was very laid back, going with whatever Yuu

and Joji wanted to do. Akira loved it all, no matter who was doing what to whom. Yuu had accused him of being too passive in bed once, and though Akira thought he was joking at the time, now he wondered if his lover was getting tired of him. Maybe he wasn't. But if he was, did that mean he was tired of Joji too? As Akira stood at the bottom of the bed, watching Joji remove his clothing, he couldn't fathom anyone ever getting tired of his lover.

Joji's soft hands on Akira's body were so carnal that his agitation with Yuu began to fade, though not the desire to have his other lover here. As much as he loved Joji and enjoyed what they did together, it would not be complete without Yuu. But Akira would allow Joji this since his small lover seemed intent on getting what he wanted. Once nude, Akira smiled as Joji stared at him, his lover's eyes dark with lust and face flushed with desire. It was always that way with them.

From the moment they had moved into this house together they had been inseparable. High school had been a test in patience and denial. It was so very obvious that all three of them loved each other, but they could do nothing without bringing the wrath of three sets of parents down on them. As it was, Joji's family considered him a disgrace and he was shunned now. Joji didn't care, saying he had all he needed in Yuu, Akira, and his art. Yuu had gone to try and reason with Joji's father, but it had been in vain. Yuu's family didn't know that Yuu was sleeping with both Akira and Joji and that he loved them both. Akira wondered if his strong but silent lover would ever tell them. He never pushed, though, knowing Yuu would make his own decisions. Akira's family accepted not only Akira's love of men, but the two men he loved. His mama adored Joji, spoiling him. She respected and loved Yuu, as well. Akira was very grateful and proud of them.

Joji had finished shedding Akira's clothing by now and Akira pulled him into an embrace, taking his lips in a passionate kiss. Their bodies slid together, the dampness of their skin mixing and heightening Akira's arousal. Within moments, Akira had Joji splayed out on their king-sized bed, his gaze drinking in the slight man as he kneeled between Joji's wide-spread legs. Joji was thin, almost too thin, but exquisite to look at with his pale, flawless skin. His black,

chin-length hair emphasized the fragile lines of his jaw and highlighted the dark, dark-brown of his eyes. Joji's cock was proof that a small body didn't mean anything. It lay, thick and dribbling, upon his lower belly, and Akira's mouth watered. He leaned forward capturing the leaking head with his mouth and sucking gently.

Joji was extremely sensitive and arched with a moan as Akira licked and sucked him deep, his small hands clutching at Akira's hair and his hips rocking. Two years they had shared a house and a bed, and Akira knew every trick there was to drive Joji insane with lust. He knew every erogenous zone, every ticklish spot, every patch of skin that made Joji shudder, every kink that enhanced Joji's need for release. Carefully, Akira pushed a finger into Joji, eliciting a groan of pleasure from his lover. Much to both Akira's and Yuu's delight, Joji never needed much preparation. Akira worked his way from that single digit to two and then three, Joji rocking onto them, his body starting to jerk with need. Akira brushed his knuckles over Joji's prostate, his lover crying out at the sudden intensity of his rapture.

Akira couldn't wait any longer, tired of humping into the duvet for friction on his aching member. He pulled his fingers from Joji and grabbed for the lube that sat on the nightstand. Despite Joji's body's ready acceptance of his fingers, no way would he hurt his lover with his much larger cock. He slicked his shaft liberally, tossed the bottle aside and scooted up to align himself with Joji's loosened entrance. He gazed intently into Joji's desire-filled eyes as he slowly pushed his way into Joji's warmth. No matter how many times Yuu and Akira had made love to Joji, he was always tight, always warm and inviting. Once buried deeply, Akira stilled, watching Joji's eyes. His sweet lover blinked a few times, then his soft hands caressed across Akira's ass cheeks before fingers dug into his flesh. That was Akira's cue to start thrusting. He pulled all the way out, pushing his way slowly back in and giving Joji's frustrated expression a smug smile. Joji liked it fast and hard, but Akira liked to take his time, and ultimately Joji's orgasm was shattering because of it.

So intent on pleasing his lover under him and the feelings coursing through him, it was a mild shock to feel warm, smooth hands caressing up the insides of his thighs and widening them, soft lips kissing the small of his back.

“What a lovely view to come home to.”

CHAPTER 2

Yuu's low voice sent shivers through Akira's entire body, causing Joji to groan in reaction. When Akira felt Yuu's naked body covering his, his long slicked fingers preparing him, he echoed Joji's groan. Moments later, Yuu slowly sank into Akira's body, the three of them now intimately linked. As always, Akira gave up control to Yuu, allowing his more aggressive lover to set the pace. Both Akira and Joji loved the way Yuu took control and brought them all to such heights of ecstasy.

Akira gritted his teeth, throwing his head back against Yuu's shoulder as his lover began to move. Joji's hands scrambled, trying to latch onto both Akira and Yuu. Little mewling sounds came from him as Yuu's thrusts drove Akira deeper into Joji. Yuu's rhythm was slow and deep, just the way Akira loved it. He groaned every time Yuu filled him and whimpered at each withdrawal. Joji was curled forward kissing his chest and sucking on his nipples. When they made love, usually Joji was the first to fall over the edge into orgasm, being so sensitive and responsive, but on occasion Akira, and twice Yuu, came before their smaller lover. Obviously, this was one of those times, as Joji's tongue and mouth drove Akira insane and Yuu continued to thrust deeply.

When Akira's balls began to tingle and tighten, he clenched his inner channel around Yuu, dragging a moan from his lover, and took over the thrusting needing the much faster rhythm to fall into his climax. Yuu froze, hips jutting forward and allowing Akira to rock between him and Joji and minutes later, Akira cried out, his body going tense and trembling with the force of his climax. God, it was always like this, so intense, so intimate, and so loving. Before Akira could collapse on Joji, Yuu started thrusting again, fast and furious, causing Akira to stay hard for Joji. His two lovers came at the same time, Joji's cock shooting between him and Akira, and Yuu filling Akira with his release.

Yuu, always considerate, dropped to the side, disconnecting from Akira so that they didn't squish Joji under them. Yuu pulled Akira over until he was between Yuu and Joji on the bed. He was sweaty, sticky, sated and so in love

his heart felt like it was going to burst from his chest. Only the nagging feeling that something was pulling Yuu away kept him from being blissfully content.

Despite the exhaustion that gripped him after making love with Joji and Yuu, Akira couldn't sleep. He could feel Joji's even breathing against his chest, hear his soft snores, but Yuu was silent behind him. "Yuu?" Akira almost cringed at his lover's deep sigh and his heart sank as Yuu shifted away from him to lie on his back. Akira kissed Joji's soft hair and then turned over to stare towards Yuu in the darkness. He couldn't see his lover's face, but the sigh told Akira that Yuu was once again frustrated by Akira's constant insecurities.

Akira had tried to talk to Yuu but was rebuffed each time. When he brought up how he felt to Joji, he'd been sincerely told he was an idiot and that Yuu would never think of leaving them. Akira didn't know what to do. They'd always been honest with each other, didn't keep secrets, but Akira could not shake the idea that Yuu was hiding something. "Please Yuu, tell me what's wrong. Why do you stay so late at the dojo? Why do I feel as if you are... I don't know... tired of us, or at least of me?"

"I have told you before, Akira, I am fine, and there is nothing wrong."

Akira snorted and crawled his way to the bottom of the bed, stomping into the bathroom and closing the door. "I don't believe you!" he shouted through the wood as he turned the shower on. Akira wasn't stupid. Something was going on, but apparently Yuu didn't feel he needed to confide in Akira. Well, he was done trying to pry out what was causing Yuu to become distant. As much as it hurt, he would let it go and hope that the day didn't come when Yuu left them.

Akira turned from the softly flowing water to see Joji standing in the bathroom watching him.

"Why do you antagonize him? Why do you push? You know Yuu loves us and would never do anything to hurt us or leave."

Akira angrily rinsed off, annoyed that Joji didn't get it, didn't understand. Maybe because Yuu wasn't pulling away from him, just Akira. Sadness

swamped him, his chest aching, and he slid to the floor of the tub, trying to take a deep breath and finding it hard to draw in any air to his lungs, his whole body shaking hard enough to make his teeth chatter.

“Yuu! Something is wrong with Akira!”

Akira tried to wave off Joji's concern, but his small lover had already raced from the bathroom. The next moment, Yuu came in, distress showing through the frown on his face. “What's wrong? Joji said you collapsed!” As Yuu asked him questions, he'd made his way into the tub and crouched down to pull Akira into his arms. Akira thought he should feel grateful that Yuu appeared to care like he used to, but he couldn't muster up the gratitude. He probably was only putting on a front for Joji anyway. He tried to pull from Yuu's embrace, only to find his strong lover pulling him tighter.

“No! You will not do this! I will hold you until you calm down. Joji, turn off the water and hand me a towel.”

Still trying to get his breathing under control, Akira watched Joji do what Yuu asked him. Next thing Akira knew, he was being wrapped in a warm towel and scooped up into Yuu's arms. Akira never could get over Yuu's strength as he carried Akira to the bed. Yuu was no bigger than Akira himself, yet didn't even break a sweat under his weight. Once Yuu had Akira settled back in their bed he stood back, hands on hips, and glared at Akira.

“Now, tell me why you were having a panic attack?”

Akira glared in return and then flipped over, giving Yuu his back. If his lover refused to talk and ease Akira's worries, then there was no reason for Akira to reciprocate. After all, what was giving him the anxiety attack in the first place was Yuu's lack of communication. Akira had done all he could to get his lover to speak up, to no avail. As much as he loved Yuu, he was done fighting to get the man to confess what was on his mind.

CHAPTER 3

“Yuu, why is Akira acting that way? I mean, I know he’s said he’s worried that you are tired of him and that you will leave us. But I told him that’s not true.”

Yuu had left Akira in bed, stubbornly ignoring him. Yuu could have pushed it, making Akira talk, but his lover had reason to be worried. Yuu just didn’t want the two men he loved more than life to worry about him. They didn’t need to know he was being bullied by one of their former rivals from high school. It was humiliating, but Yuu’s back was against the wall. Corrigan, that jock bastard from high school, had found a weak spot to exploit: Yuu’s lovers. Yuu wanted to tear the man apart when he’d threatened Akira and Joji, but Corrigan had Yuu’s hands tied.

Just a few months ago, Corrigan started working at the True Palace, training the older kids, and had worked his way into the owner’s favor with false charm. Yuu knew that Corrigan was nothing more than an unintelligent bully. Yuu tried to tell his boss that Corrigan was not a good fit for the dojo, but Mr. Miyamoto was already smitten with Corrigan. Not even a week after he started, Corrigan caught Yuu in the back alley getting ready to leave on his motorcycle. He’d startled Yuu, who had become complacent in the two years since high school. Corrigan was just as big now as he was back then, maybe bigger, and now he was a black belt. Yuu was pretty sure his skills were still superior to Corrigan’s, if for no other reason than Yuu was extremely fast. Corrigan might have strength on him, but Yuu knew he could hold his own against the other man.

It was when Corrigan pinned Yuu against the concrete wall, getting up in his face that Yuu realized he might have a problem.

“So, you still a fag, Tran? You still hanging around and sexing up those two pretty boys? What were their names? Oh yeah, Joji and Akira. Like I wouldn’t remember you losers from the old days. Don’t bother answering, I know you are. I’ve followed you. I know where you live. I know where both of them work.”

Yuu wasn't sure what kind of psychotic expression was on Corrigan's face, but the man's eyes looked manic. Yuu held still, though he was aware Corrigan wasn't focused very well. He didn't want to go home and have to lie about being injured if Corrigan took exception to him trying to escape his grip. What worried Yuu more was Corrigan stalking him and his lovers. The bully had always been unpredictable, even more so now. Yuu would do anything to protect Akira and Joji. "What do you want Corrigan? What's it going to take for you to leave us alone?"

"Simple, Chinaman. You're going pay me to stay away from your little *boyfriends*. And if you don't? There's no telling what might happen to your precious butt-buddies."

Yuu's heart seized and his stomach curdled. What the fuck? Yuu didn't know what Corrigan's problem was, but he'd let Corrigan do whatever he wanted, as long as he never touched Joji or Akira. Yuu swallowed hard, his pride wanting to rebel against what Corrigan wanted. But Akira's and Joji's safety was involved, and Yuu had to do this to keep them safe. "Fine." He hoped Corrigan heard his whisper. He didn't want to repeat himself.

"Thought you'd see it my way, faggot. How about we get started right now?"

As Corrigan spoke, he jabbed at Yuu, shoving him against a wall and digging into his pockets. Yuu could feel the shame filling him and hung his head. As humiliating as this was, it was better than whatever Corrigan might think to do to Akira and Joji.

"Want whatever ya got on you now faggot, then we'll see what kind of figure I'm thinking tomorrow. And just so you know how serious I am, don't get any ideas about calling the cops. Because if you do, what happens to your little faggot boyfriends will make you wish you'd never been born. You got that, Tran?"

Yuu could only nod, his stomach clenched in dread.

CHAPTER 4

Another week and Yuu was still coming home late, and now it seemed he wasn't interested in sex anymore. At least not with Akira. He'd seen Yuu and Joji together without him. Of course, Joji could be very persuasive, and Akira wasn't persistent like that. If Yuu didn't want him, then Akira wasn't going to beg. But, God, the rejection hurt. Enough that Akira had made the decision to leave. He loved Joji and Yuu too much to stay here and be left out. He never thought it would come to this, but he couldn't stay.

He waited until both Yuu and Joji were asleep, again, without him. He'd given a lame excuse of working and spent the time they were making love on his computer in the living room. Once he stopped hearing the moans and cries from the bedroom, he peeked in to see Yuu curled around Joji, both fast asleep. He tiptoed to the dresser and removed his clothes then made his quiet way to the closet and grabbed a duffel bag and most of his hanging clothes and shoes. A quick trip through the bathroom for toiletries and he was ready. He'd leave everything else here for Yuu and Joji.

He'd called his mother earlier, when both Joji and Yuu were gone. She'd been saddened to hear things were not going well, but reassured him he was welcome to come home. As it was, their house was only a little over a mile away. Akira threw his bag into the back seat of his car, and then, sitting in the driver's seat with the door still open, he used his foot to silently push the car out of the driveway. Akira wasn't sure what Yuu would do if he heard his car. He pushed again, and once he was far enough down the road where he didn't think Yuu would hear the engine, he started his car and drove quickly to his parents' house. His mother waited up for him, knowing he was coming, but not why.

Yuu jerked up, something waking him suddenly. He glanced around in the dark, seeing nothing but shadows. He glanced down to see only Joji in their bed. Something was wrong. He jumped from the bed and raced to the living room, only to find it empty with no lights on. Stalking back to the bedroom, he

flipped on the light, ignoring Joji's grumbling, and ripped open the closet door. Akira's clothes were gone. His heart beating hard, he went to the dresser to see the same. *Fuck!* Their lover had left them! That would make Akira vulnerable to Corrigan and Yuu wouldn't be able to protect him. Akira never went back to get his black belt after they had graduated and would be no match for Corrigan.

Fuck, fuck, fuck!

"What's wrong, Yuu?"

Joji's sleepy question made Yuu turn and stare at him. Maybe it hadn't been right to keep what was going on from his lovers. With Akira out of the house, it would have been better if he knew what was going on to help protect himself. Yuu knew he'd shut Akira out, unwilling to take the risk of Akira figuring out what was wrong and that he'd been going through a lot of money. Akira was that perceptive, always had been. He hung his head, not answering Joji's question, and tried to think where Akira would go. He had a few friends at work, but Yuu didn't think Akira knew them well enough to ask to stay at their homes.

He jerked his head back up. There was only one logical place that Akira would go. To his parents' house. Yuu was digging for his cell phone before he realized it was late. He glanced at the clock to see it was after one a.m. Screw it, this was important. Yuu needed to know if Akira was there, and then he needed to sit his lovers down and confess to them what had been happening for the last couple of months.

Akira's cell phone went straight to voicemail which meant his lover had turned it off. Undeterred, Yuu dialed the Ishida house and waited. After more than six rings, a sleepy female voice answered and didn't give Yuu a chance to identify himself.

"Yes, Yuu, he's here."

He was sure Mrs. Ishida heard his loud sigh of relief. "I need to talk to him. It's important." He only hoped Akira would speak to him.

“I’m sorry, Yuu. Akira was pretty upset when he got here, so his father gave him a sedative and he’s sleeping. You will have to call in the morning and speak to him then.”

Yuu cursed under his breath. “Okay, Mrs. Ishida. Sorry for disturbing you.” Yuu hung up before the woman responded. He had to get to Akira. No doubt, with the way Corrigan stalked them all, he would find out Akira had moved out and Yuu was terrified the bastard would go after his lover despite their arrangement. He was trembling with fear, not something he was used to, and nearly jumped out of his skin when arms circled his waist and hugged him.

“You okay, Babe?”

“No, no, I’m not. Akira’s gone.” Joji dropped his arms instantly and ran back into the bedroom without a word. Minutes later, he came back out with tears streaming down his face.

“But why? Why would he leave us?”

Yuu swallowed the lump in his throat. It killed him to see Joji so distraught. He only ever wanted to make both his lovers happy and keep them safe. He closed the distance between them and gathered Joji into his arms, holding him tight and rocking him. “Because of me, sweet baby. Because of me.”

CHAPTER 5

Akira watched his mother putter around the kitchen, concerned at her silence. Usually, his mother was bursting with advice but not this morning. Was his break with his lovers upsetting her as well? Or was she just worried about him? “Mama? What’s wrong?” He watched her stop near the sink, her back to him.

“Yuu called last night.”

Akira sighed. Of course he did. But Akira had nothing to say to his former lover. “What did he say?” Akira didn’t really want to know what Yuu had to say for himself, but he knew his mother would expect the question.

“Nothing. Just that he needed to talk to you and that it was important. He did sound... distressed.”

Akira snorted. “Are you taking his side, Mama?” Akira could see that. His parents loved Yuu and Joji. And if his mother thought he’d done something wrong, she wouldn’t hesitate to defend them and rant at him. He watched her turn and look at him, her black eyes catching his gaze. Her expression was sad yet determined.

“I am not taking sides, Akira. I want to understand so that I can give the proper advice.”

Akira usually had no problem talking to his mother and sharing, but he’d not spoken of the stress between him and Yuu. “I don’t know...” He was loath to bring it up, not just because it hurt, but he didn’t want his mother thinking badly of Yuu. Akira still loved the man fiercely; he just didn’t know what to do to fix things, or if he even could. He dropped his head, worrying his lip as he warred within himself. He was startled when his mother’s soft hand cupped his chin and raised his gaze to hers.

“Akira, my son, I am not blind. I see that something is terribly wrong. You would not be here and separated from those men you love if things were okay. Is it Yuu? Or has something happened with Joji?”

Akira sighed and then took a deep breath before launching into what he felt and why he was here. It wasn't as if Yuu had done anything specific. It was just the feelings of rejection and suspicion that had driven Akira to leave. Akira had just finished speaking when there was a knock at the door. He fiddled with the now-cold tea that his mother had given him earlier as she went to answer the door.

“Akira.”

Akira's head jerked up at Yuu's whisper. His lover looked like crap, hair a mess, stubble on his chin, eyes haunted and clothes wrinkled and disheveled. He saw Joji behind Yuu not looking much better, but with the addition of red-rimmed eyes and sickly pallor on his usually golden skin. Yuu's face was ashen, and Akira's heart skipped. Was Yuu sick? Was that why his lover had distanced himself? Akira was up out of his chair and in Yuu's arms in a heartbeat.

“I'll leave you to talk.”

Akira felt Yuu nod at his mother, but he couldn't make himself let go. Yuu's solid, warm body was heaven, and he'd missed it. He felt Joji surround him from the back, Joji's face against the back of his neck and wetness dripping down his back. God, he'd hurt his lovers. Finally, he pulled back but couldn't meet Yuu's eyes. He cleared his throat and put some distance between them. He'd fled to his parents for a reason.

“Akira. We need to talk.”

Akira just nodded, not trusting himself to look Yuu in the face and see the final rejection, Yuu telling him he was not wanted in their threesome anymore. “We can go in the back study. Papa won't mind.” Akira turned without looking up but a sigh shuddered from him when he felt Joji take his hand as he led them down the hall. His father was gone, off to work, so they had privacy. He squeezed Joji's hand and then let go so he could sit on the couch. Joji promptly dropped beside him and curled up against his side. He couldn't help but put his arm around the small man's shoulders, pulling him closer. After he settled, he finally looked up at Yuu.

His lover had chosen a chair across from the couch when usually the three of them would pile together on any furniture surface. Just one more sign to Akira that things were over for them. "Okay, Yuu. Talk." His words came out much more harsh and clipped than he'd meant them to, but he was hurting and Yuu was the cause.

"I'm sorry, Akira, Joji. I probably should have confided in you both months ago, but I was scared for you."

Akira tilted his head, confused. Joji remained silent by his side, but then, he was probably grappling with the idea of Yuu scared of anything. Akira knew there were a few meaningless things that frightened Yuu, he just never mentioned them to save Yuu's pride. "What are you talking about? What have you done, Yuu?" Akira's imagination was suddenly on overdrive, thinking terrifying things. Maybe Yuu was sick and dying. Maybe he was contagious and had infected both Akira and Joji? Maybe he lost his job, and they would be kicked to the streets? Akira didn't know what to think as he stared at Yuu, waiting for him to answer.

"I've done something terrible. I've..." Yuu trailed off, dropping his gaze, but not before Akira saw guilt in his eyes.

"NO! You didn't! You cheated on us?!" Akira had jumped up, nearly knocking Joji to the floor and then started pacing, his anger overwhelming. "How could you do that to Joji? I understand you no longer want me, no longer love me. But Joji? He doesn't deserve such pain." Akira was shouting, but he stopped and scooped Joji into his arms because the smaller man had started sobbing. He turned to glare at Yuu and saw such dismay and shock in his face, his anger drained away. Oh, he was still pissed, but he just didn't have the energy to yell at Yuu and comfort Joji at the same time. Joji was more important right now.

"I didn't cheat! This has nothing to do with sex! Do you remember Corrigan?"

Akira was surprised by the question. What did a homophobic, asshole jock from their high school days have to do with anything? His eyes widened

suddenly. “Oh, God. Yuu!! You’ve been with him? You’ve been...” Akira couldn’t even finish his sentence. The idea of his lover in the arms of that... that... well... Akira didn’t think he had a strong enough word to describe what Corrigan Matthews was. Akira was further surprised to see tears trailing down Yuu’s face. Yuu didn’t cry... ever. But then, Yuu had cheated on Akira and Joji. That it hurt the man was somewhat satisfying to Akira.

“No, no, you don’t understand. Let me explain. *Please.*” Yuu covered his face with his hands, his shoulders hunched forward like he was going to get hit. Akira wasn’t going to touch him, even though he felt like beating the shit out of Yuu for being so stupid, for being uncaring and reckless. For causing such pain for both Akira and Joji.

“He started working at the dojo, got Mr. Miyamoto to trust him. I tried to tell Mr. Miyamoto that Corrigan was no good, that he was... was—Well, Mr. Miyamoto didn’t believe me. One day Corrigan caught me in the alley behind the dojo and cornered me against a wall. He threatened... he threatened both of you if I didn’t do exactly what he wanted. He knew where you both worked... knew where we lived. He... he... started demanding things, saying things... made me pay him money... every day to stay away from you and Joji... I had to... I had to pay him or he was going to hurt you and he was... was... well, he said exactly how he’d hurt you, too.”

Akira’s chest was aching; Yuu’s voice had gotten thick with emotion and... fear. Jesus, but Akira never thought he’d see the day when Yuu was that afraid. He’d been watching Yuu the whole time he spoke, searching for deceit, but it was abundantly clear that Yuu was telling the truth. No one could be that convincing, and Akira knew Yuu too well, knew he was a lousy liar to begin with. That was why it was so easy for Akira to look at Yuu and know something was wrong.

“He... he told me that something bad would happen to you and Joji if I didn’t... didn’t pay what he wanted, said he’d get his cousin to... to...” Yuu paused, obviously struggling with his words. “I couldn’t let that happen. I couldn’t let him touch either of you. I had to protect you both. I love you both

so much, and I couldn't stop him any other way than to let him have what he wanted."

The last few sentences from Yuu came out fast and almost garbled with tears. Joji pulled from Akira's embrace and hurried to Yuu's side. He wrapped his thin body around their lover, murmuring reassurance. Akira was torn between wanting to comfort Yuu and wanting to smack him upside the head for thinking that what he'd done was the only solution. "Yuu..."

"Yuu, son."

Akira whirled to see his father standing in the doorway to the study. The rage that colored his father's face almost made Akira take a step back. Never had he seen his father so angry. Yuu had stood quickly, Joji still clinging to him, and hung his head in front of Akira's father, his shame easy to see.

"Yuu, my boy. This has to stop. I will not have you enduring such humiliation to protect my son and Joji. It is illegal what this Corrigan person is doing. You will go to the police and explain. You will stop this immediately."

Mr. Ishida turned and looked at Akira and gave a slight nod before turning back to Yuu and clearing his throat.

"Yuu, look at me."

Akira's heart ached as Yuu raised his head to stare at Akira's father. He looked so... defeated, that Akira wanted to wrap him up in cotton and hide him away. He turned to his father when he began to speak.

"And you will stop thinking that Akira and Joji are unable to defend themselves. Akira is strong and smart. He is not helpless and can protect both himself and Joji. And our little Joji is a clever fellow and sneaky. You must trust them."

Akira looked back at Yuu to see his reaction, his face still red with shame and embarrassment. He knew Yuu's pride would make it difficult for his lover to explain to the authorities what had been happening, but Akira's father was right. This had to stop. It was tearing his small family apart, and Akira would not lose Yuu and Joji to some redneck, bigoted moron from their past. They

were older now, better able to take care of themselves and not be at the mercy of some bully. “Yuu.” Akira hesitantly walked forward, not sure of his reception. He gave a sob of relief when Yuu pulled him close and hugged him tight, burying his face in the juncture of Akira’s neck and shoulder.

“I am so sorry, my ’Kira. So sorry.”

The whispered words caused warmth to spread through Akira’s body, thawing the cold knot that had taken over his stomach, making him whole again. Yuu still loved him! Akira held Yuu close, thankful to finally know what had caused Yuu to act so strangely. He smiled when Joji’s arms came around them both.

EPILOGUE

Akira looked up in surprise when Yuu came barreling into the house much sooner than usual on a work day. “What’s wrong?” Akira squeaked when Yuu picked him up and swung him around, before putting him back on his feet and kissing him soundly. Breathless, Akira staggered when Yuu broke the kiss and grinned at him. “What’s going on, Yuu?”

Akira saw Joji come into the kitchen from the corner of his eye, a puzzled look on his beautiful face, but a smile, too. Yuu saw their lover and dragging Akira along, snagged Joji around the waist and crushed them both to his chest.

“He’s been convicted and sentenced! They’ve given him the maximum allowed by the law!”

Akira whooped, hugging Yuu tightly in celebration. Joji started prancing and dancing around the room, his giggles contagious. Before long they were all piled on the couch, giggles ebbing into chuckles that finally merged into silence. All three of them stared intently into each others’ eyes.

“I love you both so much.”

Yuu was the first to speak, and Akira could feel happy tears filling his eyes as he and Joji echoed the words. Yuu leaned forward and gave Akira a deep, passion-filled kiss then turned and gave one to Joji, too. It didn’t take long for clothes to start flying and three men, very much in love with each other, flew naked down the hall to their bed.

THE END

Author Bio

CR Guiliano is an avid reader, which logically morphed into the love of writing. CR writes in many genres, but is most happy writing the love between two men (or more!). She makes them work for their HEA and considers herself an expert in Angst.

You will usually find CR cuddled up to her laptop, grumbling about her day job wasting her writing time and creating stories to entertain, inspire and bring your emotions to the surface. CR has a huge warren of plot bunnies that is growing every day and can't wait to fill out the story ideas and share them.

CR is a committed advocate for the GLBT community and does her best to change society's attitudes, one mind at a time. You can learn more about CR Guiliano and her stories at the following locations:

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