

LOVE IS AN OPEN ROAD



Don't Read in the Closet 2015

# SHINTAROU'S WAY

Eve

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# Love is an Open Road

*An M/M Romance series*

## SHINTAROU'S WAY

**By Eve**

### Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love is an Open Road* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a gift to you.

### What Is Love is an Open Road?

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 these authors 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 is an Open Road*.

No matter if you are a long-time devotee to M/M Romance, just new to the genre or fall somewhere in between, 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.

Each year, a dedicated group of Volunteers from the M/M Romance Group work hard behind the scenes to bring these stories to you. Our Editors, Formatters, Proofreaders, and those working on Quality Assurance, spend many long hours over a course of several months so that each Event is a success. As

each and every author also gives freely of their time and talent, it was decided that all edits suggested may be accepted or rejected by the author at any given time. For this reason, some stories will appear to be more tightly edited than others, depending on the choice of the author.

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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## Photo Description

The photo is a manga picture of a shaggy-haired boy in a collar clutched in the arms of an older man. They both wear winter coats. While the man's expression is one of smiling possessiveness and a certain degree of smugness, the boy has a wide-eyed look of startlement and seems a bit taken aback; however, his arms are around the shoulders of the man and his fingers are twisted in the man's coat. There is a sense of homecoming and of finding safe harbor.

## Story Letter

*Dear Author,*

*In a city full of real monsters, it's easier to be invisible, overlooked, than to draw attention to myself. Especially since I was alone with no family or friends. I won't trust anyone, not ever again. That's why I spend my days by myself, impersonating a lost dog.*

*My plan was perfect. At the very least, it made survival easy. But lately, a vampire has been coming by my alley to bring me food. I swore I wouldn't trust anyone ever again. But then, why do I get the urge to follow him home?*

*Sincerely,*

*Enne*

P.S. I'd love some BDSM with pup play thrown into the mix.

## Story Info

**Genre:** paranormal, alternate universe

**Tags:** puppy play, BDSM, Feudal Japan, vampire, shifters non-wolf/cat, interspecies

**Word Count:** 6,413

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# SHINTAROU'S WAY

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*Shintarou*

*Feudal Japan*

*It wasn't because he was male, but because he was a warrior of an enemy clan. They had caught him with the lord, and since they couldn't touch their own lord, they took him to punish for both. Stones. Stones that broke his back, shattered his knees. Stones that bizarrely missed his skull for hours while they pelted him until his body was a wreck. At last that final stone cracked his head and ended him. Not before he'd screamed in agony for hours. Not before he'd been dragged around the village with his legs a useless mash of broken bones. Not before his mind had given out.*

*That was how the story had been passed down, become legend generations later until nobody was sure what had been true. The villagers had stoned the Shogun's lover to death.*

*And the lord had gone a little mad. Had stayed locked in his castle for eight days while the village baited him by sending only overly salted provisions to his pantry and refusing to do his laundry. Then he'd emerged and put the village to the flame.*

*Burnt every last cottage down in the middle of the night. And had his men nearby to slaughter the ones who escaped their burning homes. And from the blood and terror and death, he had bought back a semblance of his dead lover. Not living, but back. Undead. Uncomfortable in sunlight, subsisting off the blood of animals he killed with mindless ferocity, barely cognizant of his surroundings. A vampire.*

*He would have been wholly feral but he knew his lover and was compelled to obey him as both Shogun and creator. They were two wounded spirits clinging to each other—one who had died in agony and the other who had watched him die and been unable to save him.*

*The Shogun himself stayed mortal, and died in his time with his undead lover by his side. It is said that every vampire is created in blood and fire. Shintarou knew few of his own kind, and none that were willing to share the*



*story of their genesis, but he had died in pain and been reborn in pain. For a long time, pain had been his only world.*

*But time was a great healer, and as the years passed he found himself recovering from the darkness in which his soul had floundered. His essential vitality reasserted itself, and he emerged from his isolation to find in himself a spirit of exploration and an openness toward new experiences.*

*A few ragged and haphazard villages had sprung up, when he resurfaced from his madness. His lord had made him Daimyo, second in power, before he died, but his lord was long gone. He stood over the land and there was nobody for him to look to. And the ones who looked to him did so with distant caution but had forgotten to fear him.*

*He had been alone a long time, through long dark years, had grown used to stealth and secrecy, and he was a little shocked now to find that his kind had finally been exposed. Shocked that vampires were acknowledged legal citizens. The possibilities intrigued him.*

*For the first time in ages, he felt whole and vigorous. But he was lonely. He was curious about the towns. And he wanted companionship.*

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*Aiko*

From the safety of the dark alley, Aiko peered around the corner onto the street. Flurries of snow whipped through the freezing air, stinging his nose. The market wasn't very busy tonight and pickings would be slim. There were only a handful of people wandering around looking at the stalls. Less foot traffic also meant that the stall owners were more likely to spot him thieving their wares. Even in dog form, he could be in danger, from kicks and abuse if not from arrest.

But he was hungry.

It would have to be risked. Holding his belly low to the ground, he slunk out and edged along the side of the buildings. With his dappled tan coat, he blended easily into the shadows, but he was still a big dog. Skinny from the poor winter feedings, but standing he was almost two feet high at the shoulder. Which was helpful when he wanted to be left alone to walk down a street. Not so much when he wanted to stay unnoticed. There was only so much he could hide by slinking.

He hadn't anticipated this much hardship when he left his home in the summer. Hadn't known the winter would be so cold. Or that he'd feel so alone.

Hadn't anticipated that the monsters would have all come out of the woodwork either. Vampires were real, and even though they must have always been there, it suddenly felt like there was one on every corner, now that they no longer had to hide. They had *rights* now.

The worst was that vampires didn't smell any different from humans. And unless they reeked of fresh blood from a kill, all that a dog could reasonably expect to smell was the normal human scent of skin and flesh, and nothing at all that would tell you, here walks a monster.

He had a healthy fear of vampires, having come upon one feeding in an alleyway. The victim hadn't looked willing, and the monster's eyes had flashed red at Aiko when he'd inadvertently whined. He'd bolted.

So he was cautious as he nosed his way through the marketplace. Soon his nose picked up the rich scent of fresh meat, and he followed the tempting smell, slinking in the shadows but edging toward the food stall. As he thought, it was the butcher's stall, but something must have gotten there ahead of him; there were no leavings tonight. Only fresh cuts of meat hung on hooks or laid on the countertop under the watchful eye of the butcher himself. Aiko's mouth watered. But there was no opportunity for theft. In fact, business was so light that he could tell the butcher had marked his presence already. The gray-haired man's hostile eyes followed Aiko even though he stayed a respectful distance away.

The town of Hagi was right on the water, built off the transport ways along the tranquil Sea of Japan coast, taking advantage of the traffic from the seafaring merchants. In late summer, when Aiko had arrived, it had been beautifully cool, full of travelers and trade and prosperity. In the cold months after the winter solstice, it was a wholly different town, with bitter winds from the sea buffeting the nearly empty streets and storms that prevented ships from landing.

Pickings were slim indeed in the winter, and Aiko had gone hungrier and hungrier as the town had grown ever colder and more desolate.

Another meat smell came from the roadside restaurant down the street, but the girl there was mean. He'd seen her lure a mutt close once with a tempting morsel, only to whack it with the stick she'd been hiding in her other hand.

“Pup.”

The voice was too close. Aiko startled and skittered away.

He looked up. The man who'd spoken was tall, dressed in gray and brown, and like Aiko, seemed to prefer the shadows. Standing beyond the light of the stalls, his face was obscured, but Aiko could make out brown eyes and a firm chin. The eyes were... not kind.

But the hand held out a skewer with three enormous chunks of red meat, still dripping juices from the grill.

Aiko knew better. He really did. But that meat smelled so good. He hadn't been truly full in months. He whined, belly low to the ground, and wagged his tail, hoping the man would throw it to him.

"Come here."

He shouldn't, but something about the vibration of that voice... Aiko edged closer, just a step. Poised to leap away at the first hint of threat. But the man didn't move. He crouched and stretched out his nose as far as he could, whining even more plaintively.

Slowly, the man lowered the hand holding the meat until it was level with Aiko's head. And just waited.

Aiko moved in but stopped outside reaching distance, unwilling to approach any closer. The meat smell was everywhere now.

No such luck. The man waved the skewer a little, and in the shadows Aiko could maybe make out his lips curving derisively. "Come get it," the man murmured, voice low and calm.

Quivering with nervous energy, Aiko darted forward and sunk his teeth into the chunk of meat at the end of the skewer, pulling with all his strength. As he'd expected, the man didn't let go, but Aiko ripped the chunk of meat off and darted back.

Good beef, fresh and unspoiled and barely cooked. He slavered as the juices erupted inside his mouth. All too soon, it disappeared down his gullet and he started smelling the rest of the meat in the man's hand. He eyeballed the man again, seeing how still the silhouette was, hand held out unwaveringly in Aiko's direction. Aiko tried another little whine, but had no real hope that the man could be cajoled into throwing the meat to him.

Darting forward again, he bit down on the skewer and pulled. The skewer didn't move at all, but after a tense moment where he stared up at the impassive

face of his benefactor, growling and tugging at the same time, he was able to pull another piece of meat off and retreat with his prize.

One piece left on the skewer.

Aiko wasn't as afraid as before, but he was still cautious. Edging forward, haunches tensed to spring away, he delicately set his teeth in the last piece of meat and slid it down the skewer. The man didn't move at all.

Having eaten all the food, he gave the man one last look and a wag of his tail from a safe distance. Was that a slight curve of the man's lips? He couldn't be sure. Turning his back, he bolted for home.

Home was a little cubby in an abandoned alley. It was nothing a human could live in, but he'd dragged in some rags over the past months, and had made it cozy enough for his dog form. He had his fur to keep him warm. It was why he spent so little time in his human form these days. Sniffing to make sure there had been no trespassers while he was away, he circled a few times and curled into his pile of rags, burying his nose in his fur, and closed his eyes.

Tomorrow would be another day, and he would have to start all over again in his never-ending quest for food. But it was with a full stomach and a sense of ephemeral contentedness that he fell asleep. In his dreams the man was there with his treats of meat, and then turned into a giant red-eyed monster who loomed over him with unknown intentions. When he woke up, he couldn't remember the specifics of the dream, but had a vague sense of mixed dread and hope. And of course, he was hungry.

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Aiko approached the butcher's stall, but he wasn't looking for the butcher. He skirted the butcher, and the restaurant with the mean proprietress. A little further. Yes, there. The man, who he'd started thinking of as his friend, was there again. Tense muscles relaxing in relief, he wagged his tail at his friend and approached. The past several days had taught him a little trust. He no longer played games, but walked toward his benefactor and sniffed the man's hand. The man, too, had made changes. The skewers had been abandoned, and instead his hand was full of raw meat. Aiko ate the meat out of the open palm, and licked the skin when he'd finished, with a little huff. Sure enough, more meat appeared. He polished off the second handful to the accompaniment of the man's other hand on his head, fingers gently stroking through the soft fur between his ears. Finished, he gave the hand another few grateful licks—to clean the last of the juices off as well—and then started to back away as usual.

Only this time the man moved before he could get away and a strong hand gripped him by the ruff of his neck.

Aiko froze.

His captor didn't do more than hold him there, so he looked up and tried a little yip of protest. Why was the man hard to look at all of a sudden? It seemed the face he'd grown familiar with—hard, square, and honest looking—suddenly changed and became a little demonic. And were the eyes red?

Aiko yelped and tried to leap back despite the grip on his neck. Vampire!

The surge of adrenaline did nothing to break Aiko free. The grip was like iron on his neck. But the vampire didn't move. No attempt to pull him closer or drink his blood or mesmerize him with supernatural powers. Instead, he held Aiko for another moment, and then the fingers slowly loosened until Aiko was held only by the lightest of touches on his neck.

“So you know,” the vampire murmured. “I don't want you to mistake me. I am Shintarou.”

And then the vampire lifted his hand and Aiko was free. He jerked back. The vampire didn't follow. Feeling strangely bereft, Aiko backed further with a warning growl.

“Are you so fickle?” the vampire asked, sounding a little wistful. Which he had no right to be, Aiko decided indignantly, considering that *he* was the one deceived. He barked at the man, throat still vibrating with his growl, and backing another step, he ran.

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For four days he stayed away, not going to the market at all. Twice he dined off rats he caught, but there wasn't enough food at the edges of town to sustain him. Each night he returned cold and lonely to his little corner niche, and felt a little colder and hungrier. Curled up with the knowledge that no one cared if he starved. It was still winter, and there was little to scavenge in the bitter cold, and Aiko had grown spoiled by the steady diet of fresh meat warm from the vampire's hand. He wanted to stay away, but he found himself remembering the feel those fingers passing over the top of his head as he fed, the feel of having his ears rubbed in—he couldn't remember how long. That low steady voice that resonated with safety and authority, and made him want to lower his belly to the ground and grovel for approval. The thought of never having that again hurt his stomach as much as hunger did.

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In spite of his better judgment, Aiko found himself drifting back to the market. The butcher was tending a customer, and Aiko could see an opening to dive in and nip away with a steak, but he didn't take it. He skirted around, and passed the restaurant with the girl sweeping in the doorway, and kept going, until finally he stopped at his usual place and looked around. And the vampire was there, leaning against a wall in the dark.

"I waited for you," murmured the low voice. "I hoped."

And the long-fingered hand caressing his head as he ate felt even better than he remembered.

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*One month later*

"I'm leaving for my home in the mountains," the vampire said, as Aiko daintily picked at the last morsels, licking at the man's palm more than he was eating. Aiko stopped. Looked up. Brown and very human eyes regarded him back, squinting a little as if the vampire didn't want to give away his feelings.

"I won't be coming back," Shintarou continued.

No. No no no no no...

Aiko whined, backing away and crouching a little.

"I'll bring a crate for you tomorrow," the vampire continued. "Your choice, whether to get in it."

Torn between outrage at this idea and the inexplicable urge to huddle against the vampire's legs and cling, Aiko took a step back and then hovered unmoving.

"There's hunting in my woods," the vampire coaxed, voice low. "On my lands I am Daimyo." So he was a lord, answerable only to the Shogun. "But it is really mostly forest, a few scattered villages. And there hasn't been a Shogun in a long while. You could be my pup.

"Or you could come in your other form," the vampire suggested, voice laced with a thread of silver that hinted of a smile, though his lips remained straight.

Shit. He knew? Shit. Shit. Shit. All right, he had been talking to Aiko like a person from the first, so Aiko should have made the connection. He obviously knew. But *how* did he know?

“Dear pup, *I can smell you.*” And yes, that was definitely a smile.

Aiko growled, but the vampire only let his smile widen until it lightened his face. He stood up, towering over the dog.

“Will you come with me now?” the vampire suddenly asked. “Come and play. Let me show you I can master you and take care of you. Let me see you as a man. My house in town is but two back from this street. And,” he added, seeing the way Aiko trembled, “you can leave whenever you want. It is not my intent to keep you prisoner.”

He should say no. It had to be a trap. Common sense said no, but his instincts said there was no danger. He remembered the gentleness in the vampire’s hands as they stroked over his head, day after day. There was the trust built up over days and days of hand-feeding, and even if Aiko knew the vampire probably had had this motive the entire time, he couldn’t believe the vampire meant to harm him.

When Shintarou turned, Aiko followed.

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The house really was close, around a corner. The big wood door loomed enormously over him, dark and ominous. Shivering, he almost turned back, but Shintarou was there beside him, neither threatening nor moving. Waiting patiently for him to make up his mind.

Whining did absolutely no good, but it did make him feel better. He let out a long desolate whine, giving in to the urge to press against Shintarou’s thigh. Familiar fingers scratched the soft fur between his ears. It was enough. Gathering his courage, he moved forward, feeling Shintarou stepping beside him, and when the man opened the door, he walked through it into Shintarou’s townhouse.

Aiko followed his nose and his curiosity, and completely discarding human courtesies, headed straight for the vampire’s bedroom to sniff around.

“Do you need privacy to change?” the vampire asked, sitting on his bed, hands quiescent at his sides.

Before Shintarou could move, Aiko took a deep breath and changed. It was painless and easy as always. And as always he emerged naked and crouched. Human, he was sandy-haired and tall, built with the same lanky body as his dog form, but his face had a hint of cherubic sweetness caused by a final bit of baby fat.

Shintarou watched Aiko in his human skin with a concentrated focus that gave Aiko an almost involuntary shiver of delight. He had missed being noticed, being *seen*.

“Lovely,” Shintarou murmured. “As I thought you would be. What is your name?”

Strange to realize that he had never introduced himself. Had only ever been a dog to this man. Feeling a little shy, he said, “Aiko.”

“*Bright*. A fitting name. You can call me Shin, if you like,” the vampire offered, “or if you prefer to think of me as such, master.”

Oh, it was as if this vampire was a mind reader. How did he know about Aiko’s deep longing for a master? How could he possibly know how that word resonated, or know how lonely Aiko had been since his pack had rejected him? *Master*. He savored it. But he didn’t give Shintarou the satisfaction of hearing it just yet. Not until the vampire worked for it. There was already a slight smugness about the vampire that was irritating.

“And how old are you?” the vampire asked, not moving at all. Aiko wished he would come and pet him, but he supposed it was better to get the questions over first.

“Twenty.” Young for a pup to leave the pack. Most never did, but a few left to find adventure or to look for mates. Of course, he had not had a choice.

“Kicked from your pack, am I right? For being different, or wanting someone you couldn’t have?”

Aiko sniffed suspiciously, ignoring the tightening of his throat. Unlike human society, the packs did not tolerate sex between males. When forced to a choice by their alpha, lover and family alike had cast him out. “Is mind reading a vampire power?”

“No, but your story’s not hard to read,” Shintarou said, and getting up, he walked to Aiko. Aiko straightened and found himself eye level with the vampire. With a smile, Shintarou took him by the hand and drew him toward the bed, and once there, pushed on Aiko’s shoulder until he was crouched again at Shintarou’s feet. Finally, finally, the vampire moved his hand and laid it on Aiko’s hair, rubbing just as if Aiko was still a dog. Aiko couldn’t help it; he loved that touch and pushed into it. “It’s a common enough story, and not just among the packs. I’ve also lost everything because I loved someone.”



Shintarou leaned forward and looked into Aiko's eyes. "I wanted you for my dog. And when I knew you were more than a dog, I wanted you more than ever. As my dog and as my boy. Do you think you might want that?"

Aiko held the vampire's gaze for a long moment while the silence stretched and his heart thudded in excitement.

"Let's see if you can master me."

\*\*\*\*

He knelt on all fours, though he was in his human form. He looked up at his master and knew he was the absolute focus of the other man's attention. It was heady to feel that powerful gaze trained on him.

"Come here pup." Ah, the first words Shin had ever spoken to him, repeated now and laden with some deeper meaning. Aiko crawled forward until his nose almost touched Shin's knee. He felt playful, as he had not felt in a long time, and gave Shintarou's thigh a little push with his nose, bouncing back again and looking up. A hand landed on his head, but not harshly. Fingers carded through his hair, stroking until he wanted to wriggle in pleasure. He bowed his head, imagining his neck curving and feeling himself beautiful in the heat of the other man's regard.

And then the fingers moved lower, and a big warm hand was stroking him from his head down to his ass in slow, long, repetitive strokes that almost hypnotized him. It was as if his skin drank in the caresses, every nerve reveling in the stimulation of being touched. Not wanting to lose this dizzying pleasure, he held himself absolutely still, afraid the smallest movement would jar the vampire's hand away from his skin.

At length, after a mesmerizing number of strokes, the hand lifted, and began patting his bum gently. In answer he parted his legs a little, and Shintarou's fingers obligingly dipped into his crack, pressing at the edges of his hole. The sensation of those fingers, each pushing separately and deliberately against that most private place, was a delicious torment. He wanted the fingers *in* him. Or something else in him. Nosing forward, risking the loss of the hand at his behind, he shoved his head into Shin's groin, growling in frustration when his lips met cloth.

With a low laugh, Shintarou undid his pants and pulled them down enough to give his human pup access. Aiko surged forward.

Shin's dick was thick in his mouth, and he tongued it with a wet slurp, as if he were still a dog, grinning up at his master. Happy to find it hard. Shin *wanted* him. He licked some more.

"Like it, do you?" Shin murmured, and encouraged him with a hand on his head again, fingers guiding but not forceful. Aiko kept mouthing, not taking the cock into his mouth but licking and sucking with his lips and moving in to nuzzle the balls, until Shin tugged lightly on his hair, moving his head back. "You can taste me some other time, but now, I think, you'd rather I fucked you with it, am I right?"

Oh yes. He would. Whimpering with urgency, he turned and presented his ass to the vampire.

And yelped to find himself suddenly hoisted up by a grip around his belly, and tossed onto the bed. Bouncing, he came down on his front, and scrabbled back, glaring at the vampire. Who smirked at him, and offered, "Better for your knees." And very firmly reached out and positioned Aiko onto all fours again on the bedspread, legs apart and ass open. Aiko lowered himself from hands to elbows, so that his ass was even higher up, and turned to give Shintarou what he hoped was a seductive look. A low laugh answered his efforts, and Shin moved out of sight behind him.

His nose picked up the scent of oil as Shintarou positioned himself behind him, and then the blunt head of a cock was pressing against his opening. "Ready for me?" Aiko whined, more than ready.

"Don't move," Shin instructed, cock prodding gently at Aiko's hole. Slowly, steadily, the vampire pushed forward as if nothing could change his pace. Aiko wanted more, and tried to squirm back, but was unable to as the vampire's hands wrapped around his hips and held him still.

He couldn't help the involuntary shivers, the trembling control of will to keep himself still under Shin's exploring entry. He waged an inner war. He mastered himself finally, and let Shin move as slow as he wished.

"Good boy," Shintarou said from behind Aiko, and the approval in Shin's voice felt so good Aiko moaned. He needed this, the words of reassurance, the feeling of pleasing his master, of being wanted. Shin's touch, his words, held Aiko in a vortex of dizzy gratification.

Shin held him still through that slow long entry, through strong thrusting waves of pleasure that built and built until, when the vampire finally spilled,

Aiko's voice was an unending whine of need and supplication. And when the hand left his hip to find his cock in a long-fingered grip and tugged, he tumbled into his own orgasm with such delirium that he almost lost consciousness.

When he came back to himself, it was to the feel of a wet towel swiping over his groin as Shintarou cleaned them both up. And then he was pulled up in the bed until he lay with his head on Shintarou's chest.

"We're going to do this my way, pup. You'll be mine." He heard the vampire murmur, but he paid more attention to the warm slither of the bedcovers being drawn over them, and then he closed his eyes and slept.

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He woke cocooned in warmth, having somehow burrowed himself into the sheets during the night until his head was completely under, tucked against Shintarou's side at his hip. Aiko stuck his tongue out and tried a tentative lick, and felt the other man move. Shin was awake. Aiko licked Shin's side over and over with small flicks of his tongue, loving that he could show this playful side of himself.

Abruptly, he felt himself gripped by the nape, and he gave a little mock growl. To his delight, the vampire mock-growled back at him. He smothered his grin against the vampire's skin. And then applied some more licks.

A low laugh. "It's too early. Sleep pup."

He could do that.

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Assuming his canine shape again, Aiko joined Shintarou for breakfast, curled up at his master's feet while the servants brought a feast of meats and fish and porridge. Shintarou hand-fed him, and when Aiko was done eating, trailed a hand down and petted him from head to neck to back. Aiko shoved his weight against the hand, loving being petted. There was nothing like it. He could stay for hours being petted and stroked, until he was a melted puddle of contentment. With a satisfied sigh, he laid his head on the vampire's knee and made happy doggy grumbles until his slobber drenched the vampire's pants and he was shoved off with mock disgust.

But the vampire followed him to the floor, and crouched over him, rubbing his fur until he gave up all dignity and sprawled onto his back with his legs wide open, whining and panting for his belly to be rubbed. His master obliged,

staying with him even though it must have looked awkward to the servants, and even though human knees weren't meant to bend so near the ground, rubbing Aiko's belly until he went from wriggling pleasure to stupefied calm.

He didn't know what he felt for the vampire, but it was too heady to give up.

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"Will you come with me?" Shin asked again late in the day. "I want you for my pup, Aiko, and I will do my best to take care of you."

In answer, he laid his head on Shin's leg, butting his nose against Shin's stomach. After all, what did he have if he stayed? An uncertain life of scrabbling for scraps, with nobody to care about or to care about him. It was about time he gave up the hope that his pack would chase him down and reclaim him. "Yes," he whispered.

"As friends or master and pup?" Shintarou inquired. As if the answer didn't matter. But Aiko saw how intent Shintarou was, waiting for his answer. How the vampire drummed his fingers lightly against the nape of Aiko's neck.

Aiko knew what he wanted. A master and a home. He warned, "You bring home a stray pup and you might be stuck for life."

"Then I'd get what I wanted." The vampire was undaunted by his warning. In fact, the fingers at his nape clenched. "Will you be my pup?"

In answer, Aiko changed and leaped up, trying to crowd his enormous canine body entirely onto Shintarou's legs, shoving and scrabbling until the vampire's arms came around to hold him in place, and then subjected Shintarou's face to a thorough bathing with his sloppy tongue.

"Oh, pup, I think I'll find you a proper collar." Shin promised, "I'm going to have to train you to have better manners."

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### *Epilogue*

Shin had left him to go hunting. Usually they hunted together, Aiko's canine speed nearly a match for the vampire's supernatural powers. But sometimes Shin wanted to push himself, and there was no way a dog could keep up when Shin ran all out. Sometimes Shintarou had unknown demons he needed to exorcise. So Shin had left that evening, to Aiko's sleepy assent.

But Aiko hadn't expected the vampire to be gone so long. It was almost dawn, and he had been alone all night. He was bored. And irritated because Shintarou had kept him tied up most of the previous day. Which had culminated in a great orgasm when he'd been untied limb by limb, but he now had a lot of excess energy with no outlet.

Growling a little to himself, he changed into his dog form and prowled out from the bedroom. Nothing in the kitchen interested him, though he sniffed appreciatively at the lovely smell of cold ham. They would feast later. He prowled down the hallways, going room to room until he reached the front door, pacing in front of it when there was still no sign of Shin.

He was bored! And it had been awhile since he gave his master cause to trouble himself. Giving in to the sudden urge for mischief, he ran to the cubby where Shin kept his shoes. Nosed around until he found the pair of shoes that carried the strongest scent. Aha, Shin's favorite pair. Lifting his leg, he peed on each shoe in turn, making sure to fill the boats.

Ha! See how he liked that!

Of course once he'd done the deed he began to have second thoughts, especially as the wait for Shin's return lengthened. Hmm, maybe it wouldn't be as amusing to his master. Belly low to the ground, he slunk away from the crime scene.

When Shin returned, wrung out and bloody from his kill, and wanting nothing more than to pounce on his puppy and wrestle him to bed, he was instead assaulted by a pungent odor as soon as he opened the door. He knew immediately what Aiko had done.

"Pup!" he bellowed.

Aiko cowered under the bed, wedged into the dark shadows of the farthest corner and trying not to sneeze from the dust swirling around his nose.

"Oh, I will find you." He heard the low determined swearing from his master, and though he trembled a little in fear, he also thrilled to the note of iron in that familiar voice.

There would be hell to pay. He couldn't wait to pay it.

**The End**

## **Author Bio**

*Eve has lived in a series of large coastal cities—LA, Shanghai, Vancouver, and currently NYC—and loves that special combination of urban life and waterfront. She's that rare lawyer who actually likes what she does for a living, and while she's always loved reading stories, up until now has not realized how hard it is to write them!*

## **Contact & Media Info**

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