

The S-Files

A Scientific Treatment on Structure and Workings of Athena's Saints (Well, sort of...)

Von abgemeldet

Kapitel 28: Interlude IX - Sun, Summer, Sea! ...and an Ice-Floe

Interlude IX

Sun, Summer, Sea! ...and an Ice-Floe

"And what are we going to do now? We have more than half a day left," Makoto said.

"Please cook me a final meal," Milo begged.

"You are simply insatiable!"

"My mama also cooked very yummy things," Hyoga said wistfully.

"I am *not* your mama!" Makoto told him, just to be sure. If Himiko didn't mind to be taken for his mother, this was one thing, but *she* certainly didn't need a teenage son with an oedipus complex.

"Of course not," Hyoga shook his head. "*Himiko* looks like her. -- By the way, can you cook, too?" he asked the blonde woman.

"Sure."

"Great!" Hyoga gave her a dazzling smile. This settled it; she was adopted as his new mama.

Makoto and Himiko disappeared in the kitchen, and the two Saints watched them with awe.

"The first course is ready," Makoto announced. With lightspeed, Milo sat at the table, fork and knife in his hands. "Are you *that* hungry again?"

"Well, I want to sample your delicious food one last time."

Makoto grinned and gave him a large helping which disappeared in record time.

"Don't I get some, too?" Hyoga asked wistfully.

"Sure." Makoto saw to it that he didn't starve either.

"That's *yummy*," the Cygnus Saint said appreciatively.

"It seems I can fetch the second course already..."

"Yes!" Milo and Hyoga said in unison.

"I really wonder where you put all the food..."

"Well, we train a lot," Hyoga explained.

"Well, I haven't seen Milo train during the whole time I stayed at his temple," Makoto wondered.

"We Gold Saints can set our own schedule."

"I see. And your schedule consists mainly of relaxing?"

"Well, my abilities are so far above those of the other Saints that I'm entitled to a little holiday once in a while."

Now Himiko came with the next course, that was attacked with the same ferocity.

"One almost feels like in a tiger's cage," Makoto observed amused.

"Indeed. Although scorpions and swans aren't typical beasts of prey," Himiko grinned. "On the other hand, thinking of the Cygnus Cloth, I might change my opinion..."

"By the way, do we get some dessert, too?" Milo asked.

"Sure." Makoto fetched a bowl that she divided evenly between both. Of course it didn't last long either.

"And you can cook this, too?" Hyoga asked Himiko.

"Of course."

"Cool!" Hyoga smiled. Yes, he *would* convince Camus to marry her, and then they would find a nice hut somewhere in Siberia, and everything would be perfect.

Finally the feast was over.

"And what are we doing with the remainder of the afternoon?" Milo wanted to know.

"Anything, if I don't have to spend more time in the kitchen," Makoto sighed.

"Our last afternoon together," Milo said sadly. "Hm... What about going to the beach?"

"Hey, that would be something. We haven't managed to go swimming so far. -- Hm, if only I knew where I have put my bathing suits..."

"Well, I wouldn't mind if you'd bathe nude," Milo grinned.

"You're a lecher!"

"Only a little bit..." He examined her from head to toe.

"No way!"

Milo sighed. "Well, I could lend you one of my swimming trunks..."

"Thanks, but no thanks. I think I just remembered where I put my things..." Of course they were in the bag with her clothes that she hadn't stowed away in the plane.

"A pity. Topless would have been nice, too."

"Then I prefer a full-body diving suit!"

"Awwwww... You wouldn't have a string tanga?"

"You *are* a lecher. But you'll have to live with me wearing my normal bathing suit."

"If only my Camus-sama would join us," Himiko said longingly.

"I'm sure he would only freeze the water."

"I don't mind. I would *love* to see him in swimming trunks."

"I could ask him to accompany us," Hyoga volunteered.

"Just don't mention that Himiko is there as well," Makoto cautioned.

"Sure." Hyoga smiled and stormed upstairs to Aquarius Temple. He was back only seconds later. "My master told me he needed to relax a bit after he got harassed by this groupie-girl -- he wouldn't mean Himiko with that? -- and so he'll join Milo and me..."

"If he knew," Makoto laughed and closed the bag with her swimming equipment. "I'm ready."

"I guess it's best if I teleport you, then Camus won't suspect anything until it's too late," Milo grinned. "You'll see to it that we get a nice spot near the sea, while I will

wait for Camus."

"Okay." Makoto looked for a nice place with a sunshade, while Himiko jumped merrily up and down.

"I'll see my gorgeous Camus-sama once more before we leave!"

"Just try not to chase him away immediately," Makoto warned and spread the large blanket.

"Certainly not!"

Suddenly, Camus, Hyoga and Milo appeared. When Camus (who looked absolutely cute only wearing some night-blue swimming trunks with the Aquarius symbol all over) discovered Himiko, he gave Hyoga a deadly glare.

"You betrayed me! I should kill you for this!"

Milo put an arm around Camus and grinned. "You don't want to show weakness in front of your disciple and flee, will you?"

Makoto almost died from suppressed laughter when she watched the Aquarius Saint's face. Obviously Camus wanted nothing more than to escape, but somehow Milo's words had struck a nerve, too.

"Very well," Camus decreed gravely. "I will stay." He sat down on the blanket, as far away from Himiko as possible.

"Fine," Himiko grinned.

Slowly but sure, Himiko started to move towards Camus.

"I guess I will swim a little," the Aquarius Saint decided and fled into the water.

"And he is afraid of her after all," Makoto said.

"It appears like this," Hyoga nodded. "I guess I should tell him that she's totally harmless and can cook wonderfully, too."

"You can try it..."

When they looked at the water, they discovered that Camus had created a little ice-floe that he used like an air mattress.

"He has something of a penguin," Makoto giggled.

"My Master is really cool, isn't he?" Hyoga admired.

"Oh yes," Himiko sighed.

The other people on the beach stared at the ice-floe in utter amazement.

"This looks to funny." Makoto shook her head.

"Indeed," Hyoga grinned.

"I wonder whether the water is cold around the ice-floe."

"Of course it is," Hyoga grinned. "There -- the first people take a wide berth around Camus."

"Phew, I surely don't want to go near it."

"Hm... Do you know where I might get an insulated diving suit here?" Himiko asked.
"As far as I know there are people who dive with them even in the Polar Sea."

"I think it's rather uncommon to find one of those here at the Mediterranean Sea."

"But as long as Camus is around it might be prudent to have some in stock," Milo laughed.

"When he is around every swimming vacation is ruined."

"I'm sure he's perfect to take along on a skiing trip. Even if there's no snow at all, he will help it for sure," Himiko said.

"But right now I don't want to ski."

"Well, so far he didn't use his Diamond Dust attack, and the water isn't frozen either," Hyoga told her. "Mind if I supply a little snow?"

"Don't you dare! I'll kill you."

"Awww..." Hyoga looked as innocent as he could.

"I'm not so fond of all that snow in the summer either," Milo said. "Keep your snow for yourself or I'll fetch my scorpions!"

"I wonder what's worse, snow or scorpions?"

"What about iced scorpions?" Himiko giggled.

"No way! You won't ice my cutey pets again!"

"I thought there are still some left in the fridge," Makoto pointed out.

"Don't remind me! Poor little Hyoga-chan..."

"Pardon?" Hyoga looked questioningly at the Scorpio Saint.

"Ahm, nothing..."

"*Hyoga-chan?*"

"Well, I named my pets for the Saints that came to my mind," Milo admitted.

"You don't need to feel special," Himiko said. "Milo also has scorpions called Marin-chan, Pope-chan, Aiolia-chan, Camus-chan..."

"Aiolia-chan and Camus-chan are dead, ruthlessly killed by being put into a Freezing Coffin," Milo sniffed.

"Can't we talk about another subject? I'm getting cold," Makoto complained.

"Yeah, and I *hate* scorpions," Hyoga shuddered.

"Hey, they are totally harmless," Milo assured him.

"As long as one is Scorpio Gold Saint, I guess. *You* don't get stung."

"Hm..." Himiko looked yearningly towards Camus on his floe. "I really would like to join him there. Has anybody got an icebear hide for me to shield me from the cold?"

"Sure, I always carry one in my handbag in the summer."

Himiko sighed. "This is so unfair... There he is, and I can't even sit down next to him..."

"You have to harden yourself."

"Okay, back home I'll try to sleep in the freezer."

"That must be really uncomfortable."

"I wouldn't mind if *he* would be there, too..."

"I don't think my Master would sleep in a freezer," Hyoga laughed.

"It would be futile, he is already frozen."

"My Camus-sama isn't frozen! Okay, he likes it a little bit colder than others, but otherwise he looks pretty hot. Especially in his swimming trunks."

"I'm sure, you mean cool."

"That too..."

"It is really hopeless to argue with you about him."

"Well, he *is* perfect after all..."

Makoto looked to the floe with Camus. He was indeed cute, especially his dark blue mane. "You're right -- look-wise."

"Yeah... His hair, his cute snub-nose, his wonderful eyes -- and that body," Himiko enumerated dreamily.

"You don't have to list every detail, I can see it for myself."

"Pah", Milo snorted. "I'm at least as handsome as he is. You'd better look at me!"

"*You* stress that you're not cute."

"I don't have to be cute to be handsome."

"I have seen enough of you, it is more difficult to get a good look at Camus."

"Indeed..." Himiko fetched her camera and grasped the chance to take some photos of him without the Aquarius Cloth. "His swimming trunks are cute -- there's the Aquarius symbol all over them."

"Really?" Makoto took out her binoculars.

"And I have some neat little scorpions on mine," Milo stated.

"I noticed." Makoto took another look at Camus.

"But remember, he's mine," Himiko reminded her.

"I don't want to touch him."

"Good," Himiko and Milo said in unison.

Makoto looked at them in surprise.

"Well, you're mine, after all," Milo said.

"Well, he's mine, after all," Himiko explained.

"Sigh."

Hyoga followed the dialogue in wonder. So who belonged to whom? And his Master certainly belonged to no one...

"I think I'll go swimming before Camus decides to freeze the sea."

"He would never do that," Himiko defended him.

"Well, at least not on purpose," Hyoga added.

"I hope so."

Himiko wondered whether she could get an air mattress somewhere. If she wanted to get adequately near Camus it might be prudent.

Makoto stayed in a safe distance from Camus' floe. Himiko, on the other hand, wanted to get into a practical distance to him. As there was no way to get an air mattress, she decided to step into the water, too. Even near the beach it felt slightly colder than it was usual at this time of the year.

After a few minutes, Makoto left the water. She had the impression the temperature dropped slowly but surely towards absolute zero.

It didn't take long, and the beach was crowded with people who watched Camus in awe, among them at least three reporters.

Milo slapped his hand to his forehead. "Why me? When Camus is around stuff like this happens all the time, and I have to cope with it..."

"Hm, I don't see that anyone is interested in *you*," Hyoga said.

"That's what he dreams of," Makoto grinned.

Milo grumbled something unintelligible.

In the meantime, Himiko had reached a pretty close distance to the floe. She was almost frozen blue and her teeth clattered. "M-my C-c-camus-s-sama!" she said shivering.

"Even *here* you can't leave me alone?" he moaned.

"Neither heaven nor hell will let keep us apart," Himiko promised, her teeth still clattering.

At the beach, the people whispered. "Have you heard? Isn't that romantic?"

"Himiko, get out of the water at once," Makoto shouted. "You'll freeze to death there and I won't rescue you from this ice water."

"But my Camus-sama is over there!"

"Get her out," she ordered Milo.

"Why me? The water's *cold*!"

"Sure, that's why I don't go," Makoto said. "I will get a cold."

"I will go and rescue that damsel in distress," Hyoga declared. "I won't watch her die in front of my eyes..." Heroically, he ran into the water. When he had reached Himiko, he turned around to the others. "Hm... The water is pretty *warm*, if you ask me. You sure that I have to rescue her?"

"Absolutely, she isn't used to such temperatures."

"She's pretty fragile, hm?" Hyoga shook his head. But then, not everybody dived daily for about two hours in the water of the Eastern Siberian Sea. He shrugged and grabbed Himiko and rescued her, no matter how much she struggled. It was only to her best, he told himself.

Makoto fetched a big towel to wrap her immediately. Sometimes Himiko was so careless with her health. If she died from freezing she'd never get Camus.

Himiko sneezed. "Why did you part us so cruelly? I was already so close..."

"Close to death..." Makoto said and began to rub her dry.

"He would have revived me," Himiko was sure.

"I'm not so sure."

"He'd probably put her into a Freezing Coffin, just to be sure," Hyoga surmised. "After all, once in a Freezing Coffin, nothing could touch her anymore, neither cold, nor warmth, nor anything else."

"I didn't understand why everyone thinks these ice-cubes don't thaw."

"That's because normally they don't," Milo told her. "The scorpions he iced are in the Freezing Coffins since they were put there and the ice never melted."

"Hm, that's weird. I thawed the one with Himiko without problems."

"You *really* thawed a Freezing Coffin created by my Master?" Hyoga asked incredulously. "But that's impossible!"

"I don't think so. In my opinion nothing is impossible. One only has to figure out how it works."

"Indeed," Milo nodded. "With one's Cosmo one can surely produce a miracle."

"It's no miracle," Makoto said and wrapped Himiko in another towel. "You will never do such stupid things again."

"Atchoo!" Himiko sneezed.

Makoto passed her a handkerchief. "I'm sure you got a cold."

"Well, *she* wanted to get near Camus. If she'd stayed with me this wouldn't have happened," Milo said.

"Camus is surely not good for the health of ordinary people."

"If I'd get a single kiss of him, I'd be immediately okay again," Himiko sighed.

"I think you better take an aspirin," Makoto said.

"But I want a kiss of him!"

"What if I'd kiss you?" Milo volunteered.

"You're not Camus," Himiko sulked.

"You bet I'm not. I'm a hot-blooded Scorpio and would immediately warm you."

"I guess she'll pass out at once."

"Then she's just not used to something good."

"No chance, she's fixed on Camus and no one else has a chance."

"That's cruel," Milo complained.

"You can't give up *one* girl?" Makoto asked.

"No. I should be able to conquer *all* girls! Each girl I'm not able to get is a serious defeat for me."

"Wouldn't this mean that you had to suffer an awful lot of defeats so far?" Hyoga wondered. "I heard that about Shaina and Marin..."

"Some day I'll kill Camus for telling everybody stuff like this!"

"My Master told me it's important to know what's going on in Sanctuary..."

"Everybody should know what's going on around him."

"But my love life shouldn't be the issue!"

"You mean your not existing love life, according to my Master," Hyoga grinned.

Makoto giggled. "These rumours are very interesting. Saints are very creative in this respect."

"Well, between the Holy Wars there's not much else to do," Milo sighed.

"Ts, I'd have better things to do."

"And what would that be?" Milo looked astounded at her.

"I'd open a restaurant for example."

"Cool. If you'd do, I'd visit you every day!"

"I've got no time for such things."

"That's a pity." Milo sighed. A restaurant like this in Sanctuary would be heaven.

"I'm sure there is no way to open a restaurant here anyway. Saints don't need any comfort, they'll get weak..."

"Pah. Food is not comfort, it's necessary!"

"They will only get fat."

"We train enough, so we won't get fat," Milo claimed.

"Camus isn't fat either. -- Which reminds me, why doesn't he save me with a single kiss," Himiko sighed.

"He doesn't know you want one."

"Well, why doesn't anyone here tell him? I'm half dead because of him, so I'm entitled to be saved by him!"

"It's cold out there."

"Well, I could try," Hyoga volunteered. "I would like them to marry anyway."

"Then go and tell him, I want to see his reaction."

"This will be tricky. I fear I can't broach this subject directly..."

"That's true, he would try to escape."

"My Master is a very complicated person," Hyoga nodded.

"*Very* complicated."

"Okay. I'll try it anyway." Hyoga went to the shore, dived head-first into the water and swam to Camus' personal floe. "My Master..."

"Yes?"

"Your help is needed. Please follow me!"

"My help...?"

Hyoga nodded. "It's very important!"

Camus frowned. He didn't want to leave his comfy floe. But if it was true and his help was in demand... "Okay." Camus jumped from the floe and accompanied Hyoga to the beach. The blond boy lead him to the others.

"I'm sure the people are happy you left the water," Makoto said.

"Well, there was one guy who wanted to hire me for an advertising campaign for Coca Cola," Camus said with an amused grin.

"You don't look like an icebear to me."

"Neither to me," Himiko said and tried to look even more ailing than she was.

"*She* is still there?!" Camus made a step backwards.

"Well, my Master..." Hyoga stood behind him and shoved him a little towards her. "That's what I need to talk about with you..."

"Pardon...?"

"It's your fault she got a cold."

"My fault? *She* went into the water."

"*You* made it cold."

"Hm."

"My Master, please do me the favour and save her!"

"Why should I do this? She doesn't look as if she was in any danger."

"But she is! I'm a doctor, I can tell," Makoto lied without missing a beat.

"And just because of me? What am I supposed to do to help her?"

"Everything that makes her feel better."

Camus looked suspiciously from Makoto to Himiko to Hyoga and back. This felt very much like a conspiracy. "And this would be?"

"I don't know, ask her."

"No, no! I can very well imagine what she would want!"

"My Master, maybe you could attempt to resuscitate her..."

"But she *is* alive!"

"Well, you might try it anyway..."

"This feels very much like a set-up to me."

"But my Master, I would never..."

"You *would*, I'm absolutely sure."

"It's your decision, but you've got to live with the consequences."

"Hm."

"Come on, my Master. Give her a kiss!"

"Gaa!"

"Please, my beloved!" Himiko looked at Camus from her large, light blue eyes.

Makoto looked from one to the other. This was really thrilling. Milo couldn't watch this. Why didn't she beg to be kissed by *him*?

"And you're sure it might help?" Camus asked doubtfully.

"Absolutely sure," Hyoga nodded.

"Well, even if it is a set-up -- so be it!" Camus said fatalistically and gave her a light kiss on the lips. Himiko sighed and fainted. "Hey. *Now* she is unconscious!"

"Well, then you need to revive her again," Hyoga told him, almost dying from suppressed laughter.

"Go on, get her back." Makoto urged him.

"I'm doomed!"

"My Master, see it the other way -- your life gets thoroughly enriched..."

"What is it that all people want me to get together with *her*?"

"You are a perfect match."

"Pardon??? What makes you think a thing like *this*?"

"It's my opinion."

Camus sighed. The whole world was against him. Okay, The groupie-girl *did* look pretty nice, but he just had no intention to settle down and found a family or something like this. He was a Saint of Athena, he had his duties towards the Goddess and there was no place for any woman. Although, if he was truthful, sometimes he had deplored the fact. But Athena was the most important person for him.

"I agree with Makoto," Hyoga told him. "Come on, Master!"

With a further sigh, Camus bowed down and gave Himiko another kiss.

"She didn't wake up," Makoto observed. "Once more!"

"She does this on purpose!" Camus accused.

"Why don't you let *me* try," Milo offered.

"No way," Makoto said. "You will only ruin everything."

"You're mean!"

"I agree," Camus nodded. He would have loved to let Milo do the job for him.

"Sure," Makoto grinned. "But he made her faint, so he has to wake her."

"She wouldn't have fainted if I hadn't been forced to kiss her in the first place," Camus grumbled. "And so it's all my fault, huh?"

"Hm. I like this point of view."

"Great." Camus gave her an icy stare. "Ah well..." He kissed Himiko for the third time and hoped he wouldn't get too used to it.

"I'm sure he starts to like it."

"I hope so," Hyoga agreed.

"I'll kill you both," Camus growled.

"Himiko is right, you're really cute."

"But I have neither the time nor the intent to get a girl-friend," Camus moaned.

"Tomorrow we'll be back in Tokyo."

"What a relief!"

"A pity," Hyoga contradicted.

"Indeed," Makoto nodded. "Somehow I'm not very inclined to return into our boring lab in Tokyo."

"So stay," Milo pleaded.

"Don't!"

"Well, and whom should I listen to?"

"*Me*," they said in unison.

Makoto grinned. "You have to decide on one choice."

"I don't want to have *her* around anymore! She disturbs my peace of mind and my duty as Saint of Athena," Camus blurted out.

"Is she?"

"Yes! She always tries to be near me and occupy my time so that I'm not able to train and meditate as would be proper..."

"Why don't you simply ignore her?"

"How when she always follows me everywhere and clings to me like a barnacle? I mean, she *is* pretty and somehow cute, but she does get on my nerves!"

"Well, she's hopelessly in love with you."

Suddenly Himiko moaned and tried to sit up. "Where is he?"

"There." Makoto pointed at the Aquarius Saint.

"My beloved!"

"It starts again," he groaned when the next pink heart formed above Himiko's head.

"Did you expect anything else?"

"I had hoped," Camus said weakly.

"Sensei, why don't you just marry her and adopt me?" Hyoga asked and looked at him with puppy dog eyes.

"Exactly! Then everyone had what he or she wants," Makoto nodded.

"Except for me," Camus grumbled.

"Well, that's negligible. After all, they outnumber you."

"Camus, if you insist, I'll be your best man," Milo grinned. "Although I fear you have to lend me a suit as I'll be totally broke after losing the bet..."

As Camus still knelt on the blanket, Himiko took the opportunity to put her arms around him.

"Yikes, someone pluck her off," Camus squealed. Of course he was ignored.

"Why should I?" Makoto wondered. "You two look cute together, especially with this large pink heart floating above you. As if you were made for each other."

"The heart has got nothing to do with me," Camus claimed. "It's hers alone."

"Isn't he sweet?" Himiko smiled and gave him a light kiss on the cheek. "My beloved..."

"My new parents!"

"My doom..."

"Poor Camus," Makoto said. "Your fate seems to be sealed."

"I'll be the best wife for you," Himiko promised. "I'll care for you, I'll comfort you, I'll cook for you, I'll keep your temple clean and tidy..."

"It seems this is not enough for him," Makoto pointed out.

"What else do you want?" Himiko gazed raptly at his deep blue eyes.

"My freedom!"

"Are you sure Saints have something like freedom in any case?" Makoto asked.

"Well, not exactly," Milo admitted. "We have our duties as warriors for Athena and they always have to take precedence over anything else."

"That's true. We fight for her, and if need be we even die for her," Hyoga stated.

"You hear! I think it's enough to belong to *one* woman," Camus said.

"Although I'm sure you could do a lot of things with Himiko that you could never do with Athena," Milo laughed.

"Milo, you're totally depraved," Camus said scandalized.

"Nope. I'm a Scorpio."

Himiko buried her face in Camus' soft, dark blue mane and the steady stream of pink hearts continued.

"Makoto, please stay with me," Milo tried once more. "Even when Camus doesn't seem to appreciate having a cute girl of flesh and blood around - I certainly do!"

"Dream on!" Makoto laughed and tried to catch one of the incredible hearts. It burst like a soap bubble.

Slowly but surely the sun approached the horizon. Himiko still clung to Camus, Hyoga was happy about his self-elected adoptive parents and Milo sulked as he didn't get the girl he had chosen, just as usual. It was so unfair, Milo thought. He was better looking, stronger and more interesting than Camus, and still his friend got the girls and not he. That is, the ones Aiolia didn't get. Milo sighed. It was more than unfair.

"What are you thinking about?" Makoto wanted to know. "Your sighs sound terrible!"

"I'm sooo lonely," he sniffed.

"Why this?"

"You still haven't given in to me."

Makoto grinned. "Well, it's not as easy as you would like it to be."

"Just *look* at *her*! Camus doesn't even have to do *anything* and yet she clings to him like glued on!"

"I am not Himiko and you are not Camus."

"In this case I really regret this. I'm sure she'd do *everything* from cooking to mending his cloths to comforting him..."

"And you would like to have a woman like that?"

"Sure!" Milo said with conviction. After all, *he* was the man, and his woman had better tend to his needs.

"Well, good luck in finding such a woman. And remember, a good house-keeper is expensive if you wish to hire one..."

"I don't want to hire a woman! I want one who is totally devoted to me just because I am me!"

Makoto laughed. "Fat chance! And women like Himiko are rare..."

"To think that Camus rejects her! It's too bad that none of the female Saints would do anything like this. If you'd ask one of them to cook for you, you'd get a challenge for a duel in return..."

"I admire these women!"

"Do you? I think they're a nuisance most of the time. And they always hide their faces behind these obnoxious masks - even though I'm sure there are at least some among them who are beautiful! In any case, they may be fun, but they are nothing for a real relationship..."

"Because they don't play the faithful and obedient housewife for you?"

"Well, I am the man after all," Milo declared poutily.

"It's getting cold," Makoto changed the subject. "We should go back now."

"Cold? I haven't done anything," Hyoga hurried to say.

"I could warm you," Milo offered.

"You don't give up, do you?" Makoto laughed.

"Never."

"I want to be warmed, too," Himiko said, and despite Camus' protests, she cuddled closer to him.

"They look so cute together," Makoto stated, and Hyoga nodded.

"Let's get out of here," Camus insisted. He tried to get up, but Himiko managed to cling to him still.

"Do you have any problems?" Makoto asked amused.

"Problems? Me?" Camus sighed and pried Himiko's arms free from his neck. In the next instant, she wrapped them around his waist.

Makoto found the picture utterly amusing. "I'm sure this will become a serious and long-lasting relationship," she commented.

"I hope so," Hyoga smiled. "I'm sure my Master will get used to it over time."

Camus gave them a deadly stare, before they returned to Scorpio Temple.

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"Do I get a final meal?" Milo asked wistfully.

"You are totally greedy," Makoto complained.

"Why don't *you* let me cook something for you, my Camus-sama," Himiko piped and beamed at him.

"Do you take your hands off me then?"

"Well, I fear I couldn't cook otherwise."

"Then do so, please!"

"Great..." Himiko smiled. "After all, the way to a man's heart is through his stomach!"

"How true," Milo nodded.

"Well, with you not only your heart is connected to your stomach," Makoto chided.

"Pah! I'm a gourmet!"

"To me you look more like a gourmand. I have yet to find something that you *don't* eat..."

"Well, I hate crabs and related food..."

"Because they remind you of scorpions and not because you don't like their taste, I bet," Makoto grinned.

"Well, yes," he admitted sheepishly. "I can't eat anything that reminds me of my cutey pets."

"Which reminds me - where are they right now?" Makoto looked suspiciously around.

"In my bedroom, of course."

"Ah, that's good."

"So what are you going to serve me for dinner?"

"You'll never give up, will you? Maybe I should try whether a certain Scorpio fits into the pan..."

Milo looked indignantly at her. "Don't even think about it! - I want you to cook me a dinner. Now."

"You are a little too used to getting what you want."

"I'm a Gold Saint. We're entitled to get what we want."

"Indeed? But I refuse to cook. I'm not your servant."

"But you're my girl-friend!"

"Whom are you kidding?"

"Hey, I chose you -- you should feel honoured."

"And *you* wonder why the girls don't run after you..."

Milo looked at her with his best 'lost puppy' gaze.

"You really know how to get the better of me," Makoto sighed. "Okay, okay, I'll prepare the dinner. But only some bread."

"Awwwwwww..."

"You're too fat anyway." Makoto pricked him in the side.

"I'm not fat," he protested. "My Cloth still fits perfectly."

"Sure it does," Camus grinned. Now that Himiko was occupied with cooking and didn't cling to him anymore, he immediately felt better. "Your Cloth fit when you were only seven years of age and grew with you ever since."

"So that's no proof," Makoto laughed.

"But look at my body - it's all muscles and no fat!"

"Hm." Makoto pricked him into the belly with her index finger.

"Jecks! This tickles!"

"Indeed?" Makoto put on an evil grin.

"Ahm, no, it doesn't tickle at all," he hurried to say.

"Well..." Makoto couldn't resist to tickle him in earnest now, and Milo was a perfect victim.

"And what about you?" Himiko asked while she looked up from her cooking. Camus looked at her in shock.

"Don't even think about it!"

"What do you give me in return if I promise not to tickle you?"

"What do you want?" Camus wanted to know with a worried mien.

"Just another kiss," Himiko beamed.

"Only one?" Makoto inquired while she still tickled Milo.

"For starters..." Himiko giggled.

"I would not sell me so cheaply," the red-haired woman said.

"One kiss is definitely not *cheap*," Camus contradicted.

"I would kiss anyone anytime, but stop tickling me," Milo squealed.

"Who wants to be kissed by *you*?" Makoto grinned.

"Who would *not*?" Milo asked, eyebrows raised.

"I!" Himiko and Makoto replied both. Milo sighed.

"Well, Camus?" Himiko cocked her head.

"Do I have a choice?"

"Nope." With an angelic smile, she stepped towards him and traced a line along his spine. Camus shivered from the sensation.

"So Saints have weak points after all," Makoto discovered.

"Of course they have," Hyoga said. "They correspond to the stars of their constellations..."

"Well?" Himiko asked and looked at Camus.

"Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant," the Aquarius Saint murmured.

"It can't be *that* bad," Makoto shook her head.

"It's even more difficult if everybody stares at me!"

"Don't tell me you are shy?" Makoto examined him thoroughly.

"I'm not shy," Camus replied sulkily. "This is a very private thing."

"Shall we leave you two alone?"

"Oh yes, my beloved, let's go to your temple so that we can have a real private tête à tête..."

"Arrrglll..."

"He doesn't seem to like it," Makoto observed. "Camus is very difficult."

"I noticed," Himiko nodded. "But that makes him so much more attractive!"

"I really don't get it," Camus sighed. "Whatever I say or do - she manages to turn it against me."

"Now the kiss, my Camus-sama," Himiko demanded and stood in position.

Camus sighed once more and lightly touched her lips with his.

"Do you call *this* a kiss?" Himiko protested.

"You haven't specified how I should kiss you," he said smugly.

"Why don't they just marry and get it over with?" Hyoga asked no one in particular.
"They are a *perfect* match."

"Dunno. Ask *them*," Milo suggested breathlessly. At least Makoto had stopped tickling him.

"I won't marry her because my duties lie with Athena," Camus grumbled.

"As long as only your duties lie with her I'm content," Himiko said dryly, and Makoto couldn't suppress a giggle.

"Maybe I should kill her," Camus pondered and looked at the blonde.

"No!" Hyoga squeaked. "I want her as my new mama!"

"Indeed, this wouldn't be nice," Makoto stated. "I think it's sufficient that Milo is mean."

"Yep. Scorpios are mean. Aquarians are supposed to be nice and friendly," Milo tried to be helpful.

"Have you heard?" Himiko asked. "Now be a little nice to me and kiss me properly."

"Why are you *all* against me?"

"My master, I'm always with you," Hyoga contradicted.

Himiko rubbed her cheek against Camus' chest, and he hung his head. "Hey, this tickles," she giggled, when a strand of indigo blue hair hung into her face.

"Feel free to leave me alone," Camus suggested, but she continued to squeeze him like a teddy bear.

"No, now that I have you I won't let you go."

"I really wonder whether they will do it after all..." Makoto wondered. "Or do we have to help you?" She began to circle the two.

"You'd better prepare my dinner," Milo nagged.

"Not now! -- Don't you think this is a little boring, Himiko?"

The other woman still stood snuggled against Camus, who wore a fatalistic facial expression.

"Of course not. Being so close to my beloved Camus-sama - I could stay here forever!"

"She *adores* you, sensei, you really should consider giving in to her."

"This would mean I'd lose a desperate fight right in front of my disciple - Hyoga, you can't be serious!"

"A *fight*?" Makoto giggled. "I wouldn't call this a *fight*." She opened a box of pralines and began to decimate them slowly but surely.

"Well? Do I get my kiss now? And I mean a *real* one!"

"I have to prepare mentally for it first," Camus tried to stall for some time.

"I'm sure he hopes that she'll forget about it in due time," Hyoga said with a lifted eyebrow.

"Camus, don't hesitate - go for it," Milo urged.

"Do I have to remind you that *she* wants me to kiss her and not the other way round?"

"Well, then Himiko, go for it!"

"Do you need a stool?" Makoto asked helpfully.

"That would be a good idea," Himiko nodded. After all, Camus was about 35cm taller than her.

"No problem..." Makoto fetched a stool and put it down next to Himiko.

"Thanks." Himiko smiled and stepped onto it. Now she was still a littler smaller than Camus, but it was manageable. She looked right into his deep blue eyes and sighed. "He's so gorgeous!" She put her arms around his neck.

"If she repeats it often enough he might start to believe it, too," Milo commented with amusement.

"That's how brainwashing works," Makoto grinned.

"You really think she might manage to brainwash my sensei?"

"Sooner or later certainly," Milo mused with an insolent grin. "Yeah, go for it, Himiko!"

"And I thought you were my best friend..."

"I have only your best interest in mind," Milo promised.

"As we have all," Hyoga added. "And a loving wife and a little hut in Siberia to settle down with your family, wouldn't that be perfect?"

"I'm not so convinced."

"Well, you haven't moved out of her embrace, so it can't be *that* bad," Makoto laughed.

Camus blushed furiously and immediately moved away from Himiko.

"How cute," Makoto observed.

"And you are sure that you don't like her?" Milo teased.

"Of course not," Camus tried to sound convincing. "I can't stand her, she gets on my nerves and everything - what more do I have to say?"

"But you tolerate quite a lot from her, wouldn't you say?"

"Do I have to remind you that we are not allowed to use our powers for personal matters?"

"That's a good excuse," Makoto giggled.

"Pah!"

"Isn't he cute?" Himiko sighed and produced another pink heart that drifted slowly in Camus' direction. Camus tried to evade it, but it followed him anyway.

Milo laughed and burst the heart with the pointed nail of his index finger.

"But tomorrow we'll go back to Japan," Himiko sniffed and hung her head.

"We can't help it Himiko-chan," Makoto tried to console her.

"But I want my Camus-sama!"

"You can return to Sanctuary when you have a vacation," Milo suggested.

"I'd prefer you to stay in Japan," Camus contradicted.

"If you come back you can stay with me in Scorpio Temple anytime!"

"But I want to stay in my Camus-sama's temple."

"I don't run a hotel," Camus protested.

"That's perfect, after all, I want you all for my own," Himiko told him.

"But I would like to move in, too," Hyoga said. "Then I would finally have real parents again..."

"Exactly," Himiko nodded. "I would cook for you, polish your armour and everything."

"It's no armour, it's a Cloth," the three Saints corrected simultaneously.

"And anyway, I don't need anyone to polish my Cloth," Camus said. "It's self-cleaning."

"And what about cooking? Can you cook for yourself, too?" Makoto wanted to know.

"Well, I go to a restaurant once in a while..."

"Just let me cook for you and you will never want to go into a restaurant anymore," Himiko promised.

"We should go *now*," Makoto suddenly changed the topic. "The plane is ready, and I guess it's best if we keep the goodbyes as short as possible, or Himiko won't go at all."

"I really don't want to go," Himiko sniffed and a big tear rolled down her cheek. "My Camus-sama, will you accompany me to Japan?"

"Certainly *not*."

"Awwwwwwwwww..."

"You would like that, hm? But as soon as he's in Tokyo, all the girls there would run after him, too."

"He's my personal property. I wouldn't allow any other girl to get near him. - Hyoga, you would help me, would you?"

"Sure," the Cygnus Saint beamed.

"But Camus doesn't want to. Now come, let's get to the plane." Makoto grabbed Himiko's arm and tried to tug her along.

"I'm really looking forward to being back home," Makoto said. "Finally we'll return to the civilized world..."

They walked down the stairs towards the plane and the three Saints accompanied them: Milo, who wanted to try and convince them to stay; Hyoga, who would join them on the way to Tokyo, and Camus to be sure that they were really gone.

"Well, I agree that I'd love to sleep on my futon at home again... But I would love to have my Camus-sama with me to share my pillow."

The Aquarius Saint only shook his head.

"Well, I'll be happy enough if I finally have electricity for my devices again."

"Okay, having my TV set and my radio again would be a nice thing," Himiko admitted.

"And I want to visit my favourite Game Center again to break some high scores!"

The Saints looked at them in utter confusion. What were they talking about?

Finally they reached the plane. The pilot and co-pilot had decided to sleep a little in their cabins, but they were fit enough for the flight, they said.

"And I really can't convince you to stay a little longer?" Milo asked.

"Farewell," Camus said hurriedly and hoped that it truly would be the last goodbye.

"Well, we have to go and evaluate our data," Makoto said. "Why don't you visit us once in a while?"

"You, too, my beloved!" Himiko said to Camus, stood on the tips of her toes and gave him a kiss on the cheek.

"I prefer to stay here in my temple."

"I thought so," Makoto said. "Okay, let's get into the plane!"

Himiko gave Camus another kiss, this time on the lips (he looked as if he had bitten into a lemon) and waved him a tearful farewell.

"Bye, Milo!"

"And why don't I get a farewell kiss?" the Scorpio Saint sulked.

"You're not *him*!"

"Himiko has her principles," Makoto grinned.

"And what about *you*? I want a goodbye kiss, too!"

"If you insist..." Makoto gave him a kiss on the cheek.

"That's *all*?" he asked, a little disappointed. He pulled her close to kiss her a little more thoroughly.

"Hey, this was enough," Makoto shook her head. "Bye-bye!"

"Bye," Milo said sadly.

Himiko looked tearfully at her Camus-sama. "Sayounara..."

The plane took off and got onto the way to Tokyo.

- End of Interlude IX -