

Horse of the Dead

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Summary: Upon learning a few secrets he had never suspected about Genma, Ranma leaves his father in search of his mother. He finds her living with her sister and her family in Tokonsou City, and moves in with her. What kind of impact can Ranma, a boy who never fit in among civilized society due ot his dedication to martial arts, have when the outbreak occurs? Ranma/Saeko/Saya other TBD

Chapter 1: Prologuechapter 1

Horse of the Dead

I don't own Ranma (my god I am getting tired of saying that) nor do I own High school of the Dead. If I did it would have fucking continued rather than going on a 'hiatus' for four(?) years!

FYI this is two chapters in one.

This story was brought about by my honestly not finding any really good, lengthy *High school of the Dead* fanfictions. That is not to say there isn't any out there, there is one story whose name I can't remember that is a Takashi/Saeko pairing but it is set in a world without zombies, there's Banchou of the Dead, which looks great but is way too short and **sloooooow** to update if it isn't altogether dead by this point. The best one I've read is HoTD Bleach which has a Saeko/Ichigo pairing, with others maybe joining in. And no, I Don't like Naruto crosses, so won't mention them. Sometimes they can be good, but most of them aren't, and he's just been chosen as a Gary Stue. Also most stories take themselves too seriously, or are too short or boring or too full of OC's. In fact if anyone knows a good non-angsty HoTD story on another site please tell me about it.

This Ranma will not have been to Jusenkyou or met the Amazons so no super speed, some ki but not as much as later on, though some new moves with what he's got, lots of mobility and skill, he will be building up other skills in this first chapter, weapons use as well as a few other tricks. He will also be building up his ability to use the Umi-sen-ken the sneaky thief, the scroll of which he found (explained in this first chapter). Ranma will be 16 at the start, and be 17 and a bit when he starts interacting with the HotD crew.

Oh and there will be lemons in this story, they will happen and they will not be marked off as such as High School of the Dead was excellently perverted in both anime and manga forms. They will be full, all the way lemons unlike in DvC, where practicality everything else happened (I honestly didn't want them to take away from the story, relationships was only about the fourth most important part of that story, in this it will be the second most), they will be detailed, unlike in CS, and far more so than in WW. If you read this story you know you are a pervert, embrace the dark side, we have cookies and no rules that try to geld you.

prologue: Er, hi mom?

Ranma frowned angrily at his old man, tossing aside his small bag, which only had a single change of clothing in it and his wallet as he came through the door into the cheap, extremely shabby motel on the outskirts of Hong Kong. "God-damnit old man these street fights you keep setting me up for aren't worth anything training-wise, can't we get back to regular training yet?"

Ranma had been in street fights since he was around ten. It was an easy way for his father and him to make some money, especially since the idiots on the other side always underestimated him thanks to his age and size. That was no longer the case alas as Ranma, despite being a little short, looked what he was, an incredibly toned and tough martial artist. So they were only really worth a bit of pocket money on bad days, on good days a day's worth of food (a week's worth for someone not traveling with Genma).

He went on a little teasingly, "I mean, I know you're still sore about me winning our last two matches, but c'mon, you can't keep sulking in here and making me do all the work!"

Genma scowled at the reminder from where he was sitting in the single chair in the dinky, ill-lit room. "Quiet boy, you're sounding like a whiny girl! I'm still trying to hunt up a map showing the way to the training grounds I'm looking for, until I find them you'll just have to wait! And no, hunting it down is taking up all my time, so I can't train you. You'll just have to make do with the street fights."

In actuality Genma was a little worried about continuing to train his son. Ranma was now faster than he was, hit just as hard and was only slightly less durable. Oh, Genma had experience and guile on his side, but Ranma never fell for the same move twice (except when it came to food and other distractions), and his learning speed was if anything becoming faster as he grew up. In a match it truly was a tossup now who would win, and Genma couldn't afford to let the boy know that. That would ruin Genma's plans to control him.

He had succeeded beyond his wildest dreams in a way, Ranma was a fantastic martial artist and the rest of his personality was utterly stunted, making him dependent on Genma for practically everything. That would make

controlling him far easier once he forced the boy to do his duty and marry into the Tendo family. Their dojo would be a perfect place for Genma to spend his remaining life living off his son's labor. What he needed was one more training ground which he could use to his advantage to wipe the floor with Ranma for a few days, beating some more respect into him so he would obey without any complaint when he was told about his fiancé. Good as he was, Ranma hadn't yet learned that choosing the battlefield was almost as important as choosing to fight in the first place. The stories his old master had told of Jusenkyou sounded perfect, and Genma had been spending the last few days looking for a map to show him the way to it. And if the stranger stories about magic pools were true, well that could be another way to weaken the boy enough so he could be controlled.

Ranma growled a little but nodded. Unbeknownst to Genma however he was becoming more than a little irritated that his father had stopped training him. *Maybe we're getting to the good stuff now, ki techniques and other stuff, and he just doesn't want to share because he's afraid I'll show him up, the lazy useless ass.*

Ranma had come to the conclusion over the past few years that his father really wasn't much of a role model or even a human being, he was a liar, a cheat, a thief (though only of food, which Ranma himself would own up to), lazy and an asshole, but he was the only family Ranma had, and the idea of setting off on his own was unappealing.

Still he wasn't learning anymore with Genma so maybe... *Hmm, I'll buy some of the good stuff and get the old man drunk, he always tells me to bring some stuff home anyway, and then I'll search his pack. If he has any techniques written down I'll start to work on them then surprise the hell out of him later when he tries to introduce me to them. And if not, well, I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.*

Two days later he put his plan into action. As his father had instructed him, he brought home some of the local rot-gut, but he had spiked it with a large amount of even more powerful alcohol. The result was that after chugging down the lot while expanding on the mystery of Jusenkyou that his own master had passed on, Genma fell into a deep and rather noisy sleep. While he was busy snoring on the one bed in the room (Ranma had to sleep on the floor to 'toughen him up') Ranma opened his pack.

Beyond the disgusting bits such as half eaten food, flyers for all-you-can-eat restaurants, several ads for bars and whorehouses, he found only one tatty journal with lots of cuts and beer stains marring its surface. He set it aside for now, frowning slightly as he searched around. Then he discovered the very back of the backpack didn't match up depth-wise to the outside. Feeling around he was able to find a very cleverly hidden zipper at the very bottom. Making as little noise as possible he removed the rest of the junk and was thus able to open the secret pocket.

He found three letters there as well as several scrolls all mashed together. He set them all aside and, his curiosity getting the better of him, wondering who would be contacting his old man, began to look through the letters first. The first one alone was enough to nearly shock him into shouting aloud and waking his old man, but thankfully he had lost the ability to speak.

Genma,

I realize the importance of martial arts training and tradition, how could I not coming from a samurai family, yet this trip of yours was only supposed to last a few years, not ten! I haven't seen my son since he was a toddler, and I desperately want to see him! Worse, it looks as if you are deliberately trying to keep us separate!

I was only able to send this to you by hiring a private investigator to hunt you down, and even then you had moved on by the time I arrived.

Thankfully he was willing to hunt you down and deliver this for me. I warn you Genma, I will not stand for this much longer, return with my son Ranma!

And the next time a creditor or a family with a supposed honor-debt shows up I will be forced to take action to retain some measure of my own honor.

What in the world were you thinking, selling off our son's hand so often!?

your wife, (for the present)

Nodoka Saotome

Ranma sat there for a minute, just trying to control his shock at the revelation: he had a mother! He never knew, oh sure he knew kids were supposed to have a mother, and he had often seen kids of all ages with their moms out and

about, from playing with them on a swing to shopping though for some reason the guys never seemed to realize how lucky they were when they were shopping with their moms. Honestly he had always thought he was just some by-blow from a whore his father laid with and forgot to pull out of, or that his old man had swiped him from an orphanage, it wasn't like they looked all that alike. Nor did Genma make any secret of his trips to whorehouses.

Ranma himself failed to see what the big deal was. They were just girls after all, nothing really interesting, not like learning a new martial arts kata. And of course learning a kata didn't give you the itch, which Genma had caught several times when they passed through Korea a few years back.

Yet apparently he had a mother, a real mom, and she wanted to meet him! *Wow, I wonder what she's like, and why the hell did my old man never mention her! But what's this about honor debts and selling off my hand? I've still got both of mine.*

Eager for answers he looked at the other two letters. One of them he recognized as being in his old man's drunken handwriting and it indicated a promise to have his son wed a daughter or vice versa with someone named Tendo, who had also signed it. *What the fuck! Choosing my wife for me without asking old man, well fuck that! Is that what my mom meant about hands, the fat tub of lard isn't one to stop using a good thing, though if he kept a copy of this one, it might be the only one he was really going to honor. Fucking dishonorable old bastard!*

The next letter didn't have any more answers for him, but it was still welcome. It was a formal letter from a judge somewhere in Japan that had a copy of the divorce papers and court proceedings for said divorce of a Nodoka Miyamoto, who was returning to her old family's name, dated about four years ago. Genma had kept this just in case sometime in the future Nodoka contested ownership (yes that was how Genma thought of it) over Ranma, just in case he had to incapacitate the boy mentally further than he had already.

Ranma didn't know this, he was simply happy for this show of honor. *Good for her!* Ranma cheered internally, *great job mom!* He was happy about this for not only what it said about this Nodoka, but also because a germ of an idea had started to grow in his head.

The little cartoon made on one corner of the envelope however made his opinion of his old man sink even lower. The cartoon, a very badly drawn stick figure with glasses, with a stain of beer next to it, had a little blurb on the side of it, obviously judging from the messiness something his old man had written while drunk off his ass. Once he translated it from drunk-es it read:

Hah, stupid Nodoka, who cares! You already gave me an heir, what more do I need from you I can't get from whores!
This way I have my cake and eat it too! Mmmmm cake....

What kind of man would marry someone just so they could get a son out of it? I wonder what mom would think if she saw that...

Next he looked at the journal, and nearly threw it out the window when he saw it was for the bane of his life, the neko-ken technique. Still he read through it, looking for a clue to a way to fight the madness the technique forced on him whenever he was near a cat and couldn't get away. He didn't find any, what he did notice however was that two pages were stuck together at the back. Once he unstuck them he read:

Only an idiot would attempt to try and use this technique as it is 99% fatal and guaranteed to cause mental trauma in the few survivors.

A stuck page, Ranma thought wonderingly, somewhere between a towering fury and sheer jaw dropping incredulity. A bloody stuck page is the reason I'm afraid of c-c-those furry little devils! Oh my god old man, I knew you were lazy and dishonorable, though I admittedly didn't know how much so, but this, this is just...

He decided then and there that he was going to leave his old man right now, this very night and get the hell out of dodge. Who knew what other disaster the old man could lead him into if he stayed with him? Swimming across the ocean would be easier without his old man around anyway, and he could be back in Japan and searching for his mom in two days. *It would be nice to have a family member who I actually like and might respect,* he mused. And if the old bastard shows up, well, my mom is sure to have words with him. With that thought he pushed everything into the bag, through it over his shoulder, made sure his old man was still out of it and left via the window.

Before leaving Hong Kong he stopped and made a phone call to the whorehouse his father had frequented the past few days, and in his best Chinese (not very good honestly, but he was decent at learning languages, he had to be with his old man taking him all around Asia and back again) told them that 'the fat foreigner with the bottomless stomach' was going to try and run out of town without paying his tab, which by this point was truly enormous. After

that he hung up, hoping that the local bully boys would hold up his old man for him until he was well out of sight from shore. Not five minutes later he jumped down from a rooftop onto the wharves where, with a grimace on his face due to the junk already in the water, he dived in.

His plan worked far better than he thought it would. Genma was awoken by the door crashing open violently and several large toughs charging in. Despite his inebriated state this wasn't exactly a danger, what was a danger was the fact they had come armed with tranquilizers as well as guns. He still fought them off however and jumped out the window, wondering where the boy was but he assumed he would find the boy later. This plan was interrupted as outside the motel were several groups of policemen all also armed with tranquilizers and waiting for him. The warehouse he frequented was owned by the local crime-lord, and he had an agreement with the police, no killing, few drugs and free nights for all the policemen and he got to call them in for the odd job. Genma barely had time to curse before he was in among them, and before he could fight his way out two darts smacked into him. They immediately began to effect him, but he still fought his way out, only to feel a large net descend on him. After that the police piled in with batons waving. The next he knew Genma woke up in a cell, wondering what the hell that had been about, and where the hell the boy was.

At that time Ranma was about fifty miles out from the port already and had just hit his stride. *Japan here I come!* Barring the odd stop for food, or as normal people would have called it the odd shark attack, Ranma made it back to Japan easily within about twenty hours.

Once there he camped out in some nearby woods to think of his next move and to look at the scrolls he had taken from his old man and what he found there angered him even further. Each of the scrolls held moves, some mid-air techniques, a few body strengthening exercises, others about getting more hang time in the air, all of which he had learned in the last few years taught by his father as part of the Saotome school, yet each of these scrolls had a different school's mark on them. He knew most of them too, they were all ones the two of them had stayed at earlier in their training trip. Places that opened their doors to two wandering martial artists, who gave them a roof over their heads and food for their bellies in return for nothing save to see Ranma sparring with a few of their students. "And my old man stole from them," he whispered.

That changes things, he thought grimly. *I ain't about to search for my mom with this stuff hanging over me. The question is will my old man think to look for me if a try to backtrack our trail? Heh, not likely, and even if he did if he did stuff like this then we won't be welcome anywhere along our route. Then again I might not be either, but meh, I'll take my lumps. Now which school is the closest one from here?* There did turn out to be one in the mountains of Kyushu province, the one whose scroll spoke about hang time, the ability to stay in the air for long periods of time. The Martial arts school in question was called the Soaring Falcon School. "As good a place to start as any I guess." He ignored the one scroll that was in his old man's handwriting for now, one problem at a time after all.

As Ranma hopped away through the trees, a lone wanderer finished asking questions about his quarry from a man in Hong Kong, not that he knew the name of the city of course. "And you say you saw a man with a pigtail and an old fat man come out of the water?"

The Chinese dockworker nodded, happy someone seemed to believe him even if it was some boy who had a very odd accent, as if he was trying to speak several of the local dialects at once. "Yeah, that's what I saw, they were arguing in Japanese I think, couldn't understand it, but they came from that direction anyway, as if they had some here or something!"

He laughed but the boy simply nodded. "And you say they went off into the city?"

"Yes, they were heading toward the poor portion of town." The boy nodded thanked him, and then turned around and headed away. And thus the eternal lost boy missed his target and lost the trail entirely.

It took him about a few days travel time martial artist style to reach anything he recognized. Once he did, he made his way through a small quiet town well into the mountains of Hokkaido, a part farming community, part hunting village, the kind of place which was hemorrhaging young ones to the cities and slowly dying out. Ranma recognized it from when he stayed here with his father at the Soaring Falcon School. Another ten minutes walk, which was up a long lane of rock stairs, and he found the school, still apparently open and busy, since two men in their twenties were standing outside with staffs crossed over the entrance. If the school was shrinking or having trouble staying open it wouldn't have people to spare for guard duty.

One of the men barked "Halt, who comes unannounced to the Soaring Eagle School?"

Ranma frowned he hadn't realized this group was so stuffy when he was younger. *Oh well, if it means I can return the scroll, I can do formal.* "The name is Ranma Saotome, and I am here to talk to your master over a matter of honor."

The men looked at one another, then one said, "Wait here, I will return with our master if he wishes to speak to you."

Not five minutes later he was back with an older man, spare of flesh, bald, with the eyes of a hunting bird of prey, and a harsh, angry scowl on his face. By his side there were gloves with long metal claws protruding from the wrists. His angry look faded only slightly when he saw Ranma standing there alone. "So, the prodigal student returns alone! Why are you back here boy, and where is your thieving father?"

"My old man's hopefully still in Hong Kong, but I'm here to return the scroll he stole from you." Ranma looked down, more than a little ashamed. Stealing food was one thing, stealing secret scrolls from another martial arts school went against everything he thought his old man had been teaching him about honor. "I found out about his thefts about a week and a half ago, and well, ya were the first place I could get to." With one hand he reached into his backpack and brought out the scroll in question, then handed it over. He probably should have bowed, but Ranma was never one to bow his head to anyone.

The master of the Soaring Falcon School, whose name was Ein Kotomaru, looked from the scroll in his hands to the young man that had brought it back. He remembered young Ranma from when he and his thieving father had stayed here for a time. He was a joy to teach, picking things up incredibly quickly and already at a skill level that he only saw in his oldest students. He was highly irreverent, a change from how he usually liked his students, but so full of life and good cheer that it more than made up for it. Nor had he shown any sign of being a thief himself. "Come inside boy, I mean, Ranma." He said his voice far more friendly now. "We should talk."

It turned out that that single scroll was one of three that Genma had stolen, but Ranma hadn't seen any sign of them. When Ein described the moves however, he became a little shamefaced and admitted to knowing them. Ein nodded, but told Ranma that simply returning the one scroll redeemed much, and the two made a deal. In return for room and board, as well as a few lessons from Ein, Ranma would teach the youngest students the two moves, which dealt with how to jump and use momentum while midair, something that Ein, being old and creaky found painful to teach.

Ranma agreed to this and over the next month taught the kids the moves, and even set up a little training area to teach acrobatics and midair spatial awareness. In return he received lessons in weapons use as well as lessons on how to read his opponent which would allow him to respond to any move they made, and could also be used to understand other people. He got along well with everyone though kept a certain distance from the older students, all of whom remembered the drubbing they had received from a younger Ranma. When a month passed Ranma left with not only a portion of his honor restored, but a letter of recommendation from Ein about his ability to teach and his personality.

His next two stops were much the same. Ranma himself was remembered kindly by the masters, but was only able to return one of many scrolls his father stole, and in return for room, board and lessons Ranma taught the moves and wrote them down by memory. Ranma was dismayed to find so much of the Aerial version of Anything Goes was based off thievery. Much of the original school, which was based off constant movement, adaptation and the use of ki in various ways (which Ranma hadn't figured out just yet), was original, but almost none of the toughness training and aerial attacks were. Still within two months Ranma had returned three of the four scrolls without much in the way of trouble. That changed with the fourth stop.

Ranma frowned, looking around as snow fell unheeded around him. All around Japan schools had just let out for the holidays but he couldn't care less, Ranma was a man on a mission. He had a hell of a time finding this place, mainly because he didn't remember practically anything about the area except for one particular house.

He remembered granny's house real well, but when he stopped in to say hi a new family was living there. They were friendly though and told him that the old woman and her husband had both passed away a few years back. Ranma paid his respects and left, but then ran into trouble finding the Beast Cry School. Eventually he was forced to ask someone. After several attempts he found someone that was willing to point him in the right direction and after about two hours walk he found the place.

It was an old but well-cared for temple, with a lot of land around it but well cared for walk-way leading to the school's wooden door, set into a traditional Japanese separating wall. Standing in front of it was a massive man, probably eight feet tall, with bulging muscles and a beard that looked almost alive and wearing a massive fur coat. He had been meditating (or napping, Ranma couldn't tell which) when Ranma came near but as the wind changed, he

inhaled deeply, then his eyes popped open and he scrambled to his feet. "Thief," he roared, "You are a fool to come back here! You will never leave here alive!"

And with that, he charged forward, his huge hands coming out overhand in massive slaps, deceptively fast, and Ranma backed away quickly. "Hey, wait, I'm..." Suddenly tiny ki claws appeared on the man's fingertips, and Ranma shouted in surprise as he dodged the hand only for his clothing and a bit of skin below to be ripped by the claws. Ranma growled angrily at the injury and shot forward underneath his opponents range. A kick lifted him off the ground and a punch thudded into his chest with all the power Ranma could put into it. The man flew backward with an oof of pain, smashing into and through the door behind him leading into the temple grounds.

He rolled to his feet, seemingly only a little winded by the blow, while around him a dozen mixed men, boys and girls of all ages looked up from some kind of meditation practice in shock. Many of them growled like animals and stood up ready to attack this intruder. A stern voice however stopped all movement in the area. "Stop!" An old man, bent but still spry made his way forward leaning on a cane. He looked from Ranma to the giant who was still growling, clenching and unclenching his hands in rage. "What is the meaning of this Kuman?"

The giant growled his beard bristling like a living thing. "Master Roca, he smells like the thief, the one who stole from us, the one who disgraced my father and me when I was younger. I will never forget that smell!"

Roca looked back at the young boy standing in the doorway, looking ready to bolt or fight, it was obviously a tossup but he was also placing his backpack on the ground. Something in Ranma's face however caused the old man's expression to soften into something far too close to pity for Ranma's taste. "Get control of yourself of Kuman. Your anger is understandable but misplaced. Look at the boy, he is far too young to be the thief." Kuman growled again, but obeyed and his eyes widened, some of his anger disappearing. "No, I think this boy is the one he put through **that** training."

Kuman winced, and several of the other older men and women around winced as well. Roca moved forward and stood facing Ranma from a foot away. "Am I correct boy, did the man you travelled with put you through the cursed training, the neko-ken?"

Ranma scowled, not liking the pity in the older man's eyes, and he had to fight his ego and the indoctrination from his old man for a moment before answering by nodding his head, wondering why the man knew about it, surely it was never a real technique. "Yeah, my father, the old man, put me through that, that thing, with the furry little things."

Roca sighed sadly, and Kuman and the other men shook their heads. "Come with me boy, we must talk. Kuman I trust you will repair our door?" Kuman nodded, all of his earlier anger gone utterly, and he shuffled to his feet, grunting a little under his breath.

Ranma simply sighed and followed the man into the temple complex without a word. They came into a small worship area and Roca sat on a cushion at the far side of the room, motioning Ranma to sit down in front of him. Ranma did so and fished out the scroll he had taken from Genma. Roca glanced at it, and a thin prehensile claw of ki shot out from a finger to snag the scroll from one of its corners. Ranma gaped, never having thought someone could control his ki that far from his body.

Roca tossed the scroll into the air towards him and caught it easily in his other hand, then went back to looking at Ranma. Ranma met his eyes, but it was obviously very hard. Roca finally sighed and began to speak. "Your father was a complete idiot. Not only in what he stole from us that you have just returned, the body strengthening technique in this scroll, but also in taking and using the neko-ken journal. You see Ranma we, all those of us here form a small community who have for three hundred years studied the Beast Cry School, keeping its secrets. Never have we shared them with anyone not of the families that started the school. There were more of us once, some creatures were simply not meant to be totems, or certain families became impatient, wanting to learn the secrets faster and paid for it, but the basic premise is the use of several pressure points, mental suggestions, mediation and acclimatization to harness the power of animals. I trust you can tell what kind of animal Kuman has bonded with?"

"A bear," Ranma said shortly all this talk of animals and the furry demon-ken was bothering the hell out of him.

"Indeed. Don't worry about any of us thinking it your fault but your father put you through one of the oldest and least perfected techniques. It was undoubtedly effective, able to create incredibly powerful warriors from those that survived but they were berserkers, mindless and almost uncontrollable. There was a reason it was sealed in our deepest, most secure vaults." He added dryly.

Ranma nodded miserably, wondering what he should be saying, but not finding anything that would do any good.

Roca studied Ranma for a time in silence, taking in how he held himself, the shape he was in, the fact the slight cuts Kuman's ki claws made on his side had already scabbed over, indicating a high ki-assisted healing ability. "So you leave us with little choice, we cannot allow a potential berserker who has become such through teachings from our school go free. We must help you contain the beast within and for the first time teach our ways to an outsider."

"A-are ya sure you'll be able to?"

"It will be difficult both for you and for us but yes. Now, first we must give you a complete physical, and we will go from there." Roca was willing to help Ranma but he was not willing to explain all of their School's secrets to him, only the minimum needed to help him.

Roca got up and led the way to another room, where a man the same age as Kuman but looking so like Roca he had to be family looked up from where he was going over a checklist of some kind. After briefly explanation from Roca about what was needed the man introduced himself. "Well Ranma I must say I never expected to see you in person, the exploits of your father are well known to all of us here. My name is Teuchi, and I'm the doctor here. First we need to see if there was any long term damage, as well as analyze your ki pathways and see if there is any damage or discrepancies there."

Ranma frowned but nodded and after being told to he began to strip off including, after some prompting, his boxers. Teuchi chuckled and shook his head. "I'm a little jealous; you're going to make a girl very happy someday Ranma, heh, whoever chose your name was prophetic." Ranma looked at him blankly, wondering what that was about and Teuchi frowned a little, wondering how a teenager Ranma's age could miss that joke. "So, tell me about yourself."

During that discussion, Teuchi found out that Ranma had never attended school for very long, had never really spent any time around girls at all, and was largely ambivalent about them in general. Oh he knew where babies came from, he knew that some people were really interested in sex, his own father was after all, but he just didn't see the point. He frowned at that, wondering how the hell a boy his age had the sex drive of a seven year old, but during his examination, he found it, and it was all he could do not to let his inner animal out. He called Roca in and after a whispered discussion that had the older man pale with rage Teuchi addressed Ranma. "Ranma, what do you know about pressure points?"

Ranma shrugged. "Not much other than what they are, they ain't part of my, well my old man's school. I ain't seen anythin' about them in my travels either."

"Well they do more than most people know about. They regulate the body's functions, the ki in your body, and a lot more." Let me ask you a question, can you remember a time where your, where you felt stiff or uncomfortable down there?" Teuchi coughed not having been prepared to have this kind of discussion with his patient.

Ranma thought back. He had so many concussions while he was younger thanks to his old man not holding back much, but he still remembered a time when he was younger. "Er yeah, I think so, I was about ten or so I think, and I asked my old man about it. He told me to ignore it and he worked me really hard that day, why?"

"You see, there exists a pressure point called the Sublime Monk point, and it is only used for short amounts of time to deaden sexual interest and feelings." Ranma cocked his head, wondering where this was going and Teuchi went on. "The problem is it needs to be counteracted, or it will simply keep going, and that isn't healthy in the extreme. Your point has been depressed since that day to now."

Ranma frowned. He wasn't certain what the big deal was, but he realized these guys thought it was important. "er, so my old man screwed me over in some way right?"

Roca nodded. "Yes, and we will correct it after we get a handle on your other problem. We can't do both at the same time. Who knows what that would do?"

Ranma nodded rapidly, caring far more about getting rid of his fear of the furry demons than anything else.

Over the next six months Ranma's birthday came and went, but he was far too busy to care. The training he was subjected to, instead of counteracting the neko-ken training, made him come to terms and become one with it. Two out of every three hours of every day he would spend time in a small room watched by four of the older men and women as he, with a pressure point to counteract his fear hit, began to get comfortable with cats. This went on until he was able to be around them without instinctually trying to run, and then move on to becoming comfortable with a cat in his lap. One that stage was finished, the pressure point was withheld. This was the trickiest time for his training, and he nearly lost out to his fear once it came roaring back. Over several weeks however the fear died, and he began

to embrace his animalistic side, becoming at home with the creatures of his totem.

Ranma came out of that training acting even more like an animal than most of the other students. It took time for him to reel in his tendencies to scratch things, chase everyone else away from his territory, wander off unexpectedly, rest in any hot sunbeams he came across, and nap several hours every day. However he did get a handle of it, though he would always be a fan of catnaps and high places, and still had an incredibly short attention span for anything that made him sit still other than sleeping. This would cause him a lot of trouble once he began to go at school. What he got out of it was massively heightened senses of smell, hearing and eyesight, a tendency to nap as often as he could, and ki claws the size of his thumb that he could call up any time he chose and a repertoire of attacks that used them both in close range.

That done they moved on to his other issue. Unfortunately part of the problem with using the Sublime Monk point was that it merely repressed your urges it did not get rid of them, and this caused a backlash after use making your urges far higher than normal and your self-control far worse. If they had let Ranma go around as normal, he would have lost control at the first sign of a girl. So after reversing the pressure point they locked him into a specially prepared room for holding those who lost control of their inner animal with a, to put it bluntly, a pile of porn and a book on human reproduction, the kind used in schools to describe the mechanics of things to seventh graders. They moved all the girls to the farthest section of the temple compound and allowed none to even come near the room. Kuman and several other male adults of the Beast Cry School stayed in the same building as added protection, and they passed in food from time to time.

Ranma remained in there for two weeks and when he emerged he was in control of himself, though barely. It would take him weeks to be able to look at a girl without blushing or staring or both. While the girls in the school got a kick out of it, and took to posing in interesting ways to get a response out of him, Ranma tried to bring this new part of his personality under control. This took over a month to do, and it interacted with his catlike tendencies, making his desire to be with a girl much stronger and harder to control at times.

By this point Roca was satisfied that Ranma was no longer a danger to those around him. He didn't tell him though, and kept hammering things like manners, math, history, common sense and general knowledge into his head. Only after he felt that Ranma could blend into society (not, Roca suspected, that Ranma would ever truly care about that) did he allow Ranma to live, with the well wishes of all of the school.

About a week after leaving the Beast Cry School, Ranma had finally found a hint as to where his mother could be. She had left a forwarding address with the Tokyo judge who had annulled her marriage to Genma, an old man who was very supportive of Ranma's search for his mother. Apparently she had moved in with her sister in Tokonosu City, a large city nearly halfway between Morioka and Tokyo. It took him another day to get there, and then a few hours of roof hopping (ignoring the looks of shock and incredulity from below) to find the address the judge in Tokyo gave him around midday.

The house was in a decent neighborhood, and was a good two story building, with a very small enclosing yard all around it. Ranma didn't see any other plants, though there might be a few in the backyard but other than the lack of plants it looked like a very nice house. Yet Ranma stood outside staring at the door as if it was the entrance to some dragon's den. After coming all this way he was having second thoughts of meeting his mother, and he was paralyzed with the fear that she would reject him. Still he remembered what the judge said, that she had been in tears about having not seen her son for so long. With that thought he worked up his courage and rang the doorbell.

After a moment the door was answered by a maroon haired woman in a yukata, one hand holding a broom as if he had interrupted her cleaning, deep brown eye and a kind, but guarded face. Even from where he was Ranma could tell she smelled like tea, jasmine and tangerines, and a long forgotten memory stirred, of a woman who patched up his bruises, gave him hugs and kisses and always smelled of jasmine and tangerines. He was brought out of his reverie when she asked, "Yes, can I help you?"

Ranma licked suddenly dry lips and said his voice a little hoarse, "Um, No-Nodoka Saotome?"

The expression on her face became even more guarded, though that seemed to fade as she noticed his pigtail and deep blue eyes. "I was a Saotome and my name is Nodoka, can I help you young man?"

"Um, well er, I, I'm Ranma Saotome, er, hi mom?" Ranma quavered, tears forming in his eyes yet not quite falling yet.

Nodoka's eyes widened, and one hand came up to cover her mouth as she took in more of Ranma's features, concentrating on the eyes, the chin and shape of the face before breathing out "Ranma, is that really you?"

Ranma nodded and before he could blink found himself in his mother's hug, a hug fit to crack weaker ribs as Nodoka sobbed in happiness. After realizing these were the mystical so-called good tears, Ranma hugged her back and the two stood there for several minutes. After a little while however, Nodoka pulled back, dragging Ranma inside with her. "Tell me everything Ranma, everything since your father took you away from me. Where is he now by the way?"

The two sat down in a small sitting room while they got control of themselves before Ranma answered. "Genma's hopefully still in Hong Kong, but honestly I don't know or care. Not after I found out about you, I just had to come see ya, um and I found out some other things about what he'd been up to. Er, you might want to see this first..."

He slid the divorce papers he had taken from his father's pack over to her along with the envelope with the doodle and watched as Nodoka's eyes dilated then narrowed in fury, but that was all the emotion she let show and her voice was clam when she spoke. "I see, and what other things did you find about the idiot?"

From there Ranma described why he searched his father's pack, and that he found scrolls stolen from other martial arts schools, schools that had housed the two wanderers for a time. He then told a few stories about his father's teaching methods, which caused his mother's grip on her tea cup to nearly shatter it. Even if you took away the neko-ken training his teaching methods had more in common with child abuse than actual training. After that he described what he had been up to since leaving, and handed over the letters of recommendation he got from all the schools who had returned property to, and he told her about getting help making the neko-ken part of him, but did not go into details, keeping the Beast Cry School's secrets.

Nodoka looked at her son with pride and sadness. Sadness that he had to go through all that, sadness that he had grown into a man without her there, sadness that she had never been part of his childhood, yet proud he had grown into an honorable man, one who had tried to offset his father's dishonorable deeds. "I am proud of you my son, more proud than I can say, I just, I just wish I was part of why you turned out so well."

Ranma simply got up and hugged her and the two sat on the sofa trading stories for hours until her sister Kiriko and her husband came home, followed swiftly by their daughter. All three of the Miyamoto's were surprised and shocked that the mysterious Ranma, the baby boy Nodoka had thought lost and cried herself to sleep over so often had shown up out of the blue. Kiriko recognized one of the school's who gave him a recommendation. That plus how alike Ranma and Nodoka looked was enough for her, and she welcomed the boy in as another family member. Her husband followed her lead. He would wait a bit to see what kind of person Ranma was before becoming too close to him.

Kiriko's daughter Rei on the other hand was not so easy to convince. Rei had long, light-brown hair with bangs that came down to the tip of her nose and two strands sticking out above the rest of her hair like antenna. She shared her mother's reddish-brown eyes and had a slender figure with E cup breasts, and she had taken the time to change from her school uniform into jeans and a t-shirt before coming down to join the family gathering. Rei had been having a very bad time of it at school the past year and a bit and was going to have to redo this past year through no fault of her own, which made her leery of trusting anyone, let alone complete strangers. "How the hell do we know this is really Ranma? I mean he could be anyone. He could just have made himself look like her son. None of these recommendations even have a phone number to go with them for goodness sake, and he doesn't even have any identification!"

Ranma growled a little at her tone, but his mother's hand on his arm stopped him from an angry retort. He quieted down and let her answer for him. "While I may not have seen him since he was four, I know this is my son. Trust me a mother knows, but if you want to test him in some way, how would you go about it?"

Rei smirked, unimpressed by the lazy looking boy sitting there. He looked like he was in shape, but that didn't matter all that much. "This Ranma was supposed to be training to be some kind of major martial artist right? Well if he's a conman no way could he be that good, so let's test him to see if he's any good."

Ranma's eyes lit up, and suddenly Rei wasn't so certain any more. "Sure, all of ya at once or one after another?"

Kiriko's eyebrows rose in surprise. "Pretty confident aren't you? You sure you want to take us all on?"

Ranma shrugged. "Sure, no offense, but it'll get it over with faster and then mom and I can spend some more time together." Nodoka smiled at him warmly and Ranma grinned back at her shyly.

Rei frowned but nodded, "Fine, if he can beat all four of us then he must be this Ranma guy."

"Three," said Nodoka firmly, "I will officiate this match."

With that the family made their way to a nearby gym that had a dojo. Since both Kiriko and her husband were policemen, they were able to just walk in. Rei moved over and grabbed a training staff, and twirled it around. Nodoka frowned a little at that, but Ranma simply grinned a little wider and she nodded. Kiriko shrugged and got her own staff, while her husband grabbed a truncheon. He was a little worried about how this was going, but Ranma didn't seem at all concerned.

The three Miyamoto's ranged themselves on one side of the dojo facing Ranma, with Nodoka off to the side between them. Nodoka looked at each of them in turn, and while she only saw eagerness in the two youngsters, they all nodded their readiness. She raised a hand into the air. "This match will be until one side or the other is on the ground or admits defeat. Ready, go!"

The three family members moved forward like a trained unit, the two staff users on either side of the father, but were astonished when instead of backing up or trying to circle and take them one at a time, Ranma charged forward. The three reacted quickly, lashing out with their weapons. Yet hitting Ranma was like trying to hit smoke, he was moving wildly, dodging around and grinning a little as they tried to hit him but Ranma simply kept dodging.

This went on for a few minutes then he jumped into the air, actually balancing briefly on Kiriko's pole-arm before his fist flashed out, tapping her face. Ranma then leaped again, now just balancing from one staff to another, hitting out when he could. Five minutes like this and Nodoka began to laugh, holding up her hand again. "Enough, enough, I think we have seen enough to probe my son's prowess, yes?"

Kiriko touched her face gingerly, as well as her shoulder and chest, where Ranma's taps had landed. If he had hit her for even half of those, she would have been out for the count. Her husband and Rei were making their own checks and they all looked a little startled. This kid was a little older than Rei and he had beaten them so easily... "Uh, yeah, I think we saw enough. No way could a conman be that good. He's definitely a martial artist. And Rei, if you're so concerned, we can have a blood test run on him when he has a school physical."

Rei scowled, now having a new worry, a young boy her own age that much better than her living under her roof. But she had already pressed things and she could tell her parents were now also buying his story so she shut up, but decided to keep some pepper spray by her bed just in case.

The next morning, after spending the night on the family's spare futon spread out on the living room floor, Ranma was up and about at the crack of to exercise outside, then went to sleep, curling up like a cat in a warm sunbeam. Nodoka found him like that and swiftly got a camera to take a picture, he was so cute, which Kiriko agreed with. Her husband didn't comment, simply grabbing a quick breakfast and heading out the door. As a detective his hours were much more based on the specific job he was working on at any given time than his wife who was a traffic cop. When she saw him Rei simply snorted and said something about an animal acting like an animal.

About an hour after lunch Ranma answered the door to find two guys his own age standing there. One had brown hair in unkempt sort of cut and the other had combed back blonde hair. Both of them looked fit, though nowhere near as fit as Ranma. He looked at them with his head cocked to one side. "Yo, what can I do for you?"

Both of the boys looked at one another than the brown haired boy spoke. "Um, we're looking for Rei, we were all going out together today, I'm Takashi and this is Hizashi. Um, who are you?"

"Ranma, her cousin," Ranma answered, shrugging. "I'll go get her." After a moment he came back with Rei, who was frowning fiercely at him. She walked out without even saying goodbye and the trio of teens walked off.

Takashi looked at the girl who he hoped to ask out someday, one eyebrow raised in query. "So who was that?"

"His names Ranma, he's Auntie Nodoka's son apparently. He just showed up out of the blue yesterday, and everyone's welcoming him with open arms!"

"I take it you don't like him?" said the blond boy. Rei growled and nodded.

"Huh, why, he seemed like an alright guy to me. Really laid back and cool," Takashi said.

"Hmmp that's all you know. He just showed up out of the blue, no real identification, no real schooling or anything, and Auntie and my parents just welcome him in!" Rei vented.

"Well maybe they're just better judges of character than you," Said Takashi, meaning to tease her a little but as was so often the case lately Rei took it the wrong way.

"Oh yeah, well you keep thinking that right up until he breaks in and assaults me in my bed or something!" She walked off in a huff, dragging the blond boy with her leaving Takashi scrambling to keep up.

A red shirted streak passed by overhead, jumping from one roof to another and the three teens stopped and gaped. "Um... was that your cousin?"

Rei just growled a little and ignored this sign of further freakishness.

Ranma hung out with Rei and her friends a few times, but never really clicked with them. He spent most of his time hanging around his mother, getting to know her when she wasn't at work. Nodoka worked as an assistant instructor at a local self defense center, and Ranma came in a time or to help out, but wasn't interested in actually working there. He was a good teacher, but only really wanted to work with the advanced students anything else was too boring to keep his attention for long. Despite this he didn't make any friends the first week he lived with his new family, but that changed on a hot Thursday night.

It was around ten at night, and Ranma was roof hopping around the city, trying to get to know his new home, when he saw what looked like a robbery in progress. About two blocks away from his current position, he saw what looked like some kind of punk or gang banger dragging a young girl of around ten or so into an alleyway with one hand over her mouth and the other one around her waist. No one else was around, and it had all the earmarks of a well planned ambush.

Ranma growled a little, his teeth bared. If there was one thing he hated it was a bully, especially one who would prey on little kids. Stealthily he jumped away moving from rooftop to rooftop until he was just above the alleyway where the thug had taken the girl, and when he looked down he snarled in rage and jumped down swiftly. Rather than being a simple robbery, the punk had taped over the girl's mouth with what looked like duct tape and was now trying to do the same to her wrists with one hand while the other was busy ripping off her clothing. This sight so enraged Ranma he barely held back any strength when his fist flashed out in a blow that crunched into one of the man's shoulders sending him shooting away to crash head first into the side of the alley way knocking him out despite the pain of his utterly pulverized shoulder.

Ranma turned to the girl and shucked off his shirt and tossed it onto the girl, who whimpered a little and pulled it on. Once she had, Ranma moved a little closer, and gestured at the tape around her mouth, gently rubbing her head consolingly. She nodded and he reached out and gently pulled it off.

After the tape was off the girl began to cry in earnest, grabbing onto Ranma in a hug around his chest like she never wanted to let go. Ranma awkwardly hugged her back for a bit, keeping his eyes on the unconscious almost-rapist. *If he moves he dies.* After a moment the young girl got control of herself. "Thank you, thank you superman!"

"Superman? Am I wearing tights all of a sudden, my names Ranma, and I ain't super, just a martial artist. What's yer name?" As he spoke Ranma moved away grabbing up the duct tape and using it to tie the bastard's legs together with one hand while he let the young girl take command of his other one.

"Hikaru."

"That's a nice name. Did he take a wallet or anything from ya?" Hikaru shook her head and Ranma nodded. "In that case, let's get you to the police and this guy too, unless ya want to take a few shots before we go? It's safe, he won't wake up for a while." He gestured and after a moment the girl nodded and came forward. She kicked the man sharply in the ribs and then again in the man's crotch while Ranma laughed.

She turned and grinned a little wetly at him and Ranma nodded sharply. "Right, now that justice has been done, let's go." He knelled down, and motioned at his back. The young girl got onto his shoulders, whopping a little as Ranma stood up easily, not even noticing the extra weight. One hand rose to keep her legs in place, and he lifted the perv in the other. "Hang on tight okay?" the girl was about to ask why when Ranma leaped from a standing start two stories up to a overhanging stairwell, then from there onto a roof, causing Hikaru to nearly shriek in surprise.

Ranma had seen a police station ten blocks from here, and so headed straight there over the roofs. At first Hikaru held on for dear life, then she began to enjoy it and soon she was laughing and grabbing at his hair urging Ranma to go faster. Ranma grinned but stayed at the speed he was, though the trip passed quickly anyway. Hikaru looked down at her attacker and giggled as she realized his head was smacking against the roofs every time they jumped from one to the other, not hard enough to do much, but the 'bonk' sound raised her spirits even more.

Soon they arrived at the police station and Ranma, not even noticing the gaping stares of a few policemen who were

outside as he jumped down from a roof into the parking lot and then quickly made his way inside.

Inside he found that this police station was already busy. A teenage girl with long purple hair flowing down her back to her rear with an amazing looking body who was spattered with someone else's blood at present and with a bokken in its carrying case lying next to her looked up as Ranma came in. The two looked at one another, then the girl's eyes traced first up to Hikaru still perched on Ranma's shoulders and then down to the perv he was dragging along. Her eyes widened in appreciation and her eyes flew up to meet Ranma's, who was looking back at her with interest wondering where the blood on her had come from.

This had only taken a second, and by the time the two were finished sizing one another up, the duty officer at the front desk had regained her equilibrium from seeing a shirtless man dragging another man along while carrying a young girl on his shoulders. "What in the..."

Ranma tossed the perv ahead of him to slide along the ground before reaching up to take Hikaru off his shoulders. "I'd like ta report an attempted assault by that ass-tard on this gal here." He placed Hikaru so she sat down next to the girl with the bokken and she immediately put an arm on her shoulders.

The duty officer shouted for help behind him and several more policemen, including two female officers, came out. Both of the women moved immediately to Hikaru, taking her away to be questioned and get some new clothing and for her parents to be called, while two of the other officers grabbed the man and dragged him away to be looked at as another began to take Ranma's statement. He was brief and to the point, giving all the details in a simple and unhurried manner which seemed to startle the officer.

After that Ranma was told to wait there and he simply nodded, sitting next to the girl with the bokken and the blood spatters. He looked at her and saw she was still looking at him. "So, what're you in for?" He gestured at the duty guard, who was now glaring at them both indiscriminately. "They don't seem too pleased with ya. Oh, the names Ranma Saotome, well for now anyway, what's yours?"

"Saeko Busujima," the girl replied. "And I am here because a man tried to assault me on my way home. I took offense, and the severity of my response is not to their liking. I am waiting here because they wish to talk to my father before allowing me to leave."

Ranma smirked, stretching his arms above his head and smirking wider in pleasure at how the now named Saeko's gaze slipped from his face to his chest. "What, did ya neuter 'em or something?"

"No, I crippled him in other ways." Saeko asked dryly. "Why ever did that spring to mind, was it what you did to your prisoner?"

"Nah, would have but I figured getting Hikaru back to her folks was more important. Of course if I see him around I might rectify that. But it sounds like ya did what ya should have done, who knows how many girls your perv attacked before ya."

Saeko made a noncommittal humming sound, not wanting to admit that she hadn't hurt the man so badly just because he attacked her but also because she enjoyed it. "I take it you are a martial artist?"

"Heh, yep, been on the road training practically my whole life. Mostly unarmed combat, but some armed too. Staffs, claws, some sword work. Been a little bored since I moved in with my mom and her relatives here though, the parents work all the time and the girl Rei doesn't much like me. Don't suppose you'd be interested in a spar or something?"

Saeko's smile widened slightly, though a corner of her mind was wondering where she knew the name Rei from as she replied, "That would be a distinct pleasure."

One of the policemen came over to talk to Ranma. "Mr. Saotome, your mother has been contacted and will be here shortly. First you have our thanks for stepping in and blocking what would have been an ugly event, but we're still going to have to issue you a citation due to excessive force, much like Ms Busujima here." The man shook his head. "That punk isn't going to ever be able to move his arm at the shoulder ever again, what the hell did you hit him with, and we're also looking at enough damage to the head that some brain trauma is almost certain."

"My fist," Ranma said dryly, "that's what I hit him with, it ain't my fault the perv was so flimsy. And ya can give me yer citation thing but don't think I'll care one way or another about it. If I had the time I'd a neutered that asshole then maybe crucified him."

He smirked as the policeman first paled in horror at the idea than reddened in anger at his tone while Saeko tried to

keep a smile off her face. "Mr. Saotome you don't seem to understand. We can't allow vigilantes to do whatever they want this one time you did a good thing, but if you show up here again, if you go looking for trouble, then you will face fines, marks on your permanent record and even jail time."

Ranma shrugged nonchalantly then yawned widely. The man glared at him for a few more minutes then walked away in a huff. Saeko held it in until the man was out of hearing then let loose with a giggle. "You really should have been more respectful to that officer," She chided lightly. "Are you always so argumentative?"

"I prefer antiauthoritarian." Ranma laughed then became serious. "I learned the hard way last year not to follow the voice of authority blindly."

Saeko paused, looking at him in speculation, wondering what the story behind that statement was.

Before the two could continue their conversation Kiriko barged in, followed swiftly by Nodoka. Kiriko had just picked Nodoka up from work in her police car when she got the call from the station that her nephew was there. After hearing the full story though, both women were relieved and proud, though Kiriko warned Ranma about going looking for trouble.

It was at this point that a tall somber man dressed in a dark business suit came in. After only a few moments talking to the duty officer he motioned Saeko to follow him. She turned back to Ranma and pressed a small card into his hand. "My family owns a dojo, so if you stop by around four or so I should be there if you wish to spar."

Ranma grinned at her. "Sure, I'll see ya tomorrow then?" Saeko smiled, then followed her father out of the police station.

Nodoka smiled a little evilly at her son, looking forward to teasing him in the future about his pretty new acquaintance. "So, did you make a new friend Ranma?" Ranma nodded, not picking up on her tone. After that the next to arrive were Hikaru's parents who tearfully thanked Ranma for saving their little girl. Ranma waved their praises away, and they left after Hikaru hugged her savior one last time.

Ranma was as good as his word and the next day, after having an argument with Rei about being a delinquent (as if he had meant to get into a fight, if that was what you could call it) he made his way to the address on the card Saeko gave him. He found her family's house/dojo on the outskirts of the town in a very well to do area, with both the dojo and the house enclosed by a stone wall. It looked very well cared for and very nice.

He knocked on the door and almost immediately it was answered by the man from the other night. "You must be Ranma." He said staring at the slightly shorter Ranma.

Ranma nodded. "Yes sir, I'm here for a spar with Saeko?"

The man continued to look at him, trying to analyze the boy's style, but coming up empty. He had none of the tells he had learned to spot, no calluses to indicate one weapon or another, his stance was loose and seemed unguarded, but he couldn't get anything out of it. "Follow me," he said finally, "I will be officiating this match." And making certain that my daughter doesn't take it too far, the glimpse into her darker side she had displayed last night was still bothering him, though not nearly as much as it had the policeman who called him in. A certain propensity for violence was a necessity for a martial artist, even more for a swordswoman or man, but it had to be controlled, regulated as much as possible. It remained to be seen if his daughter could do so.

They walked in silence to the dojo where they found Saeko waiting for them, a gi on and her bokken beside her, her eyes closed as she meditated. Ranma took a moment to look at her, and found the view even better than he thought it would be. Saeko was utterly gorgeous, easily more beautiful than any girl he had seen at the Beast Cry School, prettier even than his mom her sister or Rei. Her purple hair looked like a waterfall as it fell down her back, her face was without mark, and her body was simply amazing, with long legs, very firm looking D-cup breasts and a tight waist. *I knew that uniform she wore last night hid a lot from view, but wow!*

Her father coughed, bringing Saeko out of her trance causing Ranma to turn his eyes elsewhere. She looked up and smiled at seeing Ranma there. "I see you are as good as your word. Did you have any trouble finding the house?"

Ranma shook his head, smirking a little. "Nah, but you never told me your family was so well off, maybe I should call you Sae-hime hmm?"

"Only if you want me to rip off that which makes you a man," she replied, smiling sweetly despite her words.

Ranma grinned and her father motioned him over to grab a training weapon. He was surprised when Ranma showed no hesitation, grabbing a bokken similarly sized to the one Saeko used. The two teens dressed in the traditional protective gear then took their places in the center of the dojo facing one another.

Mr. Busujima looked between them then raised his hand. "This is not a formal match, simply a spar, and will only end if it becomes too serious or I deem it necessary, such as one or the other taking real harm. Understood? Then begin!"

Saeko wasted no time, bringing her bokken forward swiftly, only to find Ranma dodged aside rather than blocked her blow. He returned a thrust of his own, but she blocked it, wincing a little at the force of it. She reposted however, nearly clipping him, but he dodged again by a hairsbreadth. His return slash came in at stomach level and she was forced to dodge back herself, before rocketing in, trying to get a hit in before he could recover. But Ranma leaped over her head, twirling in midair, causing her father to gasp in admiration. She turned swiftly and blocked his thrust at her back, moving forward to press him hard.

This was how the bout went. Ranma was faster, stronger and had better reflexes. Saeko had skill and instinct, and she was soon able to match him in speed, though it made her muscles burn so much she knew she would be sore later. She was able to get in a few more hits than him, but he barely seemed to feel them, while his reposts came in with bruising force. Yet it was in endurance where she came up shortest. At the end of two hours Ranma still seemed good to go while she was sore and exhausted. Despite that however she was truly elated, having found someone other than her father who could push her to better herself.

Her father called the match when she lost her helmet after a particularly bruising swipe of Ranma's bokken, despite the fact Saeko was more than willing to continue. "Enough, I believe that is enough for one day, we don't want anyone truly hurt here."

Ranma nodded and backed away, removing his own helmet to show he had barely perspired at all during the fight. "Heh, that was a hell of a lot of fun."

"Indeed," Saeko smiled back. "It was most exhilarating, though I think once every other day would be my limit. Would you like to stay for dinner, I am most interested in how you came to be so good, and would love to hear about this training journey of yours."

Ranma looked over at Mr. Busujima, who nodded. "Sure, and maybe you can tell me about the city and the schools here. I think my mom is gonna sign me up for this coming year, and I want to know what to expect."

Saeko nodded then left to get a shower. Her father led Ranma back to the house then had to leave him in the family room to go and answer a phone call. Ranma looked around and spotted a nice sunbeam coming in, and the carpet was soft, so he did what came naturally.

When Saeko came down she found Ranma curled up like a cat in a sunbeam, his chest rising and falling with each breath. She giggled, he just looked so cute there, though she did wonder why he gave a catlike impression sometimes. She had noticed it in their match and seeing him like this only added to it. After a moment's hesitation, and hearing her father still on the phone, she reached out and started to stroke the back of his neck. Ranma's eyes snapped open but he didn't move, just letting Saeko stroke his neck and the back of his head. A deep rumble began in his throat, and Saeko giggled in delight. "Did you just purr?"

Ranma backed away from her on all fours, pouting (he thought he was scowling) at her. "Guys don't purr, we rumble in manly manner! And don't you forget it."

"Hai, Hai, you big he-cat you. You must tell me more about why you act so much like a cat though."

Ranma scowled (pouted) again, but nodded all the same as her father came in. The trio spent the next few hours getting to know one another. While the Busujima's had never heard of most of the martial art styles Ranma had studied, the name Anything Goes was known to Busujima senior in relation to an old hermit by the name of Happosai, though there were so many odd tales associated with the name that he discounted most of them out of hand. His tale of the neko-ken (with no mention of the Beast's Cry School) was met with horror and disbelief until he showed them the tiny scars all over his back, so small that you had to look very close to actually see them. After the meal was over Ranma promised to stop by again, and the two teens parted firm friends, though both were interested in eventually making it more.

A few weeks after meeting Saeko, Nodoka had finally been able to schedule a time to have her son tested at the same high school Rei went to. She had noticed how antagonistic the two were towards one another, but hoped they

would get over it soon, and it was the closest high school to them.

Fujimi Academy was a large campus with multiple buildings in a fenced and gated area set on a little hill on the outskirts of the town, with the soccer and track fields to one side of the actual school buildings, with a parking lot used for buses and delivery trucks at the back. The main building and the secondary buildings were four stories tall and connected to each other by walkways on the 2nd and 4th floors, making it look almost like a single large building. In addition to the main building where most classes are held, there was a separate dorm building, and a massive gym building with several indoor sectioned off areas, such as the main gym area, changing rooms, a kendo/karate dojo and a meditation room. The secondary building that was connected to the main one was designed for special classes such as chemistry and the other sciences, wood working, arts and crafts. There was even an observatory on the roof for the astrology club that Ranma could see as he made his way toward the teacher waiting by the gate entrance for him.

The tests would be given at the school by the History teacher, Kyoko Hayashi. When Ranma saw her he had to fight down the urge to ask what the hell they fed the women around here, as nearly every woman and teen he saw lately were hot as hell. Kyoko was one such example, with reddish-brown hair, stern eyes, a decent figure and a truly magnificent chest that made his mother's or her sister's seem small.

She in turn was surprised that the young man, who had, she had been told had been on the road all his life, was so good looking. She had expected him to look wild, uncouth and either like a bumpkin or a punk, but instead he was dressed in simple but good Chinese shirt and pants, was clean shaven, and had decently cared for hair, even if that little pigtail was rather silly looking. It didn't hurt that he moved like some kind of giant cat or that he was possibly the fittest young man she had ever seen. Not that that mattered much of course, she would never be so unprofessional as to flirt let alone anything more with a student. Looking was alright though. "Ranma Saotome?"

"Yes, miss." Ranma replied, having been told by his mother to be on his best behavior.

"Good, please come with me Mr. Saotome." With that Kyoko led Ranma from the gate entrance into the school, and was surprised he didn't even look at the girls track team as they passed him on a run around the school, though the girls certainly took notice of him. Kyoko had to agree, there was something compelling about Ranma, some kind of inner energy that drew the eye.

After entering the building she took him to her classroom brushing by Mr. Shido, another teacher, as they passed. Kyoko grimaced, hoping the man wouldn't say anything, but thankfully he seemed more interested in Ranma, who simply stared back blandly as they passed one another. For some reason Kyoko pictured a mongoose and a king cobra staring at one another, but then shook the feeling off.

Once in her classroom she began to test Ranma on his knowledge with a series of tests, with little breaks in between while she read over his school file. This didn't take nearly as long as it should have simply because Ranma had barely two years of schooling strung together. He had never stayed in a single school for long, the longest consecutive run was a two month stint at a middle school for troubled teens near Sapporo. Strangely enough with all of that his grades when he was at school weren't bad and he didn't have even a single dark mark on his record. She wasn't so foolish to think that was because he was as clean as the driven snow, all it meant was he wasn't caught or didn't start anything. Beside each separate portion of the record however the previous schools had put 'martial artist, extreme' whatever that meant. Still if he was in as good a shape as he looked because of that the sports teams would be salivating for the chance to recruit him.

By this time Ranma had finished the first test and handed it over to be graded and stood up, moving around to get the kinks out of his back, bending and stretching. The ordeal, as Ranma thought of it, came to an end over three hours later, and Ranma grimaced as his stomach reminded him who was boss in their relationship. Kyoko chuckled at the sound and let him go off to grab something to eat while she graded his remaining tests. When at last she finished, she rubbed her forehead in consternation.

Ranma's tests scores were all over the place. Barely freshman math and writing skills, though his ability to analyze the writings given in the test was excellent, it was his sentence structure and grammar that were abominable, as well as handwriting and spelling. Yet he had scored a perfect on the foreign language test. English was a hard language to learn but a necessary one and with Ranma's apparent knowledge of it he could probably teach the course. He had left a note at the end saying that he could also speak a couple Asiatic languages fluently. His history score was very high too. She was interested to see how well he would do on the senior test in that course, and his geography and science sections were definitely at a passing level, though she had no idea why he put little laugh symbols next to the physics answers.

She couldn't in good conscious let him into the junior year though, he would be well out of his depth in math and

writing skills and those were two of the most important classes. *Still, there might be a way. Takagi Saya has indicated a desire to skip a year and her own scores in math and writing would let her, but her grasp of foreign languages and history would hold her back, so if they helped one another....* Decision made, she went to have a talk with the principal. He was a pretty laid back man, and was more interested in raising the schools athletics to a higher level, which alas contributed to the teacher's workload and why Shido was able to run his classroom as he did, though she discounted most of the rumors about him out of hand. After getting his okay to both parts of the plan, she opened a copy of the school directory and then called the Takagi household. After dealing with the young girl's admittedly scary father, she got in contact with the girl herself, and set up a meeting for the day after.

Ranma returned soon thereafter and she smiled at him. "Well Mr. Saotome, I have good news and bad news. The bad news is that while you scored very high in several classes, including my own I'm happy to report, your math and writing skills are not up to the junior grade level, they are in fact barely freshman level." As Ranma wilted a little she smiled and went on, "However we have come up with a way to allow you admittance at that level. Another student, a sophomore has asked for the chance to test ahead. Normally we would not allow that, thinking that keeping her with her age group more beneficial in the long term, but she truly is a genius, and she has already proven to have a grasp of all the required knowledge outside history and languages.

"So you want us to exchange lessons?"

Kyoko nodded. "that is it exactly Mr. Saotome. I have arranged a meeting tomorrow with her, if you two can get along you have two months to pull your grades up. If you can't do it, then I'm afraid I'll have to put you in the sophomore class."

Ranma grinned. "that's about all I can ask for sensei, thanks a lot!" Kyoko smiled in dismissal and Ranma raced off, but to her shock and horror he didn't head to the door but to one of her classroom windows. Before she could do anything he opened the window and jumped out. She raced forward with a cry, expecting to see his broken body below, wondering why in the hell he had suicide after being told good news, only to see Ranma land easily on his feet and race off, apparently none the worse for wear. As she watched open mouthed he reached the outer wall faster than any sprinter she had even seen and without even pausing jumped first to the top of the wall and then up onto a rooftop and away.

In a daze Kyoko moved back to her desk, looking at Ranma's record again. '*Martial artist, extreme, indeed!* She chuckled, "No wonder he thought the physics questions were funny, if he can seemingly ignore their rules at will." She laughed again, shaking her head and wondering what he had been through to get so good. The first parent teacher conference at the end of the first quarter was looking more and more interesting.

Saya Takagi was a young woman who knew exactly how smart she was and had very little in the way of patience with idiocy of any kind. This often made her come off as stubborn, standoffish and arrogant but she really didn't care how other people viewed her. She had a few good friends, one of them being Takashi, who had been her friend since their childhood, though she wasn't as close to him as Rei was, much to her secret irritation sometimes. Despite being in the same grade as her friend they weren't in the same class (she was in the A group and he was in the C group), so she wanted to skip grades so that she could be challenged at least a little bit in class. The problem was she had no ear for languages and detested history, she thought it was useless information. How much of that was in reaction to her father trying to push her to be interested in it, was unknown. The idea of exchanging lessons was an interesting one and as long as the boy she was tutoring wasn't a complete idiot or spent all his time trying to hit on her she was fine with it.

Ranma's impression was of a pink-haired short bombshell with a haughty expression, big glasses, orange eyes and big breasts that almost made him stare despite the fact she was wearing a conservative blouse and skirt. After a quick glance though Ranma beat down his inner tom and concentrated on her face. "Yo, you Saya?"

"That's Takagi-sama to you meathead!" Saya snapped, not liking the boy's familiarity. Despite this she couldn't help but give him a once over. His Chinese silk shirt clung to his lean frame, he stood confidently, something she liked as she never liked it when people looked wishy-washy or subservient around her, and his deep blue eyes were really nice.

"Whatever Pinky, I don't give out sama's to anyone." Ranma scoffed. "You want to start the tutoring, or should I go first?"

Saya growled a little. "Don't call me that you dumb jock! And you should start with history, I have a copy of the test, teach me something and prove this isn't a waste of my time or else you're on your own."

"Heh fine," Ranma chuckled, enjoying her attitude for some reason. He liked straightforward people, and the newly christened Pinky seemed as straightforward and blunt as it was possible to be. Who cared if they got off on the wrong foot, he thought they'd be able to move beyond that easily enough. "Let's start off with the Meiji Revolution and the economy at the time, then connect that to why Japan decided ta invade the mainland..."

Over the next hour and a half Ranma taught her some history lessons, trying to make them interesting to her, and she took notes, interrupting him with several insightful questions that he answered easily, impressing Saya with his knowledge of the subject.

When they switched off however, Saya proved she didn't really have the patience to be a good teacher. "God how can you not do this, it's just a simple algorithm, just solve for X! How hard can it be? Damn you really are a meathead."

"Pretty darn hard," Ranma retorted, "especially for someone who hasn't even had a complete year of schooling! Be glad I can get this stuff as good as I can Pinky."

"What did I tell you about that name? And what do you mean you never had a full year of school? Did you join a gang early or something?"

"Hah, nah, my old man sort of stole me away from my mom for a martial arts training trip, and we never stayed in one place long, mostly because he was always runnin' away from the cops for one reason or another. He was a bit of a thieving asshole, emphasis on the asshole."

"Humph, well at least you have a better excuse than most retards, meathead," Saya scoffed. Ranma's eyebrow rose, realizing that Saya didn't really believe him about that, but she went on before he could say anything. "Still, here's how you do this..." After explaining this in a calmer manner, Ranma got it and the two went on, with Saya providing math problems and going over the math rules.

After another hour the two decided they could work together, and decided to set a time from ten to three for their meetings every day until they were both up to speed. Ranma nodded happily as Saya stood up having very vocally informed him of her desire to head home and take a nap. "I think we're done then, but you didn't look like you believed me about my being a martial artist, is that true?"

Saya looked over at him while the two exited the classroom and walked out of the school building, her lips quirking into a smirk. "Look, I like the fact you've got a good imagination that was a really original excuse. But no, in this day and age that kind of thing would be impossible."

"Oh really?" Ranma asked a challenging grin in his eyes as he stepped close to the shorter girl. "What if I could prove it to ya?"

Saya flushed a little at their close proximity, but for some reason didn't get angry at him getting into her personal space. "Well, er I guess that would depend. I'm not really into watching any of those sweaty kinds of things."

Ranma grinned, and they had just walked out of the school too, perfect timing. "None of that, all ya'll have ta do is hold on." Saya squeaked in surprise as she suddenly found herself held princess style and Ranma leaped up from a standing start up onto a nearby roof and away.

Saya recovered quickly and began to smack him on the chest and head, which had about as much an effect as throwing so many snowballs. "P-put me down you dumb jock, help rape!"

"Put ya down," Ranma said gaily, jumping from one rooftop to another, "Ya sure ya want me ta do that?"

Saya looked around and eeped as she realized she was in the air, with Ranma leaping along as easily from roof to roof as on the ground. She looked around, her eyes wide and wondering, her world view taking a severe hit. Still the view was great, and the wind on her face was really nice. Her tongue however soon recovered her normal vitriol. "Huh, alright, I believe you, and I'll admit this is pretty cool, but grab me like that again and I'll rip of that silly ponytail of yours."

"Heh fine, now which way is yer home?" Saya looked around and pointed off in a direction and Ranma swiftly turned, jumping away in that direction. Saya gripped him around the shoulders, pressing herself into him yet still looking around with interest, though she knew this also pressed her large F sized breasts into his chest, something her body was very aware of. Ranma didn't seem to notice, but his grip on her changed slightly, his hand underneath her sliding just enough so that it barely touched her rear with his pinky, and the other hand just barely brushing the underside of

her breasts.

This and feeling his hard chest against her breasts had her a little hot and bothered by the time they arrived, jumping over the tall protective wall around her family's mansion, something that had Ranma look around in surprise. Saya's family were even better off than Saeko's, a sharp contrast to the simple home the Miyamoto family lived in. Ranma put her down on her own two feet and smirked at her a little. "Have fun Pinky?"

Around her guards were racing toward them and her father, who was just about to leave for a business meeting was moving toward them as well. Saya didn't notice this as she ignored her flushed face and kicked Ranma in the shin. As he winced she started to hop around with her foot throbbing, but she ignored that. "I told you not to call me that you, you, meathead!"

Ranma shook his head. "You keep callin' me names, Pinky you will remain." Then his smile turned a little more gentle and he reached out to ruffle her hair. "Thanks fer agreein' ta tutor me Saya-chan, I'll see yah tomorrow kay?"

Saya flushed and batted his hand away mumbling, "Feelings mutual baka."

The first guards came began to shout at him to halt Ranma turned and jumped away with the same ease he had arrived with. The guards, all tough, professional men who had protected her family since she was a child, gaped in shock.

Her father too stared in surprise. "I haven't seen a martial artist of that skill level in years. I wonder what training he has gone through to get that good?"

Saya shrugged, looking away to hide her flustered face, wondering where this new acquaintance would take her.

Rei and Ranma's relationship had started rocky and stayed that way. Rei didn't like how wild and free Ranma was, nor how he was so much better than her at martial arts. She felt intimidated by him and made no bones about how she felt his catlike aspects were freakish.

Ranma in turn didn't much care for Rei. She was standoffish with him and way too needy she wanted to be the center of attention wherever she was. He also didn't like how she seemed to take her friend Takashi for granted. This got worse later in the summer when, a week before school started up, she and Hizashi started dating. This sickened not only Ranma, but Saya as well, who wasn't very happy at all about how Takashi started moping. The two of them had been friends since kindergarten, and she had a bit of a crush on him for years, but he only had eyes for Rei due to 'some stupid childish pinky promise'. Thankfully her crush on him had faded over the summer.

Still, Ranma's lessons with Saya and spars with Saeko went well for them and allowed him to hang out with them instead of at home. His friendship with Saeko slowly changed over time, becoming more flirty and touchy feely, with the two of them going out of their way (when her father wasn't around) to flirt with one another as Ranma taught Saeko some speed enhancing katas. After a month she was almost good enough to start roof-hopping, but her sense of balance wasn't quite there yet.

His friendship with the prickly Saya on the other hand did not become more touchy feely. Saya didn't become any more friendly after their first meeting, but trading jibes and barbs with her was fun for both of them, and she usually stopped making them when he was teaching her English or history. She in turn was astonished at how fast he picked up what she taught him, she liked how he treated her like her own person and wasn't intimidated at all by her family (actually Ranma didn't know anything about them, though he wouldn't have been intimidated even if he had) and began to see him as a real friend, though that wasn't enough to make her go easy on him.

In his free time Ranma studied the one scroll that his father had written in his own hand, and after translating it from his horrible handwriting was very surprised and more than a little impressed at what his father had come up with. The Umi-Sen-Ken was one of the, if not the, deadliest technique Ranma had ever heard of. The ability to completely mask your presence with a bit of concentration was amazing. He knew however that it would take him months to work up enough ki control to use it.

About two weeks before the school year began both of them took their tests again, and both were put in the junior B class, much to the delight of Nodoka and the chagrin of Rei.

Ranma walked slowly (normally) alongside the happy couple, Takashi having made the correct decision to walk to school on his own, if he even decided to show up at all for the first day. Ranma couldn't blame him at all, being

around Hizashi and Rei was irritating for him it must have been torture for Takashi given his obvious (though admittedly only obvious to Ranma thanks to his sense of smell) feelings for Rei.

The girl in question was looking across at him from Hizashi's other side as they walked up to the gate. "Now just remember that here you don't know me. I don't want you hanging out with me or in any way making people think we're friends."

Ranma simply gave her the finger. "Don't worry cousin, I wouldn't want to hang out with yer bitchy ass anyway. I already got a few friends of my own." With that he walked off leaving her gaping at him in anger. As he walked through the gates Ranma spied Saeko talking to some of her kouhai from the kendo club. He smirked and moved over to talk to his friend.

He touched Saeko lightly on the shoulder, getting her to turn and stare at him in surprise. "Ranma, what are you doing here?" Behind her the younger girls looked at the new boy with interest, wondering what her connection with their captain was.

"I applied here as a junior and was able to get in. Remind me to introduce ya to Saya Takagi, the one who tutored me so I could raise my grades enough to be accepted."

Saeko smiled happily, touching his hand lightly, which was all the public affection she would allow especially in front of her gossip crazy kouhai. "I'm glad. Can I expect you to make an appearance at my kendo club for a bit of sparring after school?"

Ranma grinned, letting a bit of his teeth show. "Wouldn't miss it."

The rest of the day was filled with the inauguration ceremony, which showed Ranma falling asleep next to Saya, who found herself torn between a desire to scratch the catlike boy's head, and wanting to smack him upside the head. The two later learned they shared a class, and although Saya groaned irritably at this, she was secretly pleased to have her new friend with her.

Kyoko turned out to be their homeroom teacher and immediately after calling roll she brought Ranma to task on his attire. "Saotome-san, is there a reason you are not in your school uniform?"

Ranma, who had taken a seat by the window in a sunbeam, yawned. "Because I don't want to wear 'em they're uncomfortable and I don't like how they restrict my movement."

Kyoko frowned moving to stand right in front of him. "Saotome-san, I realize you are not used to going to school, but there are rules here. I expect to see you in your uniform after lunch, are we clear?"

Ranma looked up at her and sighed. "Fine I guess." This was only the start of the trouble Ranma caused his teachers. In the next class he fell asleep in a sunbeam, and began to smack back the eraser his teacher threw at him while still sleeping. Saya however was able to wake him up with a smack to the back of his head. Then later he used the history text to hide a snack in Kyoko's class, though she let it go as he was still able to answer any question she threw at him from the text.

However the teacher who most had problems with Ranma was Shido, who taught classic literature. Shido was always on the lookout for interesting tools that he could use to further his own ends, and he had noted Ranma's physical talents, though he had no idea how talented the young man really was. Nodoka had put her foot down on roof-hopping after several of the neighbors complained that he was damaging their roof tiles, and so only Kyoko knew how good he really was. Shido merely saw him as a normal karate user, though as he hadn't been able to influence one of those as yet he hoped to do so with Ranma.

After class was over, Shido called Ranma (who had knocked off for another nap at the back, only this time Saya didn't bother waking him) to wait. "Saotome-kun, I notice you don't seem to have any enthusiasm for my class. That's no good, this course and the skills I impart are the most important for your life after school. If you have any questions or if I can help instill some wisdom from the works we study, that is why I as your teacher am here."

Rei had never shared any of her issues with Shido with her cousin, nor had her father mentioned his issue with Shido the elder with his wife or her sister. Indeed he wouldn't have shared it with his daughter if Shido hadn't held her back at the behest of his father to intimidate her. So it wasn't anything along those lines that made Ranma distrust and even hate Shido from first sight. No, it was his cat-given instincts that warned him of the man. He smelled like a snake, poison and danger all in one. Even though Ranma could tell he wasn't any physical threat, nor did his lessons from Master Ein tell him why he felt this way, he knew he wanted nothing to do with the man. So he responded in his

usual blunt and insulting way. "Shido-sensei, you smell like shit." After breathing in deeply and making a show of being disgusted Ranma walked off, leaving a Shido trembling with barely suppressed rage at this cavalier brush-off. That was the first and last time Ranma would be seen in his class.

He held his anger in until the classroom door closed behind Ranma then he turned and slammed his hand against his desk hard, again and again until he could control himself. Being so easily dismissed and thwarted, as if he didn't matter at all, was something that punched all his buttons.

Unbeknownst to either man this exchange had been witnessed by a sophomore who had come up early to ask Shido a question from some work she had turned in last year. Yuuki Miku had also come up to check out the new hotty, but then again a lot of girls had done the same. When she witnessed their confrontation, she realized that Ranma was even cooler than he looked, and that there might be a reason to keep away from Shido-sensei. His show of anger and the face she had seen looking into the classroom through the door's window, a mix of rage, scorn and contempt, made her very wary of him. Yuuki might give off the air of a sex bomb, and she sort of was one (she liked sex, but it wasn't like she was easy or anything, she just loved causing reactions to all and sundry) but that didn't mean she was stupid.

Immediately after class ended Ranma ran through the halls dodging everyone around him and ignoring the random teachers shouting at him to not run in the halls as he made his way toward the kendo dojo that was next to the gym. He found Saeko already there, and just coming out from the changing area. She smirked a little at him and shook her head. "I'm sorry Ranma-kun" she had initially tried to call him by his last name but he would pinch her cheeks every time and she had since learned not to bother, "But we can only have a brief warm up spar now, I will have to work out with my team for a time before we can truly go at it."

"Che," Ranma frowned. "Ah well, I guess I'll just take a nap or something." He reached over and began to twirl a bokken in one hand, then brining it forward in a slash Saeko brought her own bokken up to block quickly. "Or perhaps you could use this time to start your first night's homework?" Saeko asked.

"Now why would I do that?" Ranma asked, blocking her riposte swiftly and countering as Saeko shook her head in amusement. Ranma was extremely bright, but no real drive in anything but martial arts and it took his mother ordering him to do his school work. Indeed Saeko thought his lazy nature outside of sparring and practicing would probably drive the teachers insane soon.

They began to exchange blows in the center of the ring inscribed on the mats on the floor, continuing until Saeko's kendo team came out and joined them. After they were all there, Saeko signaled a stop and the two disengaged, bowing to one another.

Ranma moved off to the side and laid out in a sunbeam against the wall, but before he could nod off a female voice he had never heard before spoke from the entrance to the gym. "There you are Saotome-kun!"

He looked up as a blond woman wearing a very short tight skirt and a doctor's overcoat over a blouse and with the biggest breasts he had ever seen walking toward him, hands on her hips. *They look at least a size, maybe two larger than even Kyoko sensei!* "Um, yeah, er, why are ya looking for me?"

"Hai! I'm Shizuka Marikawa, the nurse here and while you've been accepted here, you haven't had full physical in a long time, so we need to get that done and add it to your records."

Ranma's forehead crinkled. "Um sensei, I'm a martial artist. Ain't been sick a day in my life, and any injuries I get, well they heal real quick. And I had a physical a few months ago, there wasn't anything wrong with me."

"Nevertheless I want to take a look at you. Now come on, I want to get this done so I can go home." She reached down and tried to pull him along, but this had about as much an effect as trying to make a mountain move by pushing on it.

Ranma looked over at Saeko for help and saw she and the other kendoists had stopped and were giggling a little at his expense. Saeko chuckled a little then made a shooing motion and mouthed the word 'later' at him. She was amused however that something most boys would kill to do, I.E. get close to Shizuka-sensei, who despite her ditzzy nature was a true beauty, seemed to just irritate Ranma.

Ranma growled a little having wanted to take a nap, but stood up, making Shizuka back up at his sudden movement. "Come on, let's get this over with."

Something that would have surprised most of the students and even some of the faculty was that Shizuka actually took her job as a nurse seriously. She swiftly went through the physical, then looked down at her findings and shook her head. "Well Saotome-kun"

"Ranma" he interrupted her, scratching at his pigtail in embarrassment. "I ain't much for formality, and I'm only a Saotome until we get all the paperwork done to add me ta the Miyamoto clan register."

Shizuka nodded, giggling a little at how cute the boy looked. "Well Ranma-kun, you're in the peak of health. Heck, you'd be hard pressed to find an Olympic athlete in as good a shape. The only other person I've seen with numbers even close to this is Busujima-san." Ranma nodded and yawned like a cat stretching in place, making Shizuka have an idea which she acted upon immediately.

She reached out and scratched at the back of his neck then watched in delight as his eyes slitted shut and a deep rumble started to emanate from his chest. She giggled, scratching down his back and then up to his hairline and the rumble increased as he arched his back under her scratching. "Hehehe, did you just purr, oh that's so cute!"

Ranma tried to frown and get away, but his body betrayed him and he slumped back into a puddle as she continued her ministrations. "Guys don't purr," he protested (for the second time since arriving in this city), "We rumble in a manly manner."

"Hai, Hai kitty-kun, you're so manly." Shizuka giggled and then kept scratching at his back. This went on for a time until she got a call from the athletics field to come and look at an injured student. Ranma took the chance to make his escape and went back to the dojo. The team was still practicing so he went back to his original spot and curled up in the sunbeam again, quickly falling asleep.

He was woken up by a gentle hand touching his hair and he woke up quickly, looking up to see Saeko looking down at him, a smile on her face. "I'm done with the others now, do you still wish to spar?"

Ranma jumped to his feet lightly, looking around and noticing that most of the girls had already left, leaving only a few juniors, one he vaguely recognized from his class. They were still working through some katas together, but it was obvious they didn't need Saeko looking over their shoulder.

He nodded grinning a little and moved over to grab a bokken before turning to face Saeko in the center of the ring. "You know, this will be the first time we've sparred without your father around to referee."

Saeko's smile widened slightly, and an eager light began to glimmer in her eyes. "So it will. Will you be wearing armor, and what are the rules?"

"No, and no rules," Ranma answered simply, "Anything goes until one of us is disarmed, on the ground, or submits."

Saeko didn't bother answering charging forward and sweeping her bokken around in an arc faster than any of the girls around her could follow. Ranma however could and blocked it, riposting swiftly but she recovered and blocked his blow, staggering back a little under the power, but a thrust caught him in the chest and he grunted a little under the impact but that was all and he kept coming. The two continued, and Ranma landed several glancing blows on her, though she landed a few of her own they were few and far between. She sensed that Ranma was holding back, but how much she couldn't tell. Yet despite this the fight was the best she ever had, and she could feel her body responding, her panties soon becoming drenched.

The girls had long left, their worries waved off by Saeko at different times during the match, when suddenly a blow from Ranma smashed in shattering her kendo protective armor as well as his own blade. Her blade however came around in an arc, smashing into his shoulder. He reached out and grabbed it with the speed of a striking snake before she could recover from the lunge, and pulled her towards him. She attempted to kick out, but Ranma jumped over it, touching her forehead with the palm of his hand and pushing her off balance just enough for her to stumble backwards onto her back.

They ended up with Saeko on the ground and Ranma straddling her stomach looking down at her. "I think I win, though I will be feeling this tomorrow. You hit even harder than a few of the masters I've sparred with." Indeed, she was better than most of the martial artists he had met on his journey, though her skills weren't nearly as diverse. He wouldn't put her up against a master like Ein or an advanced journeyman like Kuman, but by this point she could have given anyone else he had met on his journey a run for their money.

Saeko looked up at him, her body on fire barely under control as her chest heaved. She tried to move a little, but found his weight pressed down on her, not hurting but not allowing her to get away either. "So you do, and thank you

for the compliment. Now, what are you going to do with your prisoner?"

Ranma looked down at her, his own body responding to the musty smell in the air. He moved gently down her body then leaned down to her neck, raking his teeth over her skin causing her to let out a gasp. "What do you want me to do to you?" He buried his nose into her neck, smelling the delicious smell of her sweat and lilac perfume. His hands began to touch her side and she suddenly flinched as he touched one of the bruises from the match. That caused him to pull away and move off her quickly. "Sorry about that."

Saeko gasped at the sudden lack of weight on her and pushed herself up to her knees. "It's, it's quite alright. We, we should probably wait until I'm healed up for any kind of strenuous activity." She glanced down at herself, ignoring her now hardened nipples under her gi and checking out the rest of her body for injuries. She frowned, knowing that once the adrenaline wore off she would be immensely sore, and would probably remain so for a while.

Ranma looked at her remembering the battle, for no way could that have been called a spar, and he remembered a certain look in her eyes. It was a face he had seen in the mirror once or twice and in several martial artists during his travels. "You know," he said slowly, "I once heard that to be a true martial artist you had ta in some way like pain, both inflicting and feeling it." Saeko suddenly stopped moving, looking over at him warily. But rather than the condemnation or the disgust she had expected there was only understanding showing on his face as he went on. "The trick of course is ta always focus it. If ya can't harness it ta something else, like the defense of someone or yerself, or maybe just being the best at yer art, then ya become a danger to others. If ya do, like you do, or like I do, then we become simply better martial artists, better defenders of those who don't have that bit o' darkness in 'em."

Saeko nodded, wondering how he had seen her enjoyment of causing pain, but they had sparred often enough so maybe it wasn't that big a mystery. "And you have this bit of darkness in you as well? I haven't seen any sight of it." She realized she had just admitted to her own inner sadism, but the understanding in Ranma's face had completely disarmed her.

"Yah ever see cats playing with mice and rats?" he asked whimsically, though his blue eyes were dark, and his smile a little vicious. "Cat's don't have any empathy for their opponents or prey. And me, well I think that if anyone tries to cause pain, well I think they deserve ta have some returned to them. That gives me an outlet." He was telling the truth here, though he probably would not have been able to put it into words without his time with Teuchi, who had explained how their animal aspects could change them. Maybe if he didn't have his cat-like way of viewing the world he wouldn't, but even then he would still have his love of combat, and with that would almost certainly come a desire to inflict pain. "People may call us barbarians, but so called civilized people need people like us around ta protect 'em from other barbarians."

Saeko nodded, realizing the boy in front of her was even more like her than she had thought, thus making him even more perfect for her. "I can see that. But now alas I need to go change and head home before my father calls to see what is holding me up." She walked over and hugged him tightly, pressing a kiss into his neck before moving away. "Thank you Ranma, both for the spar and for the talk. We will have to do this again soon, as soon as I am healed in fact." With that she turned and walked away, swinging her hips enticingly and delighting in the heated growl she heard from Ranma behind her.

Ranma stood there a moment willing his body to stop reacting to the teasing swordswoman, then shook his head with a chuckle and walked out of the dojo. A moment later, with the dusk all around him, he jumped from the ground up to the rooftops and made his way home.

The first two weeks of school passed pretty much uneventfully. Ranma learned the lessons he wanted to, slept through the others and never showed up for Shido's lessons again. While he ignored or talked back to most of the other teachers however, Kyoko found she and the other female teachers were able to get him to do pretty much whatever they wanted. Unlike with most boys however he responded to the female voice of authority rather than their bodies, so he became her and Shizuka's chosen gofer. When Kyoko demanded he sign up for some sports, he signed up for every one of them but track, the team Shido was advisor for. He easily showed up everyone else on every team he joined, making him feel a little bad, but the principal was ecstatic about it, already envisioning his school bringing home every sports trophy they could for the next two years.

Ranma only really made friends with Yuuki, who had come to him and asked him bluntly what his problem with Shido was, and a boy named Kohta, who he protected from a few bullies by the simple expedient of lifting the pair of bullies up by their necks and shaking them like rag dolls. Kohta and he had a few long talks about self-defense and the world at large mainly about the military side of things, and Ranma found Kohta a mine of information.

Yuuki on the other hand was a mine of information about the school and the town. The only thing that marred their

friendship was the fact Yuuki kept on flirting with him. He found her attractive, but her in your face sexuality was a little too strong for his tastes, and he was already torn between his interest in Saeko and a growing interest in Saya so he never took her up on her offers.

He also made somewhat friends with Takashi over a shared love of high places, but he wasn't nearly as close to him as to Saya or the others. Takashi's moping about Rei and the way he still hung out with her and Hizashi irritated Ranma no end, and his relationship with his cousin was frosty at best. Saya became an even closer friend despite her prickly attitude, and his relationship with Saeko proceeded apace.

These normal days however were soon interrupted in a sudden and final manner.

Chapter 1 Having fun?

Ranma growled as he worked on repairing a statue near the soccer field. *It's a good excuse to skip class but just because it was me who hit the baseball that shattered its arm don't mean I should be the only one doing this! Blame that asshole pitcher for trying to scare me with a speedball past my face rather than the curve ball he was supposed to be working on!* That incident had happened yesterday, and this afternoon Hayashi-sensei had ordered him to repair it as he left the classroom intending to go with Saya and try one more time to get Takashi out of his funk. Ranma had found he couldn't disobey any of the female teachers, much like he couldn't disobey his own mother. This was a natural response to not growing up with a mother to provide a female voice of authority, and it didn't help matters that he was most definitely a mama's boy, and they all knew it somehow.

Suddenly something caught his attention and he looked up from his work, frowning as his sixth sense began to tingle, the hairs on the back of his neck standing up and he began to growl deep in his throat looking around for whatever had disturbed him. He noticed some kind of commotion over at the entrance to the school and made his way over there as fast as he could while in the distance alarms began to sound over in the city.

Unfortunately as he would soon discover it wasn't just the main entrance where trouble had arisen. Indeed a few smokers would soon learn that smoking wouldn't be the thing that killed them, it would merely put them in a place to meet what would.

Kyoko shook her head looking at the man acting so strangely on the other side of the gate. He moved like a strange mix between a sleepwalker and someone who was on drugs, but he kept on banging against the gate, and the noise had caused the four teachers who were patrolling the school after the lunch period ended for students skipping class. "I don't like the look of him guys, I think we should call the police and get him removed."

"Oh don't worry about it Kyoko-chan, I'll get rid of him easy enough." Teshima was the school's gym teacher, and had been irritated lately by how much of his thunder had been stolen by the new junior Saotome. Teshima was used to being the biggest and most physically imposing person in the school, stronger and tougher than any of the kids or other students. Ranma however was simply in another realm entirely in terms of strength and skill, and this had stolen much of his thunder. Now people knew he wasn't the toughest guy around and more than that Kyoko and Shizuka, the best looking of the female teachers by a very wide margin, had latched onto Ranma as a gofer and he had taken over the jobs Teshima had done before to give him time to flirt with them.

Now seeing a way to get some of his thunder back he strode forward followed by Kyoko and two other teachers. "Hey you, this is a school here, we don't give handouts to damned drifters or crazy bastards so just shove off!" The man continued to groan and moan, his hands gripping the gate and shaking it slightly. "Hey did you hear me?!" There was no response and Teshima scowled then reached through the gate, grabbing the other man by his shirt and slamming his head into the gate. "There, how's that bastard! Now push off if ya don't arrgghh!" His words cut off by a scream as the man suddenly grabbed his arm and pulled him forward and chomping with all his might into Teshima's arm. "AHHH, get him off get off!" Teshima flailed wildly, and was able to push the crazy man's away enough to release him. Teshima fell back on the ground, grabbing his arm and screaming.

The other two teachers grabbed him and forced him to stay still as they looked at the wound. Kyoko was just about to join them knowing a bit of emergency first aid, when a voice behind her, a voice she had grown to know very well but in a tone of sharp command she had never heard in it before made her jump backward in shock. "Get away from him sensei!"

Ranma had run up to them from where he had been repairing the stone statue of the school's founder he had broken with an errant baseball. His face was a lot more serious than Kyoko had ever seen matching his tone. For some reason the thought of a hunting lion came to her as he ran forward but she shook it off as he spoke again. "All of you

get back from Teshima, that other guy looks rabid almost, and that can be passed along by biting so"

Almost as soon as he said this Teshima stopped screaming. The teachers holding onto him relaxed, but then Teshima reached over and latched onto one of them with his teeth, ripping out a chunk of flesh in a welter of blood.

Ranma didn't even hesitate at all, simply rocketing forward, his punch catching the former gym teacher in the side of his head and crushing it utterly. The now headless body fell back to the ground and Ranma lashed out at the other teacher, who had already succumbed to whatever madness this was, and bitten the shell shocked third teacher. Ranma ki claws lashed out, slicing both of them to shreds.

Kyoko gaped in horror at the sudden shocking violence but Ranma looked out through the gates down the street, and saw more shambling figures like the man who was still banging against the gate. *And that gate ain't the only way into the school*, he thought grimly. *Not good, and if people start to panic...*

Kyoko began to tremble in place as the blood and violence got to her as well as seeing the madman who had started this still trying to get in. "Wh-what in the world is going on! Th-this can't be real, yes, this is some kind of dream, some nightmare brought about by one microwave meal too many, y-yes, I'll close my eyes and I'll wake up in my bed in my apartment."

Ranma moved over to her and spanked her hard on the ass, a part of him enjoying the sight of her squeaking and bouncing in place, but his mind was on more important matters. "That feel real to you? Get it together Kyoko-sensei, and follow me!"

Ranma turned away, pulling out his cell and texting Saya to stay where she was and hide if need be. She responded with a stream of 'WTF?' and 'what are you on about you retard?' but Ranma simply reiterated his orders and that she would figure it out soon.

Kyoko wordlessly nodded, realizing that Ranma had already saved her life once, and realizing that whatever was going on Ranma might be her best chance at surviving it. She followed as he rushed away to the gym but he didn't enter the gym instead moving around it to the shed on the other side.

He broke in easily enough, then grabbed two hammers from a box of tools and twirled them, getting a feel for them. "Not my preferred style but it will have to do." He then thrust them both into his belt and led Kyoko off.

At this point the principal came on the speaker system asking the students to remain calm and obey the teachers and to evacuate the school in an orderly fashion, but this call for calm was interrupted as someone broke into his office and attacked him. His dying cries sparked the panic Ranma had feared and he cursed, immediately leading Kyoko to the back of the school, looking up at the building. "Kyoko, is that the teacher's lounge up there on the third floor?" The teacher's lounge had one entrance and a working bathroom with water and a small kitchenette and also held the teachers private items, including their car keys.

Kyoko looked up and nodded. "Yes that looks like it, but how are we going to get up there and why can't we just run? Surely if we find some police or something we'll be safe?"

"I ain't leaving any of my friends behind," Ranma said grimly. He knew Saeko could take care of herself, and maybe Kohta if he got something like a gun to use, but the others would be helpless, hence why he had ordered Saya to stay where she was. And he didn't even want to think what his mom would do to him if he didn't try to protect Rei!

He kneeled down and motioned to his back. "Get on, we're taking the Ranma express™!" He grinned, enjoying this a little. This was certainly more fun than being in class! Kyoko reluctantly grabbed him around his shoulders, pressing her chest into his back, causing him to blush a little but then he leaped and she had to bite down hard not to scream in surprise. Ranma reached out at the apogee of his leap, grabbing onto the ledge of the third story window. His legs hit the side of the building and he jumped up a little further, grabbing the side of the window frame. The two of them looked inside, but as it was a time for classes there were no teachers present in the lounge. The door too was shut, and seeing that Ranma smashed the window with his bare hand before jumping to the floor inside. He moved over to a desk and turned around, letting Kyoko slide off his back onto it. With that he moved over and swiftly looked out the window in the door, seeing a lot of chaos and confusion as students ran around everywhere with over a dozen of the rabid zombies in sight chasing after them. "Shit. Where the hell did so many of these zombie fuckers come from?"

Kyoko shook her head in despair. "Probably from the other entrances, and I know there was a delivery coming in today for the cafeteria."

Ranma simply growled but nodded. "Alright, here's what you do, first you lock this door when I leave okay?" *Hell, I'd*

lock it myself if I could figure out where on the outside Saya and my classroom was. "Then ya stay by the kitchen door, if ya hear anyone try to break in yah lock yerself in there. If push comes ta shove there's got to be knives or something in there to use in a pinch."

Kyoko visibly gulped and made to protest him leaving her but his blue eyes hardened and she looked away, nodding convulsively. Ranma wasn't about to stay safe with her if even one of his friends were out there, she could see that in his face. It reminded her of her ex-boyfriend who had been in the SAT when they were going out a few years ago. "All, all right Ranma, I'll stay here, just, just don't leave me here please?" That came out a lot closer to desperate than she could have hoped, but in this environment she truly was dependent on him for her survival.

"No worries Kyoko, I'll be back for sure." With that he slipped out the door and Kyoko moved forward instantly to lock it behind him. Then she moved back to the desk nearest the kitchen, sat down, put her head into her arms and began to sob uncontrollably, the violence she had seen at the gate and the screaming she was still hearing getting to her as she broke down entirely.

Ranma moved swiftly through the school, slaying any zombie that came within arm's reach but otherwise concentrating on moving through as quickly as he could, lashing out beyond that only when he could save a student and then moving on as the students ran on, too panicked to even thank him. As the junior grade classrooms were on this level of the main building he was able to find his classroom quickly and moved inside then closed the door behind him. He looked around but evidently everyone in here had already tried to run for it, but there were still a few places that Saya could have hidden to wait for him. "Saya, you in here?"

A rustle from a strange pile of desks at the front of the classroom answered. "It's about time you got here meat-head! What the fuck is going on!?" Saya pushed aside a desk she had used to hide the little space underneath the teachers desk, just big enough for her to hide in, uncomfortably it was true due to her chest but still, she had been hidden well enough.

When the principal's announcement had come on it had caused a massive and immediate panic, with everyone running, pushing and shoving in an attempt to first get out of the classroom and then out of the school, but her hiding had saved her from the press of bodies.

Ranma reached down and hauled her to her feet into a fierce hug. "I'm so damn happy you're alright Saya-chan!" He pulled back grinning at her flushed face, "And happy ya followed my suggestion. As ta what's going on, it looks like one of those old zombie flicks come ta life."

Saya looked away trying to fight down her blush at the sudden contact, trying not to notice that Ranma had yet to let go of her, his hands coming to rest on her waist. "Hmph, it was simply common sense. This way I miss the rush, and it was easy for you to find me if you survived long enough to do it. Don't underestimate my genius IQ, baka!"

Ranma laughed a little and pulled her into another tight hug, feeling her breasts mash against his chest in a very pleasant manner before pulling away. "Alright, let's make our way over to the teacher's lounge. Kyoko-sensei is there already, I saved her out by the main entrance. I'll drop you off there and start looking for the others."

"And if they're already dead or turned?" Saya asked frowning angrily at the idea he would just leave her there no matter how safe the place was.

"Then I'll give 'em mercy and come back quicker." Ranma said grimly. "Now come on."

Saya was still frowning but she followed him willingly. After a moment of watching him kill any zombie that came within range however she grabbed him and pulled him close so that she could whisper in his ear. "Stop that," she hissed. "You don't have to kill all of them, they're mindless, only reacting to outside stimuli. We need to learn more about these things, figure out what they react to."

Ranma looked at her then smiled. "That's the brainy girl we all know and love. What do you want me to do?"

Saya blushed even further at his appreciative gaze and his use of the word 'love'. "Let's make our way over to that dead body over there then I want you to take off its shoes."

The body in question had been a zombie before a blow from one of Ranma's hammers had liquefied its head, and she wondered how much damage a person could take before turning and if the others stopped eating you once you did. She shuddered at the morbid thought then nodded as Ranma stood up with the two shoes in his hand. "Alright let's move forward as slowly as we can, then I'll want you to throw one of those shoes at one of them."

Ranma nodded and the two began to move back the way he had come down the hallway and up the stairs. They encountered a pack of zombies at the far end of the hall milling around one of the classrooms and they stopped and Saya nodded. "Hit one of them with one of the shoes." Almost as soon as she said it the shoe left Ranma's hand and slapped into the centermost zombie which went down in a heap. The other zombies turned and made their way toward it, but then stopped, going back to moving around aimlessly.

Hmm, so they are in some way able to tell what noise is another zombie and what is prey? How? "Alright, hit one of the lockers along the opposite wall." Ranma did so, and the clang caused by this brought the attention of the entire group of zombies to that area. They all turned and moved forward, smashing into the locker mindlessly. Saya nodded in satisfaction. "Alright, we can go now."

Ranma nodded and the duo made their way around the mindless zombies, then cautiously up the stairs to the next floor. "So, they respond to sound?"

Saya nodded, relieved that Ranma had understood her experiments. "Yeah, and it seems they lack any kind of sight or else they would've known not to attack the locker back there. On the other hand, their sense of hearing might be heightened to make up for that lack. In fact I'd bet on it." More the things knew somehow when one of their fellows was the one making the noise, which was a really disturbing thought to her. They also seemed to speed up quite a lot when they thought prey was near, moving faster than most humans at that point and she knew they were also far stronger.

Ranma nodded and slowly eased open the door leading onto the third floor of the building. Seeing only a few zombies at the other end he waved Saya forward then led the way down the hallway toward the teacher's lounge. They bypassed the few zombies that they saw easily, and when they arrived knocked as quietly as possible on the door. Even that little noise however attracted a few to the zombies, but Ranma dispatched them easily. "Kyoko-sensei, open up, it's us," He whispered urgently, and a moment later the door opened just enough for the two of them to squeeze inside (and for Saya that was not a figure of speech).

The two women looked at one another and exchanged a quick if heartfelt hug. Ranma nodded at Kyoko and gave each woman one of his hammers, then made his way over to the open window, figuring it would be easier to get back to the tool shed that way. "Lock the door, I'll be back soon." Saya opened her mouth to protest but Ranma was already gone, leaping down to the ground below though changing his target having just spotted a familiar purple head in the distance.

The two women looked at one another again, shrugged and moved back to where Kyoko had been sitting after locking the door. Kyoko wordlessly handed Saya a glass of water and a piece of chocolate and the younger girl took them both gratefully, then sat down on a desk, frowning as she ran scenarios through her head trying to figure out where this zombie plague had come from and what was going to happen in the future before turning on the TV that was suspended from the ceiling in one of the lounge's corners with the volume low.

Saeko was having fun, she probably shouldn't be, especially not given the situation, but she was. She had never before found herself in such an enemy rich environment after all, and no one would say anything, look at her strangely or judge her harshly for cutting down as many of these zombielike creatures as she could.

Saeko had been in the meditation hall that abutted the kendo dojo when the principal's aborted announcement rang out through the loudspeakers. Once she heard that however she had grabbed up one of the club's bokken and gone in search of either her teammates or anyone else she could find. By the time she entered the main school building the initial rush of panic and attacks had passed and she was faced with a few groups of zombies wandering around aimlessly and no people. The zombie infestations had spread insanely quickly in the crowded confines of the school aided by the initial rush of panic that had hundreds of students fighting one another and the zombies in the halls to get away. Several corridors were simply abattoirs full of the things, some still feeding on their victims.

Knowing that Ranma could handle himself she endeavored to make her way over to where she knew where their homeroom was. Along the way she stopped in at Shizuka's office, assuming that a nurse would be a helpful thing to have along in this current crisis.

When she arrived she had been forced to give mercy to an infected sophomore who had tried to protect Shizuka but been infected, something that while necessary did not give her any pleasure. She had found lately that instead of being simple sadism, simply enjoying causing pain, she enjoyed the fight more, causing pain was just a part of that. Having to kill someone before they turned into a zombie was not in any way something she had enjoyed.

Now she and the large breasted nurse were making their way from the second building into the main building by

moving through the hallway to a roofed walkway connecting the two buildings on the ground level.

Shizuka was not having nearly as much fun as her new guardian having come to work in her normal ensemble of high heels and a very short, tight skirt that constricted her movement. Yet despite this she had enough energy to ask

"Why aren't you killing any of them, with someone of your skill it should be easy?"

Saeko shook her head as she once more used her bokken to prod a zombie out of their way. They moved on before she spoke in a low tone, "I would have to stop moving to get enough of a swing to make certain of killing one of these things, and that would slow us down."

Actually, she reflected that isn't the case so much any longer. She could kill them with while on the move mostly as thanks to training with Ranma since he had shown up she was stronger, faster, and even more precise than she had been before. She could kill them with even a partial swing, easy to do while on the move. Yet it was true that killing them would have slowed them down no matter how much fun it would be for Saeko. Shizuka would not have liked it at all anyway, and Saeko wasn't willing to risk her just to sate her own bloodlust.

They were about halfway along the outer walkway when a voice hissed "Saeko-chan!" from above them making them both look up at the roof. Ranma's head poked out from the side of the roof at them smiling happily when he saw the two of them. He flipped down and landed lightly on his feet coming forward and throwing an arm around the swordswoman's shoulders, whispering, "hey Saeko-chan, having fun?"

His eyes glinted with humor and Saeko could tell that he was enjoying himself too regardless of the savage and terrifying nature of what was going on around them. So instead of taking umbrage she simply shook her head and said "you are incorrigible you know that."

Her smile and the look in her eyes however answered his question and Ranma simply chuckled before turning to look at Shizuka. "How are you holding up Shizuka-sensei?"

Shizuka shrugged, a little disturbed by how much blood there was splattered across Ranma. Indeed he was covered from fingertips to elbows in splashes of blood and from his feet up to his knees and several splashes on his shirt from the zombies he had slain. Saeko had noticed this as well and simply smiled taking this as even more proof that Ranma was quite a bit like her, he had his own darkness telling him to fight, letting him enjoy it. Yet at the same time she knew it wasn't the total of his personality and that reassured her greatly about her own circumstances as well as how compatible they could be in the future.

"As well as I could be expected after all this, kitty-kun" Shizuka said, swiftly getting over her shock and hugging him happily for a moment before pulling back, her face more serious than was her wont. "I, I'm not enjoying this at all, but I won't fall apart if that's what you're worried about."

Ranma nodded. "Well let's get you over to the teacher's lounge, I saved Kyoko-sensei and she and Saya-chan are hiding there 'cause it has a lot of things we could use if this shit is happening everywhere in the city." He looked over at Saeko and asked, "will you want to stay with them or come search around with me for the others?"

Saeko actually thought about it, weighing staying to protect the three non-combatants in a place of safety or going with Ranma on his search and then nodded. "I will search with you I think. If the door is closed and they make no noise they won't attract any of the zombies and I will be of much more use guarding your back than hiding with them." *And, she thought to herself, looking to Ranma's eyes, this will give me an even better chance to let loose a bit.*

Ranma understood that part of the message without her needing to say it out loud and he simply smirked a little before leading the way over to the back of the school where he jumped up with Shizuka in his arms to deposit her in the teacher's lounge.

Saeko frowned a little at the sight. She hadn't quite worked her way up to roof hopping yet, and now she was regretting that lack in her repertoire since if this infestation was occurring everywhere in the city the ability to travel by rooftop would be incredibly useful. A moment later however Ranma returned, jumping down to land lightly next to her. He grasped her tightly around the waist pulling her body against him, her breasts pressing tight against his hard chest and stealing a quick kiss before jumping up with her in his arms. *Or perhaps it isn't so bad I can't rooftop* she thought chuckling a little.

The four girls nodded to one another for a moment, then Saeko and Ranma made their way out the door and off to search for his other friends in the main building.

Searching the classrooms as quietly as they could they discovered that Kohta and Yuuki were not in the classroom they should have been if they had stayed put, which might be good or bad. Not wanting to simply wander around aimlessly looking for them Saeko motioned Ranma in and as soon as the door was closed to cover the noise asked "where do you think they would go?"

Ranma scratched at his pigtail thoughtfully as he thought. "I think if Kohta was in charge they would make their way either to the teachers' lounge or the woodcraft classroom." Saeko looked at him in question and he answered her unspoken query before she could say it. "He'd be searching for something he could use as a weapon, and he once mentioned how a nail gun could be turned into a gun."

He smirked a little at that. One of his first real conversations with Kohta had been about what he could use as a weapon if push came to shove and the bullies took it a step further than picking on him and pushing him around to full on assault. Kohta's own reply had actually cheered the gun otaku up quite a lot as he realized that if he wanted to he could cause quite a bit of damage with some handy items found easily around the school. Ranma had simply smirked at him knowing that a bit of backbone was all the kid really needed. "If even half of what Kohta said about himself is true, he'll be alright once he has a gun or somethin' like one in his hands, trust me."

Ranma motioned to the door and opened it bowing Saeko out in a courtly manner and she giggled a little, trying to muffle the noise as they moved on. *It's strange that the two of us are so at home during this chaos. Barbarians indeed,* she mused laughing a little to herself as she remembered the conversation they had a few weeks ago in the dojo. *It seems that there is a need for barbarians now.*

They slowly made their way to the nearest walkway then across to the secondary building and up the stairs, trying to not get into any fights they could get around. Once they opened the door leading onto the third floor they heard the sound of a nail gun going off down the hall.

The two looked at one another and sped forward, no longer trying to move around her silently, simply killing all of the zombies in their way and moving as quickly as possible.

They soon found Kohta and Yuuki trying to make their way down the hallway. In front of them was about five or six zombies, with one already on the ground with a nail through his head.

The two martial artists waited no time in rushing forward and falling upon the zombies from behind. Kohta and Yuuki looked on in astonishment as the two of them slaughtered the zombies swiftly and efficiently. Even more than Saeko Ranma got a few strange looks as he wielded just his hands having dropped off his hammers with Saya and the others. But his fists and legs were more than enough for this, and the last zombie went down with a kick to the head that sent the head thudding (more squishing really) off down the hallway like a soccer ball. As the zombie's body collapsed he turned to Kohta and asked "you two all right?"

"That was so cool Ranma-san!" The gun nut exclaimed, running forward and grabbing Ranma's shoulders and shaking him. "How did you learn how to do that? How cool was that, are you some kind of ninja or something or some kind of super secret government super warrior!"

Yuuki rolled her eyes and slapped him upside the back of the head. "Stop that," she ordered. Despite how she treated him though her opinion of Kohta had changed drastically since this all began. The two of them had been in their classroom when the principal's announcement went out over the loud speaker and before anyone else had reacted Hirano had grabbed her and pulled her out of the room and into an unused bathroom. He held a hand over her mouth to keep her from shouting at him, though after the panic outside began she realized that hiding there was a good idea. After that they had made their way to the woodcraft workshop and he had armed himself with the nail gun. After that his confidence had risen even further, and Yuuki now looked at him as someone she could count on.

Kohta had developed a bit of a crush on Yuuki after talking to her and Ranma a few times in the past two weeks and that plus their friendship with Ranma was why he had gone out of his way to save her. The looks of admiration she had been shooting him occasionally were payment in full in his opinion.

"Were fine," Yuuki replied to Rama's question looking between him and Saeko. Saeko merely nodded at the other girl and she nodded back. While they were acquainted with one another through Ranma the two of them didn't move in the same circles.

"Either of you know where Rei or Takashi are? We haven't seen any sign of them, either alive or..." he trailed off gesturing wordlessly at the zombies.

Kohta looked a little concerned. "Takashi came in shouting something to Rei, then he and Hizashi went off with her

somewhere about five minutes before all of this began."

"If he was on the roof when all this began he probably saw what was happening out at the gates, though why he'd save Rei after the way she's been treating him is beyond me," Ranma muttered. Saeko elbowed him sharply and he sighed nodding more in resignation than agreement, knowing that his mother would skin him if he let Rei get hurt. "I wonder where they went off to?"

"Are we going to start searching for them now or should we drop these two off first?" Saeko asked, then told the other two about Saya, Shizuka and Kyoko.

Ranma frowned thinking and looking over at Yuuki, knowing that she couldn't really add anything to their combat potential at the moment. He wasn't unhappy that she was with them, she was a friend after all (though Ranma wasn't as close to her as he was to Saya and Saeko) but he was a realist, and the best she could do would be to rearm Kohta's weapons for him. She didn't have any combat experience or martial arts training, so in the current chaos would be a liability if they ran into any zombies. "Let's drop them off back at the teacher's lounge. Kohta can provide them with a better defense and the two of us can keep searching."

The others nodded, Kohta looking a little proud at being told he would be protecting all these hot girls. They followed him back to the staircase leading up to the fourth floor, thinking there would be fewer zombies in the upper levels as the students had all tried to escape by heading downward where they ran into the massive chaos in the hallways and the zombies.

He was proven correct in this assumption as they only saw a handful of zombies as they traversed the fourth floor of the specialty building and then used the walkway to head over to the main building.

They had made it down to the third floor and were making their way towards the teacher's lounge when they heard a scream from in front of them. Kohta, Saeko and Ranma all looked at one another, nodded and rushed forward, with Yuuki following behind quickly with a worried expression on her face. She really wasn't a warrior, but she knew staying with this group was far and away better than trying to go off on her own.

They came to the open area right in front of the teacher's lounge to find that four students had been hunted down there by a large group of zombies which was piling towards them from several directions and had just lost two of their members, hence the screams. The two remaining students had backed away quickly, wielding makeshift weapons but obviously not knowing at all how to use them.

On the other side coming along another hallway came Takashi and Rei. Ranma looked over at them then back to the zombies and shouted "I'll take center!" and shot forward, leaping over the astonished heads of the four students caught in the center of the open area to land in front of them, his leg flashing out and slamming into the nearest zombie throwing it back into many of its fellows before charging forward, his ki claws briefly appearing as he sliced a few zombies into pieces.

As swiftly as he moved Saeko moved just as fast shouting "I'll take right!" Her bokken flashed out crushing the head of one zombie before coming back and slamming into another's chest, sending it into one of its fellows before she moved swiftly crushing their heads with two sharp blows of her bokken. She came back to rest looking over at the others to find that Rei had charged forward along with Takashi taking the left side wielding a makeshift spear that had once been a broom handle with the ease of long practice. Saeko hummed appreciatively of her skill then turned back to business.

With the four close combat members keeping the zombies away and Kohta providing long-range support (mostly to Takashi admittedly as he did not have as much skill in hand to hand combat as the other three) the couple was able to back away from the zombies towards the teacher's lounge, where they were met with Yuuki who pointed wordlessly at the other hallways. If any more zombies came from the directions the fighters had originally come from they would need to shout a warning. The other students nodded and watched for any movement but thankfully this did not happen and no more zombies appeared to menace them.

A moment later Ranma slew the last zombie in sight, and the now eight strong group retreated to the doorway to the teacher's lounge. A moment later it was opened by Shizuka who quickly looked at them all checking for injuries and then waved them inside hugging each teen in turn as they passed through the doorway.

As soon as the door was closed Ranma walked over to the teacher's kitchen area to wipe off the blood as the others introduced themselves. Saya scoffed, not seeing the point to this and followed him. Ranma smiled at her and asked "Did ya or the others think of checking the news ta see how far this shit has spread?"

Saeko growled gesturing angrily at the TV that was on back in the main lounge area. "Did you think I wouldn't think of that you numb skull! Whatever this is, it's going on worldwide! They're trying not to cause a panic, but I would say this epidemic spread everywhere at once. Whole nations aren't communicating with any other nation, most governments are just gone and the local news is all about the chaos going on! It's a fucking pandemic!"

"Pandemic?" Rei asked hesitantly. She looked a little shell shocked, her face looked as if she had been weeping at some point, and Ranma wondered why that was.

He glanced over at Takashi, and saw a glimmer of the same emotion there. It occurred to him then that Rei's boyfriend Hizashi was missing from the trio who according to Kohta had left the classroom at the beginning of all this. He frowned a little at that and then looked over at Takashi, raising an eyebrow and gesturing mouthing the words "where's Hizashi?", not wanting to ask Rei and maybe set her off. Takashi caught his glance and shook his head sadly at the silent question.

Ranma frowned a little. He hadn't really gotten along with the blonde but he had been a nice guy stuck in the middle of a situation not of his own making and sort of following along with Rei, always in her shadow and hanging on her every word but that seemed what she wanted. *And judging by the look in Takashi's eyes I'm not the only one that had to give out mercy today.* He had done so several times, once to two girls who had been caught on one of the outer stairwells and bitten before he could rescue them, and several times when he found single students who had locked themselves in classrooms after being bitten, not realizing that they were already dead.

Rei nodded as Saya finished her explanation and turned back to watch in horror at the news. Saya muttered "see it's a pandemic, its going on everywhere!"

The two students whose names Ranma didn't know muttered to themselves at that but he ignored them, looking over at the pink-haired girl. Of them all he knew that Saya was the most intelligent, so he asked "So what do you think will happen, Pinky?"

Saya growled a little at the nickname then kicked Takashi when he made the mistake of chuckling at it. Takashi began to hop around on one foot grabbing his leg in his hands as Saya frowned looking up at the TV screen shaking her head. "This is going to get a lot worse before it gets any better, if it's going on everywhere so everything is going to be overwhelmed, all the utilities and everything else. The whole city is going to shut down, hell probably the whole country!"

"But the police and the Army will do something won't they" Rei asked almost desperately.

Kohta nodded fervently while at his side Yuuki looked on, her face creased in concern. "The Army should definitely already have been called in on this. The SDF might not be as large as most nations armies, but they have a great reaction time to natural disasters and some of the best equipment in the world."

"Idiot," Saya scoffed, "Look at the news. Where would they be sent to exactly? This problems happening everywhere! More, you know how many people are in a city even of this size let alone someplace like Tokyo? There is one policeman for every five hundred people in Japan, how the hell are they going to handle something like this! Even if the army, and they might have their own infestations to deal with, sends troops here if this is happening everywhere in the city it would take a battalion at least to restore order, and even then how do you keep it? Even one of these things could cause the epidemic to spring up again. You'd have to create a safe zone first, and I doubt there's any kind of central authority anymore to do so after something like this!"

Kyoko looked up from fiddling absentmindedly with her glasses, her face grim. "That means you see the rise of local bully boys who for various reasons can create such a safe zone. Law and order goes away quickly, and that kind of thing would hasten that."

Ranma and Saeko looked at one another, then shrugged. Ranma then looked around at the others. "So, what are our short term goals, any ideas?"

Takashi spoke up quickly. "I think we all need to get out of here and find our families."

Saya frowned but nodded and the others all agreed, even the pair that Ranma didn't know. Ranma nodded. "That's a plan I suppose, though if we do I think we should head ta Rei's and my place first." At the others look he answered "My mom and I got some real weapons there." He looked over at Kohta and grinned. "Sorry dude, not your kind of weapons, though Rei's parents are both policemen so they might have something I don't know about."

Everyone nodded at that and Saya gestured at a desk piled high with stuff. "We collected a lot of food stuffs, mostly

energy bars and drinks, and a few confiscated knives. There was also a handgun of some sort, that one of the teacher's had in his desk" a short fat blur passed her to rummage in the pile and she blinked behind her glasses in surprise at how fast Kohta could move when motivated but then she shook her head. "It should only be used in an emergency thought fatso, we found out the zombies react to sound. The more you shoot that gun the more you'll attract them."

Ranma grinned and clapped Kohta on the shoulder as he found the handgun, some small pistol but it had a full clip so Kohta was happy. "You heard the lady my friend. Still that leaves how we're getting out of here. I don't think going by foot would be a good idea, and I can't carry all of ya on the Ranma Express™." Saya and Saeko both laughed at that, having been carried like that a few times while Kyoko shook her head in amusement. The others save Takashi and Rei looked perplexed.

Shizuka held up her car keys. "Well, we could go in my car."

"Could your car hold all of us?" asked Saeko skeptically.

Shizuka thought of her little Beetle and pouted, "Not at all."

Rei looked out of the window at the parking lot at the back of the school. "What about one of the school buses? Most of them are still here."

Saya nodded. "That could work, though we would still have to get to them first."

Ranma frowned then moved over to the open window. "I'll be back in a second, just poppin' out ta look around."

The two strangers and even Shizuka, Kohta and Yuuki blinked in shock as he jumped from the window up to the next level and then onto the roof. Once there he had a good view of the school and beyond that the city. He frowned as he saw several smoke trails against the afternoon sky over the city then frowned a little more at the number of zombies moving around the school grounds. It looked as if a lot of students had gotten out onto the grounds, but had been caught and infected there or already infected before they escaped to the grounds. He jumped down, grabbed the top of the windowsill and swung in, causing exclamations of surprise and one shout of "So Cool!" from Kohta.

Ranma moved over to lean against a desk by Saeko and Saya. "Alright, there are a lot of zombies around out there, but most of them are congregated near the parking lot, the back entrance and between the main building and the gym. If we can get one of the buses up to the front entrance though there aren't nearly as many zombies on that side. We'll rest here for a few hours and then I'll take Shizuka-sensei with me ta the buses and we'll drive it around to the main entrance. Saeko, you and the rest'll need ta move through the school and join up with us there." The others looked at one another, and one by one nodded. It was risky, but it was the only way they would be getting out of here.

Ranma moved over to rest against the wall under the windows in a nice sunbeam and closed his eyes. Saya and Saeko looked at one another almost challengingly, but before either could move Shizuka slumped down next to kitty-chan and put her head on his shoulder, her eyes closing. Ranma's eyes opened and he looked at her then at the others before he shrugged and leaned back, a nap was more important than anything else at this point.

Saya and Saeko both growled a little, then moved off to lean against the wall beside Ranma's other side. The others spread out talking in whispers or trying to rest as best they could.

Ranma rested for two hours before Kohta roused him by first shaking Saeko awake and getting her to do it (Kohta had seen what happened to people who interrupted Ranma's naps) and Ranma opened his eyes and stood up in one easy movement, a hand pushing Shizuka back against the wall so she did fall as her pillow moved out from under her. He glanced outside and then at the others. They all looked a little better than they did before, a few looked shell shocked, but they all looked determined and ready. He nodded. "Alright, when Shizuka and I leave, give us fifteen minutes then start making your way out." Takashi nodded, but Ranma was looking at Saeko as he went on. "Remember not to get into any pitched fights, keep quiet and sneak your way out as much as possible, okay?" Saeko nodded seriously, and the others all nodded in turn. "Great, Shizuka-sensei, let's go."

"Aww, I wanted to rest some more." Shizuka pouted, then got to her feet, her tits wobbling and grabbing every guys attention bar Ranma, who was taking one of his hammers back from Saya, who had grabbed a power drill from Yuuki as her new emergency weapon. Ranma turned back and kneeled down his back to Shizuka then he paused as Kyoko spoke up. "Um, Shizuka, remember you can't scream or anything when we do this. Do you want some tape over your mouth just in case?"

Shizuka frowned, but looking out the window pouted and nodded. She knew herself well enough to know that she would either scream in joy or fear, especially since she had nearly done so on the way up, only the shock of it keeping her from rupturing Ranma's eardrums. Kyoko smiled sympathetically and came forward and placed a piece of duct tape over her friend's mouth then suddenly hugged her, the strangeness of the situation they found themselves in making her more emotional than she usually was. "Good luck, keep safe the both of you." Ranma merely nodded and Shizuka waved as she got on his back.

Without another word Ranma turned and leaped out the window, and almost immediately the need for the duct tape became apparent as even with it on he could hear Shizuka screaming as they plummeted down for a few seconds. She stopped as they landed, Ranma taking the jolt easily on his legs before shooting off along the wall towards the school parking area. Behind them the others looked at one another and began to move around making last minute preparations.

He made his way to their destination easily enough, weaving through clumps of zombies and cars with ease to the farthest bus, figuring that starting it up would create a lot of noise and hoping that using the one farthest away would allow them to get away without attracting too much more attention. He forced open the door and deposited Shizuka in the driver's seat. "Wait here for a bit, I'm going to clear out some of the closer zombies to give us some time to get going so they can't swarm us." Shizuka nodded, her hand already up to remove the tape but he turned and hopped out of the bus before she could say anything.

Ranma stalked through the parking lot, killing every zombie he found with ruthless dispatch, his teeth bared in shark's grin. One blow from his hammer, fist or foot was enough to dispatch a zombie and even when they turned and attacked him, the small clumps of them were no threat to him. Within ten minutes he had cleared a space around the bus, and he turned and made his way back. As soon as he stepped in he nodded. "Start it up Sensei, and let's go!"

Shizuka nodded looking a little pale, and it was only then that he realized he was once more covered in zombie blood. He shrugged that off for now though, knowing that there were more important matters at hand. The bus's engine shuddered awake and Shizuka began to move it out of the parking lot.

At the noise nearly every zombie in sight began to make their way toward the bus and Ranma cursed. *I underestimated their hearing damn, ah well, we're moving now, we should be able to outrun this group and meet up with the others at the front easily enough.*

He was proven correct as the bus left most of the zombies behind it, but as they turned around the school to head to the front and meet up with the others, Ranma growled in aggravation, seeing them running and fighting their way through a gathering horde. Evidently something had gone wrong.

Something indeed had gone wrong. The group had made their way down to the first floor near the school's main entrance easily enough, but there they ran into far more zombies than they had expected. They weren't doing anything, but they were spread out and everywhere in the entrance area. Takashi had the bright idea of trying to sneak past them, volunteering to go first, an act that raised his status a little in Saeko's eyes as well as the others. He snuck forward easily enough and grabbed a shoe from near the door, left there by some fleeing student no doubt, and hurled it down the hall. The noise it made hitting a downed locker made all the zombies in hearing range turn and make for the source of the noise. He opened the door silently and gestured the others to get a move on.

The trouble began when Takuzo, the boy they had saved along with his girlfriend Naomi outside the teacher's lounge, banged his makeshift spear on the staircases' iron railing causing an even louder noise to echo around the entrance area. Takashi had shouted run at the top of his lungs and everyone bolted for the door.

Ranma growled angrily and jumped off the bus, heading for the group rushing toward safety. "Keep the engine running and the door open!" He shouted behind him, and then he was in among a group of zombies trying to cut off the group ahead of him. They had turned at his shout, but even that did not save them, and Ranma moved among them like a lion among sheep, slaying them all easily. "Kohta run to the bus and give us covering fire from there!"

Saeko had turned aside and taken up position to guard the group's flank, and she smiled as she saw Ranma open a path for them before lashing out, slaying one zombie and then destroying another's ability to walk. Rei did the same a few feet behind her and the two of them urged the others on.

Kohta obeyed Ranma's order instantly, running as fast as he could, with Yuuki pulling him along to add to his speed as much as she could, knowing she couldn't help in a situation like this. The two soon reached the bus and Kohta

quickly began to shoot from the windows while Yuuki opened up the emergency exit set into the top of the bus and lowering the ladder. "Come on, this'll give you a higher position to shoot from! What else do you need me to do?!"

Kohta scrambled over and made his way up the ladder, shooting almost as soon as he got in position to take out a zombie reaching for Takashi from behind. "Just get my some more nails when I tell you! They're in my bag!" Yuuki nodded, throwing down the bag she had been carrying which was full of energy bars and other snacks from the teacher's lounge to rummage in Kohta's for the nails.

At the back of the group Saya, Takuzo and Naomi were bringing up the rear when Takuzo gasped as one of the zombies grabbed onto the towel around his neck, pulling him to a stop for a moment, just enough for another to lunge in and bite him on the arm. Takuzo screamed in pain and knocked the thing lose but the damage had already been done, and he grimly turned and set himself, ready to sell his life dearly before the sickness took him.

Saya grimaced but ran on, only stopping when she noticed that Naomi had stopped. She ran back and grabbed the other girls arm dragging her along. "Run you idiot, right now you need to save yourself, that's the most important thing!"

Naomi, her eyes dead, tears streaming down her face, shook out of her grip shaking her head wordlessly before running back to her boyfriend. Saya gaped in astonishment at this sign of idiocy, but Kyoko grabbed her arm and pulled her along. "Come on!"

Saya nodded and ran beside her, shaking her head. "I don't get it, why the hell did she do that?"

Kyoko shook her head, her face drawn and sad. "I can understand it, if you lost the one person among this chaos that made life still worth fighting for, I can understand not wanting to keep going."

Saya scoffed, but turned away not arguing the point though she still thought it was stupid. The two of them passed where Rei and Takashi were standing, racing between them and hurrying on.

Ranma growled as he saw the two students, hell he didn't even know their names and right now he was thankful for that, go down under a mass of zombies. More and more zombies were coming out of the woodwork, around the side of the buildings, from the gym and the rest of the school attracted by the sound of combat and he snarled. "Keep going! Takashi, Rei take over in close defense around to the bus!" He moved forward again as Rei and Takashi passed him, his cousin glaring a little at being ordered around. The two of them and Kohta pushed back another rush of zombies that came up at the bus from the side while Ranma joined Saeko guarding Kyoko and Saya as they raced forward.

One of the zombies that had been knocked down by Takashi suddenly rose up from the ground, reaching for Saya as she pushed herself to catch up to the other two. With a shriek that attracted a lot of other zombies to her Saya fell back, barely avoiding the lunging jaws and falling to her knees. "G-get away, get away!" She raised her power drill turning it on and thrusting it forward into the zombies mouth, up and into its skull. "Get AWAY!" The drills spun and drilled through the zombie's head, blood and gore going everywhere and splattering her face and glasses. The zombie stopped moving as whatever was driving it failed at last, but it still would have fallen on top of her if Ranma hadn't appeared and smashed it to the side with a kick that sent it flying in the air and away.

Saya looked up in shock as the zombie disappeared from view, but her mind had shut down, and she began to tremble in place as how close she came to a fate worse than death registered. Wasting no time Ranma reached down and picked her up easily, then ran as fast as he could to the bus, putting her in a chair in the front then racing out again to rejoin Saeko.

Saeko sent him a look between swings and Ranma shrugged. "She'll be okay eventually, right now we can't do anything to help her, we got bigger fish to fry." The two fell back towards the bus as Kyoko ran up its steps into the bus, plopping down in a seat behind Shizuka.

Ranma waved at Takashi and Rei to get on the bus and Saeko and Ranma had just jumped aboard in turn when suddenly Takashi shouted, "Wait! There's another group of survivors coming towards us from the school!"

The others all looked and Rei growled while Ranma merely ground his teeth at the sight of Shido (or as Ranma called him Shido-shit) coming toward him with about eleven students following him, all of them students from his homeroom. Rei turned to Shizuka and said "Leave them, get us out of here!"

Takashi gaped at her in shock. "We can't just leave them to those things!"

"You have no idea what that man is like!" Rei shouted back.

Saeko, who didn't know anything of Rei's issues with Shido or even that Ranma had a particular problem with Shido, shook her head. "We shouldn't just leave them here. That would be too cruel a punishment regardless of who it was."

Ranma growled. He didn't really know why Rei had a problem with Shido-shit, but ever since he first saw the man all his senses were telling him to stay as far away from him as possible. Still the students with him hadn't done anything as far as Ranma knew. He wouldn't leave them to their fate just to leave Shido-shit with them. "Turn the bus around and aim us at the exit!" he ordered and then jumped out. "We'll all stay around the bus and keep guard, if they reach us fine, but stay close, all of ya."

Takashi nodded and followed behind them but Rei grabbed his arm glaring into his face. "you'll regret this," she ground out "I promise you!"

Takashi looked at her wondering what the hell had got into the girl before shaking her arm off and following the others out of the bus.

Ranma ran forward, slamming into a zombie and sending it skidding backwards into one of its fellows before bringing his hammer around to slam into another's head splattering everywhere. Saeko charged forward as well and the two of them with cover fire from Kohta cleared an area around the bus as it turned to face the exit.

They kept this area clear of zombies as the teacher and his group ran forward. Shido had been following behind chivying the students in front of him, not because he felt that the back was a safe place, but felt that he wanted of me shield in front of him. He frowned as he saw how hard-pressed the fighters around the bus were, then back across his shoulder, seeing hundreds of zombies boiling out of the school buildings, the nearest barely ten feet behind him. A distraction was needed to ensure his survival, but what?

One of the students was running next to him and thinking quickly Shido subtly tripped him. As he ran on the student grabbed his leg and said "help Sensei!"

Shido simply sneered and kicked him in the head, forcing him to let go of Shido's leg. As he ran forward the zombies fell on the downed student, taking enough of their attention of Shido and his followers to enter the zone around the bus that Saotome and Busujima were keeping clear of zombies in a show of martial prowess that made Shido smile covetously.

Luckily for him, none of the fighters around the bus had seen what had happened, too busy with the zombies around the bus. Even Shizuka and the others hadn't seen it. Soon Shido's group was on board.

Once they were on the bus one Shido's followers a trouble maker named Tsunoda shouted "get us out of here!"

But Shizuka refused to move commenting "they saved your life and we're not leaving them just because you're on board! You'd never have reached us without them out there to protect you!"

Kyoko and the others all nodded and Kohta clambered down from the roof space, his nail gun moving around warningly. Even Yuuki nodded, and Tsunoda sneered a little but backed off. Soon after this little confrontation Takashi entered the bus, followed swiftly by Saeko and Ranma last of all. The moment he was on board he shouted "go!"

"There's a lot of those things in front of us though!" Shizuka exclaimed

"Run them down!" Ranma ordered.

Shizuka gaped a little then shook her head and said to herself "they're not human anymore, they're not human anymore, they're not human anymore!" and with that final repetition she gunned it. With that the bus shot forward splattering several zombies and bursting out of the still closed gates onto the road outside of the school.

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief as they left the last of the zombies behind them and began to barrel down the road towards the city center. Ranma stretched a little sharing a smile with Saeko and then nodded at Kohta and the others, taking a moment to pat mess with Shizuka's hair a bit, causing her to giggle at how their positions had reversed. He noticed that the groups had separated, with his friends in the front of the bus and Shido-shit and his followers at the back with several seats between the two groups, which suited Ranma just fine. All his instincts were still telling him that Shido-shit was trouble, so the more distance between his friends and the slimy assholes followers the better, even if Ranma couldn't have left them behind.

His gaze moved over to Saya at that point and he knew that he had something else to do first. He looked over at Saeko, who nodded at his look and moved in, sliding past Saya to take a seat on her outer side, then Ranma sat on her other side, bumping his shoulder against the almost comatose girl. "Hey, how ya holding up Pinky?"

Saya roused out of her stupor enough to glare at him and yell "Ha, who do you think I am, remember I'm a fucking genius you, you dumb jock! I can handle this, I...I..." she trialed off as she caught her reflection in the window opposite and saw the blood spattered across her front, face and even her glasses. "Oh, oh no, I need to clean up, mama will be mad at me for getting dirty..." She trialed off again as Ranma put an arm around her, pulling her into a hug.

After a moment she broke down and began to sob uncontrollably into his shoulder. Saeko put her own arms around the sobbing girl, and the two of them spent the next few minutes getting her to settle down again. Around them however other issues were occurring.

The group at the back began to complain, yelling at Shizuka for her driving into the city rather than going to the dorms or someplace close and forting up. One of them even complained "Yeah, if this is happening all over maybe we should have stayed at the school! We could have found someplace to hide there until this all blows over!"

Yuuki scoffed, leaning back and not at all inadvertently shoving her chest forward, arresting the speakers attention as well as most of the boys on the bus, even Shido looked though that made her nearly shiver in disgust. Still, better that than causing trouble. "What makes you think this will just blow over? We saw the news in the teacher's lounge, this pandemic?" she looked over at Kohta who nodded, shamelessly staring at her chest but she didn't mind, "This pandemic is everywhere!"

"You should still have waited and asked us where we wanted to go! Where the hell are we even going?!" Tsunoda shouted, adding his voice to the complaints.

Kyoko stood up, glaring at the trouble maker with her best teacher's glare. "Sit down Tsunoda-san. Now is not the time to fall out amongst ourselves. For your information we are heading to a place that may have weapons and maybe a place to fort up. Does that suffice as a short term goal?"

Tsunoda growled and backed away a little then stopped as he caught Takashi looking at him. "The fuck do you want, you want to fight or something?"

Takashi glared right back but it was Yuuki who answered, looking down at her nails. "That's not him, that's your testosterone talking. Amazing that you have any really, considering some of the rumors I've heard from your ex-girlfriend."

Tsunoda turned and glared at her then ignored what she said simply pointing back at Takashi. "I can't fucking stand this guy! Always acting like he's all that!"

Saya had by this time recovered and that allowed Ranma to look around at what was happening. Deciding to nip this in the bud he reached over to the empty chair on the other side of the bus and with a little grunt of effort he ripped it out of its moorings. The squeal of tortured metal halted all the conversations and every eye on the bus turned to him as he stood up, holding the chair easily in the air, most of them looking astonished at the amount of strength Ranma so negligently showed. He looked at the irritating blond and said "shut up, sit down, and be quiet or I will throw this at you and squash you!"

Tsunoda was about to scoff and bluster but wavered when Ranma lifted the chair up as if to hurl it and he backed away quickly to join the rest of the group at the back of the bus.

Shido strode forward clapping. "Well done Ranma-kun, an excellent method of conflict resolution." Shido said, trying to butter the boy up. He knew now that Ranma was an even more valuable tool than he had first appeared. "Now, I must ask who among you is the leader?"

That was as far as he got before Ranma made to throw the chair at him too. "And you shut up too Shido-shit. This ain't school anymore, you being a teacher didn't matter ta me before, it matters even less now." The students at the back of the bus protested this treatment of their savior (he had kept them hidden and safe during the initial panic), but Ranma ignored them. He slammed the chair down onto its side in the center of the walkway down the bus. "This is the line. None of you people cross comin' this way and none of us'll cross going back. I'm going to have a nap, if I do not get a nap I become cranky. You would not like me when I am cranky. Am I understood? After my nap we can talk about lettin' you and yer groupies off somewhere." His wild blue eyes glared around and everyone nodded with various emotions showing on their faces.

Saeko looked at him with admiration and a bit of arousal at how strong he was, imagining him showing that strength in other ways. Saya simply smiled while Rei muttered something about him being a showoff. Kohta grinned at him as did Takashi. Kyoko simply shook her head and Yuuki looked at him speculatively, her arms crossed under her chest and her thoughts strangely following Saeko's.

Shizuka simply smiled, glad that all the yelling had stopped. She flinched as she looked out of the driver's window up into the air, seeing a zombie biting into the leg of someone who was desperately trying to hang onto the side of a helicopter that had just risen in the air.

Shido however tried to talk his way out of it. He knew that if he could talk Ranma into following his vision, then he could carve out his own little empire somewhere amongst this chaos. "But surely Ranma-kun you really wouldn't threaten a teacher? I never took you for a...."

He stopped talking as Ranma made to lift up the chair again and the teacher backed away swiftly, real fear in his eyes as Ranma's eyes darkened, his teeth bared. "Go back ta yer little groupies Shido-shit, none of us up here are lisenin'." Shido made to open his mouth again but Ranma lifted up the chair and he flinched back, moving away to join his followers who were looking between the pigtailed martial artist and him with concern.

Ranma growled a little more then sat down and was about to lay down when Saeko sat down next to him. He looked at her askance and she merely smiled, gesturing at her lap. Ranma smiled and lay down, his head on her lap and closed his eyes yawning widely. Saeko chuckled and began to run her hand over his hair and neck, causing him to purr. Most of the others looked on at this a little freaked out by the noise he was making, though Saya frowned at this display of affection for an entirely different reason. Shizuka too looked back at them pouting a little. She enjoyed scratching Ranma and feeling him purr, and was a little miffed that she couldn't because she was so busy driving the bus.

Ranma's friends followed his example and rested, while at the back of the bus Shido began to speak to his group in low tones, convincing, coercing and preaching, beginning to warp their minds even more than he already had.

The bus continued on like this, running into more and more trouble. Fires were everywhere along the road, with many crashed cars and zombies moving around in clumps at the nearest noise then moving on.

Rei was the only one who didn't rest, looking back at Shido, listening and frowning more and more as he continued to brainwash his group, then around at the others sitting around her, none of whom seemed to be listening. Kohta and Yuuki had both fallen asleep soon after Ranma, and Saeko was leaning back with her eyes closed, a smile on her face as her hands continued to move through Ranma's hair. Kyoko was murmuring quietly to Saya and Shizuka, working out a route they could follow, but coming up blank on a way forward that would avoid places where the zombies could have congregated.

Eventually Rei lost her temper, stood up and strode to the front, clamping a hand on Shizuka's shoulder. "Let me off!"

Takashi woke up out of a light nap to gape at her, standing up and moving to take her arm. "Rei, what..."

She shook his grip off angrily, snarling, "I warned you, I can't stand Shido! If he and his group are going to stay aboard, I'm not! I'll make my own way back home!"

By this time everyone but Ranma was awake, and even he was stirring as he began to wake up. Kyoko tried to be the voice of reason. "Now just wait a moment Miyamoto-san that makes no sense. If you can just put up with it for a little while, we might come to a place where we can drop them off."

Rei growled. "I can't sit here and be this near to that man while he's spouting his crap!" She hit the door release button and bolted out of the bus. Shido noticed this and smiled a little shaking his head and now putting a bit about unity into his sermon to his followers.

Takashi made to follow her immediately but Saya grabbed his arm. "Wait, we need a place to meet up. She needs to get away, but that's just an awful idea long term. Can you meet us at the police station right on the other side of the bridges?" Takashi nodded and Ran out to catch up with Rei.

At the same moment however Ranma came fully awake, looking out the window next to him and seeing a city bus barreling towards them. He turned to Shizuka and shouted "Get us moving Now! Backwards or forwards I don't care!"

Shizuka gaped at him then, as the way forward was blocked by traffic pushed the bus into reverse and pulled back

quickly, so suddenly she threw Saya and Shido, both of whom had been standing, to the ground. The bus continued past them, full of zombies attacking the few remaining people inside including the driver who was being bitten as they watched it go past them. A second later it slammed into a building on the other side of the street, exploding and sending fire everywhere. This fire cut off Rei and Takashi from their friends. Indeed it was only because Takashi dove and grabbed her and pushing her behind a nearby car, that both of them survived it.

Saya opened her window and shouted out "Remember, the police station on the other side of the bridge!"

Takashi nodded, shouting back "We'll meet you there!" before turning and pulling Rei away from the fire and noise which was sure to attract more zombies.

Ranma groaned as the bus began moving again. "So, why did those two run off? If they couldn't keep it in their pants I swear..." Saya shook her head and explained what had happened while he was asleep.

Ranma looked back at Shido, who had stood up again and begun to speak to his followers. Wordlessly he hefted his hammer and threw it. The hammer zoomed past Shido's head to slam into the back of the bus, sticking by its back tines in the metal there. "Hey Shido-shit, you've lost your talking privileges. Sit down and shut up or the next one I throw I'll aim to hit ya." Shido flinched away and his followers muttered angrily, but Ranma's eyes swept over them and none of them dared meet his eyes.

Ranma nodded and turned back to his friends, all of whom were smirking a little at how he solved that issue. "See how easy that is. So basically instead of trying to shut him up, Rei decided to just go off by her own? And Takashi, like an idiot, followed her?"

Yuuki smirked a little, she and Rei had never gotten along. "That's about the size of it yes."

Kyoko frowned, thinking that Takashi's devotion to Rei was romantic, in a sappy sort of way. Yet at the same time she knew that their leaving the group had been the height of idiocy.

Ranma groaned, wondering what his mother and aunt would say if he met up with them without Rei. *I envision pain in my future.* "My cousin is a complete idiot. And so is Takashi." None of the others disagreed with that sentiment.

End chapter

And there you have the first chapter of this new story. I will not continue it however after this point unless my Lion of Light muse leaves me entirely. I hope to continue that story until the tournament arc is finished, but honestly RL and my own enjoyment might work against that, so don't expect the updates to be as regular as they have been up to this point. I apologize for all of you who are reading that story, but that is just the way it is.

I realize the two week break portion is very weak, but I needed to speed up the time and introduce Ranma's relationships with a few of the other characters, but didn't want to dwell on them. I also know that some of my sentences come out very awkwardly, so if another writer spots the ones I'm talking about and has a suggestion I'll take it under advisement.

Questions for any reviewers:

Catlike aspects? Too much, not enough?

Should I bring in other Ranma characters or simply show what happened to them in cameos interspersed throughout? I'm wondering if I should put in some odd pairings using them and see what people think.

Suggestions on how to make all the characters speak/sound like they do in the original would be helpful. I know Saeko speaks very formally I'm not certain I pulled it off.

Where in relation to the ocean is the city this story starts off in, are there any clues pointing to its location? I didn't find any evidence it was a real city so it doesn't really matter but if there are clues like that I want to know about them.

What kind of weapon should Ranma start to wield fulltime going forward? Not a sword or polearm please, think **unusual** weapons and give me examples.

Who should Yuuki, Kyoko and Rika hook up with? I am debating having Rika be with Ranma, I might just keep it Ranma/Saeko/Saya. Shizuka will be with Takashi and Rei (maybe, if I don't kill her off in a humiliating and funny manner-_-) while Kohta will be definitely paired with that police girl from the mall arc. Hell, I think I'll make a poll about

it after I pick up this story full time.

***Chapter 2*: Operation Pimp my Ride**

I don't own High School of the Dead nor do I own Ranma 1/2. There just comes a time when trying to figure out something new and funny to say gets old.

I know this is insanely quick, but my muse for this story grabbed me by the throat and refused to let me work on any of my other stories until I finished it, but I still want to concentrate on my others stories. Chaotic Space **will** be out this weekend as usual. Lion of Light... I actually have an outline and will try, but alas cannot make any promises.

Some reviews I would like to mention specifically:

Farmer Kyle: Telling me I have typos doesn't do much, since I obviously missed them, if you can point them out that would be helpful. I also always try to get my prologue out of the way quickly, since I feel if it goes too long it takes away from the main story.

Ten-Faced-Paladin: I never liked how Rei turned from being with Hizashi and then started to cling to Takashi in his place without even really apologizing for choosing Hizashi over him in the first place. I know she was having issues with Shido at the time, but you can't blame all her issues on that. I have decided not to kill her off, but she and Ranma won't be getting along for a while as I think she has some major growing up to do.

Janissa: Actually, those size are listed on the HotD wiki. If you think they're large, Shizuka's is a 108cm (J-cup)! It's not just me being a typical man, though as I said, this work will have full lemons, simply in keeping with the maturity of the original work.

Narsil: Good to hear from you my friend! Yes, understand your point about his curse, but I decided that I wanted to give Ranma more time to grow in a different manner than he did travelling with Genma, and I didn't want to introduce magic to HotD. This way Ranma has a lot of the Anything Goes basic skills, but none of the higher ones and instead has a different bag of tricks. I have decided I can't kill off Kasumi, I'm just not that heartless so she at least will appear in a cameo, though I am uncertain if I could work her into the main story. Your point about too many super-powered martial artists is well taken though, and my idea to have Ryu Kumon, Ryoga or another male appear is heretofore scrapped. In fact Saeko and Ranma are already so good that any zombie group numbering less than twenty would have to catch them in an enclosed space to be truly dangerous to them.

Tai Khan: I addressed the curse issue above, but if you feel up to writing your own version complete with curse go right ahead. Rei will not be a new Akane, she will still have issues with him, but she will gradually warm up to Ranma. The whole neko thing will still freak her out though. Ukyo though....hmmmmmm.... need to think about that one.

I have decided to leave who gets with who other than the people already set in stone up in the air for the moment, since it could go anyway at this point, though everyone's opinions were appreciated.

I am also using a new way to break up scenes in this chapter, so tell me what you think.

Chapter 2 Pimp my ride

Master Ein was up in what the masters of his school had called the Eyre, the personal quarters of the master since the school was founded, when he looked down from his balcony and saw a strangely shambling man making his way slowly up the stairs to the school. He frowned, drugs were an almost unknown here in the mountains, but that man definitely looked as if he was on some kind of drugs going by his jerky, uncoordinated movement. He frowned even more as the man seemed to stumble into the woods for a second and startle one of the local birds out of its nest. The man seemed to try and catch the little swallowtail for a moment then stopped and turned away toward where the noises of the schools daily practice could be heard.

Ein, shuddered a little, something about the man told him there was trouble coming. He moved as swiftly as he could, grabbing his eagle-claws on his way down to the main school and out the gate. He swiftly made his way down the stairs, waving the two guards to follow him.

They stopped and stared at the man, one of the villagers that Ein wasn't personally acquainted with, but he didn't think the man normally had gray skin, blank, dead eyes, oh and piece of his muscles showing from what looked like bite marks on his legs.

Ein wordlessly motioned to one of his journeymen who handed him his spear, and Ein pulled back and threw with unerring accuracy, impaling the man's head right through. The man kept on his feet for a few seconds, then fell back,

whatever was driving his dead body giving out.

The two journeymen stared in growing horror, and not a little bit of fear, but Ein's mind was already moving on to the next problem. The School was self-sufficient, one of the reasons it was still popular, with its own small farms and a blacksmith and machine shop. That plus the fact that even once you entered the first gate the main school was up a very narrow path in a sheer stone face and easily defensible meant it was a fortress at need. The initial area was simply used for large lessons, since the area above were given over to buildings and farms. So they could simply pull back, but should they? They did have a duty to protect the people of the town below them after all.

"Ma-master, what does this mean?" one of the journey men guards asked.

A moment later however he heard more moaning, and saw several more shambling forms coming up the stairs. Ein swallowed, recognizing the mayor and one of his clerks who must have tried to escape to the Soaring Eagle School but then been turned by their earlier wounds. "Seal the school," he whispered, "pull all the students back up to the main school. We must see to ourselves and our students for now." The journeymen nodded and moved off swiftly, letting Ein to stand there and stare at the man who had once been a friend, now shambling toward where his students were still shouting and making the normal training noises. Ein bowed his head in sorrow, then leaped forward, his eagle-claws slashing forward. A moment later he ran up to join the evacuation of the lower areas, his purpose clear. Whatever else he would make certain that his school and the students under his charge were kept safe from whatever this was.

OOOOOOOOOOOO

Tokonsou city was a city that had been planned almost from the get go. It sat on a tributary to a major river, and most its power came from water turbines up river. The river passed through town bisecting it, and the high school where Ranma and the others went was on the far western side of the city, and they had been trying to maneuver through the streets to Rei's and Ranma's house in the southern section for over an hour since Ranma had shut Shido up. That hour had been spent with the bus slowly navigating the streets moving around any trouble spots they could, trying to avoid clumps of traffic and zombie ridden hysteria as they could. This had slowed them down massively.

At the back of the bus Shido began to speak of his followers again in a quiet yet hypnotic voice. Ranma, who was pacing at the front of the bus like a caged animal, didn't notice too busy growling about his idiot cousin and what his mother was going to do to him if he showed up at their house without her.

Shizuka and Kyoko looked at him amused, finding it funny that such a massively talented and self-reliant young man like Ranma would be so terrified of his own mother. But they didn't really understand, it wasn't so much that he was terrified of Nodoka it was that he was terrified of disappointing her. Most of the time growing up he didn't really have anyone who would give him positive reinforcement, simply pat him on the head and say good job or be there for a hug. His father barely acknowledged his skills, always pushing him harder, never treating him as a son, only as a pupil. The idea of a mother had caught his attention because he had hoped to find someone that would simply care for him treat him like family should be treated. The fact that Nodoka had loved him and missed him before he even showed up in her life again was one of the brightest spots in his life. Disappointing Nodoka wasn't something he ever wanted to do.

Yet at the same time as he was worried about disappointing her he was also worried about her in general during this crisis. He knew Nodoka was tough, she was a decent swordswoman and was pretty strong for a woman of her stature, yet this kind of chaotic madness, with enemies coming suddenly and in large numbers, he didn't know if she could handle it. It hadn't just been the fact their house had weapons they could use that had him suggesting it as a first destination.

Yuuki, Saya and Kohta however, sitting further back than the adults (though that word meant nothing in the current crisis) did notice what was going on at the back of the bus and none of them were happy about it. "Shido's at it again," Yuki muttered shaking her head her arms crossed underneath her breasts, pressing them up and out in a way that caught Kohta's attention and she smirked a little at him. He turned bright red and turned away a little but his attention refocused on their conversation quickly. "I can only hear some of what he's saying but even that little bit and the tone is making my skin crawl. It's like hearing some kind of a cult leader or something trying to psyche up his followers. Like, like that Marylyn Manson guy in America I read about once."

"Like nothing," Saya scoffed, shaking her head. "That's what he's trying to do. 'Trust no one but the group, the group and my teachings will see you through, the group and I matter over everything, look to me for I can lead us through this'. We're seeing the start of the cult of Shido, he's not the first, and under the current circumstances probably won't be the last."

Kohta frowned, his glasses gleaming in a strangely disturbing manner, as one hand smacked the nail gun that rested beside him. "Should I take care of him now? It would only take one shot."

"Hmm," Saeko shook her head joining the conversation from the seat in front of the trio, "Don't bother, he's not worth the nail." Kohta frowned but nodded, even with his holdout gun he wanted to remain with the nail gun for as long as he could as it didn't make as much noise. Yet he was already down to his last clip with barely 15 shots remaining. Saeko went on, patting her bokken next to her with a almost hungry smile on her face, "Besides which, the moment he starts something myself or Ranma can finish it. Shido knows that too, he's not dumb enough to push things with us."

Saya nodded but still thought, *maybe but killing the bastard now might save us a lot of trouble later*. Despite this she wasn't about to suggest it. She wasn't quite ready just yet to be a party to cold-blooded murder.

Ranma growled again as the bus was forced to turn away yet again from the direction his house was in and he shook his head. "All right this isn't working, pull into a parking space somewhere where there's no zombies we need to figure something else out."

Or Ranma thought to himself, *I at least need to get everyone here to a safe house before I go off on my own*. He'd been watching the rooftops and had yet to see a single zombie up there. He knew he could cover the distance between here and his home in barely 15 to 20 minutes travelling in a straight line over the rooftops. Going by the roads it was looking to be an impossible job. That meant he would have to go and come back with as many weapons as he could carry, but that didn't matter. *Besides*, he thought, *our home ain't exactly defensible*. It abutted two others on either side, and the fence around it was wooden, not stone. He had seen how determined the zombies were, and even he didn't want to be stuck in one place like that and swarmed under.

Shizuka nodded a little sadly reaching out and gripping his arm and he smiled at her and then ruffled her hair again before turning away. Shizuka looked over at him sadly, wishing she could do something more to help them, but she sighed and went back to driving, turning the bus around and making for a supermarket they had passed a few minutes ago. She hadn't spotted any zombies in the parking lot at least, though what it was like inside she wasn't going to think about.

Unbeknownst to the youngsters behind her Kyoko had also been listening to Shido and had come to her own conclusion of what needed to be done. As Ranma turned she leaned toward him and muttered "If we're going to stop we should start to think about doing something more permanent to Shido and his group, unless of course you want to try and separate Shido from them."

She asked that one a little hopefully, they were after all her former students. Yet she could see Shido's influence in them already, the way they looked at him and the way they looked at her and the rest of them like they were outsiders. The way the boys who made up the majority of his followers looked at her and the other girls at the front of the bus made her shudder (and want to stab their eyes out with a pen). Whatever Shido had been doing with them during the initial madness back at school had let him set his hooks into their minds and she was afraid that even if they gave the students gathered around him the opportunity to stay they would all follow Shido anyway.

More a dark ruthless part of her mind she had never even known she had before this all started had looked at the group in the back and realized that none of them had any skills, abilities or knowledge that the group in the front could use. Manpower was well and good, but what did they need manpower for in this environment that Ranma could not demonstrably supply better and easier. If they didn't have anything to add to the group's survival then they were a liability in this current crisis. And if this crisis was happening all over the world, then the best thing they could do would be to look out for themselves. A small, close knit and co-dependent group, with each of them contributing something to the survival of them all was the best idea. Of course out of giving advice she knew she was the weakest link in Ranma's team following that idea, but she had some knowledge that would be useful long term.

Ranma looked over at her and then cocked an ear to the back of the bus and heard some of the phrases that Shido was using about 'unity,' 'obedience' and 'destiny' and how as long as they followed him he would keep them safe. He growled a little and nodded again, looking at her gratefully. "I understand Kyoko-sensei, I'll deal with it."

Kyoko nodded, realizing for the second time that Ranma had become her bulwark in this chaotic and insane environment. The boy just seemed to have a knack for both surviving and fighting and in this new world those were two of the most important things.

Ranma laid a hand on her shoulder then moved back to the others murmuring the change of plans to them and asked, "Does anyone here know anything about quieting this bus down?"

Saya smacked her head for head irritably. "Of course," she exclaimed loudly, "I should've thought of that before." The others looked at her blankly and she elaborated. "At the moment there's a lot of noises, a lot of people running around shouting, fires, cars still moving around everywhere in the city, but come nightfall things will quiet down as people go to ground. That means the zombies who probably don't have to sleep" she looked at them all sardonically and Yuuki and Kohta laughed a little at her joke, "will still be out hunting for anything making noises. This bus makes a lot of noise and thus would be a liability after dark."

"But we can't just leave it," Kohta said patting the bags on the chairs behind him. There were four large backpacks and they were all heavy. Carrying them along would slow the group considerably, but they had food, water bottles, and a few makeshift weapons just in case for Kyoko, Yuuki and Saya as well as the holdout pistol. The stronger individuals among them couldn't be the ones carrying them as they needed their hands free.

Yuuki frowned thoughtfully and was about to say something when the bus stopped moving and Ranma looked out the window realizing they had come to a zombie free (for the moment anyway) parking lot. "Hold that thought guys, I'm going to go take out the trash."

"You need any back up?" Kohta asked slapping his nail gun again, "just say the word." His voice was a mix of helpfulness and hidden underneath that a real desire to do the dead he was talking about.

Ranma looked over at Saya who shrugged then back at Kohta and cocked his head, staring just a little

Kohta blushed a little under his glare and decided to come clean, his voice started out embarrassed then moving into anger, and even a bit of hate. "He, he just sort of sat by and watched as I got bullied ever since I started at the school. Sometimes he even encouraged it saying something about how 'the nail that stands out needs to get hammered down.' I'd like to introduce him to one of **my** nails now!"

Ranma smirked a little but shook his head, patting him on the shoulder. "In a situation like this we're going to get blood on our hands eventually," he said grimly. "People're going to be acting out as much as they can using this like an excuse, others are just gonna be paranoid and lashing out, and we'll have to defend ourselves. But I don't think any of us want to start doing that just yet, not unless we have to."

He looked over at Saeko looked back at him thoughtfully then nodded a little, understanding the hidden message there. Both of them knew that if push came to shove they would kill the entire group at the back of the bus without much remorse, but neither of them would do so simply because it would be too easy, because if they did they would be doing it because they **wanted** to kill them, not because it was necessary or in defense of their friend.

Shido and his group also noticed that the bus's stop, and most of them were looking out the windows wondering what was going on. Shido however knew something was going on, and that it wasn't anything he wanted. He hated the fact that he had no control about where the bus was going or the group up front, more he knew that they all represented far more in the way of assets short and long term than his group. His group might have numbers but that was all really. They were good cannon fodder, or in this case meat shields, but they didn't have any of the skills that he would need to survive in this current environment. It was for that reason that he had not made waves up to now, well that and the fact that Ranma terrified. How in the world a human could be that strong was beyond him. He decided to start off with a soft sell, realizing that if he tried to come on hard than Ranma was more than likely to smack him down. Unfortunately Ranma already had a smacked down in mind.

"Gentlemen," the former classic literature teacher said, moving towards the front of the bus down the aisle "why has the bus stopped here? Is there a place of safety nearby that we are going to be walking to now? I must say I don't like the fact that you are all making his decisions for all of us without consulting the whole. We must work together in this dangerous time to survive after all, and how can he do that if a small minority are making the decisions for us all? Of course if we are looking for leadership, the other Senseis and I are here and could provide it. I'm certain," he said, looking at the two gorgeous adult women, "We could work together to plan out the future of our group." He tried to keep his leer off his face and for the moment succeeded.

Ranma snorted a little and moved forward pushing past Shido then opened the emergency door at the back of the bus and gestured out. "We're not making any decisions for us all, just us. You and your group ain't welcome here anymore, you've been voted off the island."

The group at the back of the bus started to mutter and the blonde got up about to shout angrily but Ranma simply glared at him and he sat down frightened by the look in his deep blue eyes. Then Ranma smirked and said "Here's the deal." He pointed back at Shido who hadn't moved since Ranma brushed by him, merely turning to look at him and trying to keep his eyes on everyone. "See that guy, Shido-shit, all of us upfront don't trust 'em. We got different reasons, but what it boils down to is we think he's about as trustworthy as a snake, and we ain't gonna let him remain

around us any longer."

One of the girls shouted at him "you can't say that about Shido-sensei! He saved our lives when the zombies began to attack!" The others began to clamor in agreement, some of them even standing up and shouting.

In reply Ranma slammed his hand against the metal of the buses back end, making a loud reverberating sound and actually warping the metal. "Shut it," he ordered. Looking at the front of the bus Saeko was already on her feet bokken in hand, and Kohta as well was ready for trouble with his nail gun up at his shoulder. "You all have yer opinions and we've got ours. But here's the point, we couldn't let you there ta die back at the school, but nor do we want ta bring ya along with us. You all argued about what we should be doing from the beginning, well here's your chance to go out and do what you want ta do."

Shido looked around injecting a real note of concern into his voice, keeping the fear he felt well out of his tone. "But surely there are safety in numbers? Shouldn't we all stay together? After all we are all students and teachers from Fujimi Academy. Would you throw us to the wolves with nothing to our names? Surely," he looked over at Shizuka, his hormones overriding his common sense for a moment, "the school nurse at least should come with us, after all we represent a majority of the students it is her duty to aid."

Shizuka shrank back in the driver's seat a little, shaking her head adamantly and Ranma growled, a deep rumble of a sound that sent a shiver of fear through Shido and all of his group while it sends a thrill through the girls in the front of the bus. He shook his head, his eyes dark. "Now see right there is why we don't trust him." He reached out and grabbed Shido by the lapels of his suit and lifted him off the ground. Even as Shido gasped Ranma turned and threw him out the emergency door to the concrete of the parking lot beyond.

Shido groaned in pain as he hit the ground ass first, not hard enough to break anything but his back and rear would be feeling it for a while. He looked up at Ranma with hate and fear in his eyes, though he was careful to keep those emotions off his face since he was in full view of his followers.

Ranma turned away from him to look at the other students including the blond trouble maker. "The rest of you can join him if you want, but if you stay realize that me, Saeko and the others are calling the shots here. We're the ones that got the bus, we're the ones that got the food and water, and we're the ones that fought off the zombies to let you assholes on board in the first place! Not a one of you have proven yourself to be worth anything right now ta us but trouble."

Shizuka frowned a little at Ranma's harsh stance but nodded sadly. In a world that was swiftly becoming one where survival was the name of the game having people around you that you couldn't trust at your back and that were also unproven in a crisis was something that would swiftly get you killed. She swallowed her empathy and simply sat there waiting for the order to start the bus moving again.

Tsunoda stood up and shouted "well I'm not staying around with you! You think you're all that just because you're tough! Well Shido saved us, he is a teacher, an adult and a better leader than you are!"

The others all murmured and agreed, though one or two of them looked a little less enthusiastic, but they decided to stay with the larger group. The blonde punk led the way off the bus. Shido tried one more time to at least get some weapons or something and at that point Ranma agreed and tossed one of the bags that they had taken from the teacher's lounge and the power drill that Saya had used as a weapon. "That's the last handout from us yer going to get," Ranma said looking down at them, eyes hard. "From now on you'll survive or die on yer own. Either way it don't matter to me or mine." With that he shut the emergency exit door and nodded to Shizuka who started the engine up again and they moved off.

Behind them Shido stared angrily at the retreating bus his face for just a moment a mask of anger and rage, but thankfully none of his followers could see it and he had composed himself before he turned to lead them off. He would get his revenge, Ranma and the others would pay for looking down at him like that, he would make certain of it.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOO

The mood on board the bus was somber for a time, only Saeko, Kohta and Ranma being immune to the depression of the necessity of leaving behind so many students to get rid of one cancer. Eventually however Shizuka shook it off and asked "should we keep trying to get to your home Ranma?"

Ranma shook his head. "Nah, that's just not working. Anyone else live near here and want ta stop and see if ya can find yer folks?"

Saya shrugged. "My folks live on the other side of the river over the Onbetsu Bridge and I doubt my checking on them is very necessary." She scowled a little, having expected them or some of their men to show up while they were back at school and she wondered if they had even tried to come and find her or simply turned their attention to their own matters.

Yuuki shrugged, her breasts bouncing a little then she felt a spike of lust go through her at the look this drew from Ranma and she could feel her nipples hardening at the heated look in his face before he shook himself and concentrated on her face. She frowned internally, she knew he found her attractive, she had seen him look at her before, but something was holding her back and seeing their interaction she thought that might be his relationship with Busujima. Still, with the way the world was, maybe they could learn to share, or maybe she should set her sights a bit lower for a sure thing? "My mom works as a flight attendant so she's never home, and my dad left us years ago. One of her friends usually stops in and checks up on me once a week, but that's all."

Kyoko thought, *well that could explain her attitude. Honestly, who would leave a teenager alone in a house by themselves for extended periods of time?* "I of course live on my own Saotome-san nor do I have a significant other to worry about." *Nor children*, she thought, but rather than feeling an all too familiar pang at the thought, that knowledge only brought her relief in their current situation.

Shizuka nodded, not looking away from her driving. "My parents are both dead, and anyway I moved here from out in the country, all my extended family is still back there."

Saeko shrugged. "My father as you know is abroad at a kendo competition, Ranma-kun." Ranma nodded, Mr. Busujima had left a few days ago before all this began, and the two of them had been wondering if they should take advantage of his not being home to have another spar like they had on the first day of school, or possibly something else before all this began. "Where is your family Hirano-kun?"

Kohta shrugged. "My mom's in France at her job as a clothing designer, and my dad deals in jewelry, he's in Holland on business right now."

Saya scoffed looking across at him. "Why the hell is your life like some lead in an eroge game?!"

Shizuka giggled as the bus slowed to a stop at the directions of a policeman, who was working with two others to keep traffic moving at the intersection they just reached. That sight filled her with hope, since it was the first organization in this chaos they had seen thus far. She knew it wouldn't last but it still raised her spirits a little. "If this was a manga, your father would be the captain of a cruise ship or something."

Kohta chuckled. "No, that was my grandfather."

Saya groaned aloud at that, and the others all chuckled, but Kyoko brought their attention back to business. "We were talking about a way to maybe quiet down this buses engine, as it is getting into the afternoon this becomes even more important. Anyone have any ideas?"

Yuuki raised her hand a little hesitantly, knowing that she and Kyoko were the weak links of this group. Neither of them could fight very well, and neither had any real knowledge of fighting or surviving. They only survived because Kohta and Ranma protected them. Here however she might be able to be of some use as besides being the school's sex bomb, she could call herself it's leading petrol head with pride. She had been a member of the mechanics club since starting middle school and had been in that club ever since, despite the fact most of the club only saw her as fancy window dressing who wouldn't put out. Hey she might be a petrol head, but she wouldn't just sleep with someone just because they were a grease monkey!

"Well we install some sound dampening under the hood, as well as a cover for the engine and sound dampening pads, but of course we'd have to make certain everything in the engine was running in order, since you know anything being out of place, anything wrong in the exhaust system would funnel exhaust gases into the engine compartment which would make it significantly louder than it should be. I haven't been in this bus before so I don't know how it normally sounds but it seems to be a bit louder than it should be. Now, for a regular mechanic or a team that would take anywhere from an hour to five hours. For us, well that would depend on where we go to do the work and how good you all are with your **hands**." She emphasized the last word and enjoyed seeing the blush on Kohta's face, though was a little disappointed that it went right over Ranma's head.

Kohta nodded, still blushing. "Stopping at a car shop would also give us some more things we could turn into weapons you know, they for sure would have some more nails for me for example".

Ranma nodded. "Then does anyone know of a car shop nearby?"

The group spent a few minutes looking out the window and soon it turned out Kyoko did, her house was actually near enough she recognized the intersection the just passed. Unfortunately her home wasn't exactly defensible, being part of an apartment complex and on the first floor. She was actually terrified of going back knowing that the whole place could've been turned into a death trap very easily. But she directed the bus to the car shop easily enough.

The bus slowed as they came near their destination, seeing a lot of detritus and a few zombies on the outside. Ranma nodded grimly, having expected that. "Alright, here's the plan. Saeko and I will clear up the zombies on the outside first then we'll park the bus and shut of the engine right by the entrance to the garage. Kohta you get back up top like you were back at school and Saeko and I will make our way inside. We'll open the garage doors once we've cleared everything out, if you run into trouble call out and I'll hear ya.

"What about the rest of us?" Saya asked angrily. "What do you think we should be doing while you fight-freaks do what you do?" She hated not being in control, and she hated feeling like she was dependent on other people, hell she hated being dependent on her parents, so this was irritating the hell out of her.

Ranma looked at her then ruffled her pink hair affectionately. "Look, I like how game you are Saya, but let's face facts you don't know how to fight, and Yuuki and the two teachers don't either. Best to leave this to the ones that have been trained to fight okay?"

Saya pushed his head at the way angrily and turned to stare out of the window, unhappy that she had not really contributed a lot to group survival but Ranma seemed to sense this and added "Besides, I want you to start thinking long-term plans."

Saya looked back at him intrigued. "What do you mean long-term?"

"I don't know about you, but I don't see us joining any larger group and going along with anyone else's plans anytime soon, so what do we do after we check in with our parents and make sure they're okay? Do we stay with them or do we move on to someplace else? Is there any place nearby that we could fort up and settle down and what would that mean?"

"Or," Saeko added "would we be better served getting out of the city entirely and moving someplace into the countryside?" That was actually a good question, after all cities didn't provide their own food, which had to be shipped in from the countryside. More Tokonsou was self-sufficient in terms of energy and water but for how long? "Resources both short and long term need to be looked at."

Saya nodded, looking a little intrigued of the question and leaned back looking out into the distance thoughtfully as she brought out a pad and pen from the backpack she had been assigned from the teacher's lounge. Kyoko nodded as well and moved over to help her.

Ranma nodded then grinned at the others and he and Saeko led the way off the bus. They looked at one another and split up quickly, rushing towards a few zombies that had already begun to move towards the bus and the noise of the engine despite it having cut off. The two of them made short work of the ten zombies, then Ranma turned and nodded at the bus, and Kohta popped open the upper hatch and made himself comfortable there, looking back toward the road.

After that Ranma went to Saeko and picked her up around her waist and jumped up intending to enter from the windows on the second floor and clear the building from top to bottom. The window they entered by was open already, letting in a nice cool breeze into a small office set on top of the garage which was empty of zombies or people. It looked as if there hadn't even been a fight here, something that made both of the marital artists nervous.

Saeko took a moment to steal a bit of a kiss from Ranma being very careful to press her chest against his then moving off quickly. "For luck," she said enigmatically and led the way through the doorway. Ranma shook his head and followed. The hallway leading down to the garage was splattered with blood, and there was a body at the bottom of the staircase. In front of the door leading to the first floor. It was very definitely a body, living people had more head. More the entire body looked chewed on, with digits missing and the neck bitten into badly on one side.

The two looked at one another and all levity vanished and they moved forward with purpose, with Saeko in the lead for a moment. In close like this especially with the lights out was a very dangerous environment faces zombie in. Ranma reached around Saeko and pulled her back before she could move down the other stairs. His hands rested lightly on her chest right underneath her breasts and his thumbs began to move slightly against the bottom of her breasts as he whispered into her ear. "Let me go first here. Another one of the things I got from my neko-training is that I can almost see in the dark almost like a cat and my sense of hearing is better too."

Saeko leaned back against him for a moment simply reveling in his hunch. There was nothing truly sexual about it, but the action was hinting at more and she was looking forward to that more very much in the very near future. The battles thus far today had lit a fire in her and she hoped that there were other ways she could express that fire other than combat.

Ranma gently moved around Saeko and moved ahead with her following behind quickly. They opened the door and moved on into the hallway. On the first floor was the garage to one side, the parts backroom at the end of the hall and the waiting room and front desk on the other side. The front desk was open and airy with windows on its other three walls, and Ranma motioned that they should clear that area for now.

Instead they moved into the room at the far end of the hall where parts and supplies were stored and found not one but five zombies moving around. The first one attacked them almost as soon as they opened the door but Ranma's ki claws sliced his head into splinters and the body collapsed to the ground. This was a sign of things to come but unlike the hallway outside where the light had been smashed this room was brightly lit so Ranma and Saeko split up hunting the zombies through the stacks and shelves of parts. Luckily there were only four more. Ranma looked at a makeshift bed set against the far wall, noticing the bloodstains on it and realized that one of the workers had been bitten and they spread it to the other workers. Ranma idly wondered how fast the plague had spread simply because people thought they could help those already bitten. He shook his head sadly as Saeko slew the last zombie. This was really a situation where being kind or trying to help your fellow man could literally kill you.

The duo left the store room and after a moment's silent communication moved into the welcome area, where they found three more zombies moving around. Saeko struck quickly, killing one of the zombies before realizing to her horror it was a little boy. Indeed two of the other zombies were little children. The third looked like their mother, and it looked as if the one of the children had been infected and simply spread it to the others somehow.

Ranma ignored the fact that they were children and rushed forward his ki claws out and slicing. A moment later it was over and he looked back at her and wondering why she had froze, and why she was looking so lost all of a sudden. It was a stark change from her normal confident, almost ecstatic appearance when faced with combat. "Saeko," he asked softly, "you okay?"

She didn't answer, simply staring down at the corpse of the child she had slain. He moved over and gripped her shoulders shaking her little. When that didn't work he pulled her into a hug gripping her ass hard and kissing her. That did the trick and she broke out of her stupor, moaning first in shock then pleasure into his mouth. He pulled back a bit and said sternly "Saeko-chan remember I know about having an inner darkness. It's just another part of you, and I think the full package is the greatest, most fantastic and attractive girl that has ever lived. If you're worried about it taking control, look at me, and I'll stop ya if ya go too far. Can you do the same for me, can you accept me?"

Saeko looked into her friend's eyes from barely an inch away, seeing the stark sincerity and his belief in her and nodded happily. "If you accept me, and will do that for me" she said softly reaching up to his head and running her fingers through his hair, causing those magnificent eyes to narrow and a deep rumbling purr to emanate from his chest, "then I will gladly do it for you."

Ranma nodded and leaned in to kiss her again. This one lasted much longer but was much more chaste. Soon however they broke off to move back into the main section of the garage. They found two more zombies in the garage area, one of them having been hiding underneath the car along one side of the room, the other by the door. Saeko lashed out slaying that one instantly and Ranma moved past her to kill the other. After that they checked every nook and cranny and then nodded to one another and moved off to open the garage door to let in the bus after making certain the door to the front waiting area was locked and barred.

Kohta had been nervous being left behind to guard the bus on his own but nothing untoward had happened only one zombie had appeared still moving towards the sound of the engine and he laid it out with a single shot from his nail gun.

Ranma moved around the bus and began to slowly push it into the garage. Even as strong as he was he could never have pushed something as heavy as the bus on his own if it didn't have wheels or even if it was in park, but luckily Shizuka had the presence of mind to put it in drive and he slowly pushed the bus into the garage.

The moment the bus was inside Saeko closed the garage doors and the rest of the group boiled out of it. Shizuka made her way over to Saeko and Ranma, looking them over for any injuries. "Are you both alright, any injuries, what did you all run into?"

She listened to their response with only with half an ear as she ran her hand over them searching for injuries under their clothing, taking a bit more time with Ranma than Shizuka, enjoying his muscles tensing and twitching under her

touch before he pulled away looking as if he was going to break out into laughter. She smirked suddenly, her fingers wiggling. "Oh, is Kitty-kun ticklish?"

Ranma backed away swiftly, moving to place Saya, who exited the bus last, between them. "Guys aren't ticklish, it's just that I'm a little sensitive there is all."

Suddenly fingers dug into his side and he jumped away with a whoop, glaring at Saeko who smiled impishly at him. "Ara, that was rather fun."

Ranma pouted and moved further away from the two women who giggled to each other. He then noticed that Saya was holding up a cell phone to her ear, listening to something on it. "I thought the cell phone service was down or overwhelmed, ain't that what Rei said?"

Saya glared over at him. "Baka, Rei only tried to contact her dad, a police officer, and to call the emergency line. Of course the emergency line would be swamped and her dad too, there's nothing wrong with the cell phone service." She frowned down at the phone. It actually wasn't hers, she had taken it from a desk in the teacher's lounge, knowing that they couldn't afford the time to search for her own, especially since it was in her shoe locker by the entrance where they ran into so much trouble while escaping.

Still it had allowed her to look at her messages and find out that her parents hadn't even tried to call her, not even once, and when she tried to call them she only got the answering machine. Now she was truly worried for them for the first time since this all began. She knew they were immensely capable both as individuals and with the resources they could call on, but could something have really happened to them? I can't worry about it right now, I have my own worries to attend to first.

"Hmm, in that case we could all call our folks couldn't we? Asked Saeko, though she herself was torn on whether she should, after all if he was in danger there was nothing she could do about it. In this case a bit of ignorance might be better than a lot of worry.

Ranma paled a little, moving away to join Yuuki and Kohta who had opened the front of the bus to look at the it's engine from atop a pair of stools, with Kohta clearly concentrating more on Yuuki's rear as she bent over to look inside at the engine. "Well, um, that's nice, er you two need any help there?"

Kyoko's eyes narrowed. "Ranma, you wouldn't be trying to get out of calling your mother would you?"

"Er, no, I, um yeah um, everyone else should call their folks first, yeah that's it!"

"Ranma..." Kyoko drawled, her eyes narrowing behind her glasses as she glared at him. "I understand you're worried about what she might say when you tell her Rei isn't with you, but you need to call her."

"Er, no look, I..."

"Ranma!" Her voice was much sharper this time, and she strode over with the phone in one hand and she grabbed his arm when he tried to get away, pulling him back. "Call her."

Ranma sighed, hanging his head. "Hai Kyoko-sensei."

Kyoko nodded, smirking a little at how he was utterly unable to disobey the female voice of authority. She shared a look with Shizuka who giggled a little and Kyoko moved away, heading over to join the others around the front of the bus. Already Yuuki was giving Saya a list of tools and parts she would need. Kohta had moved off, looking for tools they could turn into weapons.

Ranma despondently punched in the number for his mother's cell phone. *Maybe she won't answer 'cause she doesn't know the number.* This hope was dashed, and after a mere second of hearing Nodoka's voice on the other end he realized that knowing she was still alive was better than worrying, even knowing he was going to be yelled at.

His mother's voice issued from the phone, breathless as if she had been exercising or fighting recently, but with no pain or fear in her tone. "Yes, who is this please?"

"Mom, it's Ranma. Er, how are you doing?" he asked lamely, but really what were you supposed to say in the current circumstances. 'I'm happy you're not a liking corpse'? Or maybe 'Hey mom, I fought my way out of the school after it was infested by zombies, would you mind swinging by and picking me up'? Tears of relief began to appear in his eyes and Kyoko and Shizuka smiled at one another.

"Ranma! Oh thank goodness, I'm so happy to hear from you! Where are you, what's been going on, how is Rei and your other little friends, how are you all doing?"

"Um, well we're alright. We fought our way out of the school, we're holed up in a garage right now trying to do something ta the buses engine, we used a bus ta escape, to make the engine run quieter. We were trying to make our way ta the Miyamoto house. Yer not there are ya? I could get ta ya via roof hopping and come back quick."

"No, I'm not at the house, I hooked up with Kiriko, the two of us are on the freeway right now trying to keep the way out of the city clear with several of her fellow officers. After that we are heading over to a police station near the eastern edge of the city. It's supposed to be the emergency evacuation point, but it's been changed so often and the police higher ups don't seem to be able to take a plan and stick to it so I don't know." She paused for a moment and talked to someone else at the other end. "It's my son, he says they're fine! Of course!" She turned back down to the phone. "Ranma, Kiriko is here and she wants to talk to Rei, can you put her on?"

Ranma winced, he had hoped they could avoid this talk. "Um, well, uh, ya see...."

"Ranma..." Nodoka said, her voice becoming much harder. She could tell it wasn't something horrible, just something bad, but Ranma couldn't lie to save his life. "What's wrong with Rei?"

"Nothing's wrong with Rei, least I don't think so, she's just, sort of, y'know, not here right now."

"Why isn't she with you?" Nodoka asked calmly. *If the two of them let their dislike for one another get in the way of them working together to survive in this madness I will tan their hides!*

"It's not my fault! I was sleepin' when she decided ta leave because of that snake Shido, and then there was the out of control trolley and..." Ranma said becoming more frantic and waving his arms around pulling Saya and everyone else's attention away from what Yuuki insisted on calling 'Operation pimp my ride'.

Nodoka sighed and tilted the phone so both she and Kiriko could listen in "Why don't you start from the beginning."

Ranma sighed and did so. After a moment she could hear cursing coming from the other end of the line, not in his mother's voice so it must've been Kiriko, though he would never have thought she had that much of a vocabulary.

After he finished however, Kiriko spoke directly into the phone. "Ranma I understand it wasn't your fault and I'm glad you intend to meet up with my idiotic daughter again. I've never been told the full reason why she hates that teacher, I think it has something to do with one of my husband's investigations, but I don't know the extent of that." There was a sharp undercurrent of anger in her voice about being let out of the loop, especially about something that affected her daughter, but she reined it in. "Still running off instead of confronting the problem was foolish in the extreme, one she will have to explain to me when we meet up. Try to watch out for her all right, despite her idiocy she is still my daughter and your cousin okay?" Ranma nodded and answered in the affirmative and the formidable woman went on. "For now, try to get across the river. When you do, contact us again and we'll direct you to where we can meet up okay?"

Ranma answered again in the affirmative and Kiriko handed the phone back to her sister. "Well there you have it my son. Neither of us blame you for Rei's issues, the only thing you could have done would be to kick him and his group out before that and you couldn't have known she would react like that. Now, if you can get to the house you are free to take **anything** you want alright?"

The way she emphasized the word anything told him what she meant and he nodded and answered in the affirmative. "Good, take care of yourself my son, I love you and hope to see you soon."

Ranma teared up a little more at that. "I love you too mom, and don't worry, we'll see ya soon." At that point he hung up and turned to Saya who had walked up to him during his conversation on the phone. She merely looked back at him, sighed and held out her hand for the phone, deciding to try to contact her parents again.

He nodded, handing it over and ruffling her hair before moving over to Saeko and Kyoko, who were waiting to help Yuuki remove a busted piece of the engine. She looked quite different now that she wasn't trying to emphasize her sexuality. Her hands were already covered in oil, she had a streak of soot on her cheek, and her previously almost spotless uniform top (albeit with several buttons undone to let her breath given the size of her breasts) was splashed with oil and sweat.

Ranma leaned in toward Saeko and Kyoko, whispering "I'm going ta head off fer a bit. I can reach my house easy going over the roofs from here and be back in under an hour with weapons and anything else I can grab."

Saeko and Kyoko both frowned but nodded. Kyoko even told him "Take your time, maybe scout around a bit and see if you can find Rei and Takashi if you can. I don't think we will need you here, and Yuuki said it would take maybe an hour, maybe two to silence the engine as much as we can, and Kohta is busy trying to see what weapons he can make from the tools here." Ranma nodded and he kissed Saeko on the cheek and ran off up to the open window on the second floor.

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While Yuki continued to lead the others working on the bus Ranma set off swiftly over the rooftops, keeping an eye out for Rei and Takashi but not seeing either. He frowned angrily seeing the amount of chaos down on the streets as he zoomed over the rooftops. Below him he could see a large group of yakuza thugs gunning down every zombie they saw and every person not of their group, taking whatever they wanted from the bodies and the stores on either side of the street.

He shook his head even as he jumped from one side of the road to another and one of the yaks looked up quickly enough to try and take a shot at him. The rifle bullet whizzed by behind him and he gave the man the finger midair, then touched down on his target rooftop and continued swiftly even as shouts of shock and surprise went up behind him.

Not fifteen minutes later he reached the neighborhood where the Miyamotos lived. Here he found no living human, lots of dead bodies and a few zombies, but he didn't search any of the houses. He hoped the families in the neighborhood had gotten away, but he wasn't going to search around for them. He touched down in his family's backyard, then quietly as possible opened up the backdoor. He moved into the kitchen and found a note saying much the same thing Nodoka and Kiriko had told him over the phone. He then made his way up the stairs towards the room he and his mother shared for everything but sleeping, since he slept on the couch. There Ranma rummaged in his personal backpack, the one that he had arrived here with and pulled out several items.

The first thing he pulled out was armored gloves and boots. The gloves were not gauntlets, but tough leather gloves that covered his hand halfway up his forearm with leather. Then on top of the leather were pieces of armor on the fingers and back of his hand, all of which were made to protect his hands and fingers but allow him to retain a full range of movement. The boots were leather on the bottom, allowing for silent movement, but the top and calf region were armored. He put them on moving around a little and making certain they didn't clink or make any other noise that could give him away, having realized that against the zombies the ability to move silently was more important than armor. Thankfully he wouldn't have to make that call, as the metal and leather moved silently as he flexed his fingers and did some kicks. Once again he decided to spend some time learning the umi-sen-ken, something that he had been meaning to do for months but other things had taken precedence.

The next thing he drew out was a weapon that had been a gift from the master Ein, and while he didn't really enjoy using it all that much, he was extremely proficient with it. The weapon was an extremely modified version of a meteor hammer. Apparently one of master Ein's predecessors was a master blacksmith and greatly enjoyed making strange and unusual, some would even say insane, weapons. This was an example of his art. The two weights on the end were each different. One was a heavy metal ball about the size of Ranma's fists put together. The other was a metal pole, but a small indentation on the bottom of the pole where it connected to the chain made a curved blade pop out of it, transforming it from a blunt to an edged weapon.

The chain too was different, being made of a carbon fiber chain that had holes along its length. When the chain was flicked in the correct way, those holes were suddenly filled with spikes, which made the entire chain, into a giant saw. Ranma hadn't tried it out in that mode against any living target, but the damage he had done to the Soaring Eagle's target dummies had been both impressive and appalling. More, the chain had something in it that sucked a bit of your ki away when you welded it and in return could be lengthened or shortened at a mental command, which had been one of the major selling points when Ranma was gifted with his choice of weapon from the school's store. Ranma had never really expected to actually use it for real, since he always thought that anyone who was dependent on a weapon to fight simply using a crutch, but given the current circumstances, well, a weapon like this would be very useful.

Next he looked over and saw that his family's honor blade was still in its place on the wall. The blade was straight, with only a hint of a curve to it, the blade was gorgeous, the lines of chikei and nie mixed, showing its enduring strength and its age. On the bottom of the hilt was the makers mark, showing it was a true Masamune blade.

The blade had been in its sheath for years as Nodoka could not bear to even look at it, feeling the dishonor of Genma and her marriage to him keenly, knowing her ancestors, all of whom had wielded the blade in honor, would look at her and find her wanting. That had changed when Ranma had shown up and she saw how well he turned out, and she and Kiriko had both felt that Ranma had proven a worthy addition to their clan, and that Nodoka's divorce had wiped

much of the stain of Genma away from her. Nodoka was unhappy that he showed no preference for the blade but understood his feelings on the matter.

Still, she told me to take everything with me, and I assume that means our family blade too. With that thought he sheathed the blade and draped it over his shoulder. With that done he ransacked the rest of the house for anything useful. This search turned up some medicine bottles, Ibuprofen and other over the counter medicines, all of which he stuffed into his backpack. He grabbed another backpack and filled it with clothing from Rei's room (not caring if it matched or anything like that and showing a preference for jeans), some clothing from Kiriko's room that might fit Kyoko (though not Shizuka, Ranma wondered idly where the hell she got her clothing from anyway), and several dozen boxers from his own room. The boxers, like most of his clothing, had been a gift from some of the martial arts schools he visited, seeing as he only ever really had three sets of clothing on his training journey with Genma. That done, he looked at the clock on the wall and frowned a little, seeing that raiding the house had taken more time than it had to actually reach it.

Sighing he decided to make one run around the neighborhood to see if he saw any sign of Takashi's mom, good or bad before heading back to the others. *But she's a elementary school teacher*, he thought grimly, *so she might never have gotten out*. He shuddered a little at the amount of chaos a zombie infestation/attack could cause at an elementary school, with all its kids being too small to defend themselves and so few adults in comparison to the children. Still he knew Takashi would want to know if she reached home, and with that thought jumped up to the roof where he left his packs and the family sword, then began to make his way over to the Komuro household.

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Back at the garage Yuuki had continued her work on the engine with the aid of Kyoko, Saeko and Saya. Shizuka on the other hand had taken the phone after Saya was finished with it, not having been able to contact her parents, in an attempt to get in touch with her friend. This took a while as she couldn't remember her friend's phone number, but after a time, and after even longer spent punching it in, Shizuka wasn't really at home with cell phones (or anything tech related) she was finally able to punch it in.

Her friend, a SAT police officer in their sniper division named Rika Minami, answered the phone immediately. "Shizuka! Oh my god girl, how are you doing, where are you, my place?" She knew it was Shizuka as she didn't have other friends, and her fellow officers wouldn't use her private number like this. She turned away from the phone and seemed to speak to someone for a moment, something about a target or something that Shizuka couldn't catch.

Shizuka was simply glad to hear her friend's voice. "I'm fine Ri-chan, I'm with a group of students, they were the ones who got me out of the school safely. There's Kyoko-chan you remember me telling you about her, there's Kohta-kun, he's really good with shooting things, Yuuki, she's working on doing something I don't understand to our bus's engine, and Saya, she's really smart, she was the one who grabbed this phone, there's Saeko, she's the one who saved me, she's really strong and she fights using a bokken, and then there's kitty-kun."

Rika smirked a little and somehow that came through in their tone when she replied to this flow of information. "Well it sounds like you're with a good group, thought kitty-kun... isn't that the boy you've been telling me about, the one who acts like a cat? The one you called, and I quote 'yummy'? Isn't that an amusing coincidence." She teased.

"Moh, Ri-chan, it's not like that." Shizuka replied, blushing a little as she whispered her reply, turning away from the others. "Besides, he's a student so there can't be anything there, and I think he's interested in Saeko-chan."

"I really don't think that matters much now Shizu-chan." Rika answered, her smile back in her voice as she purposely didn't mention which issue didn't matter. "Listen, I don't have much time until I have to go back to work, I'm over at the international airport protecting the perimeter from zombies. They're lifting out VIP's now, and then they'll start on regular people. What are your long term plans? Remember that I've got a lot of guns and stuff at my place, so if you need a place to hold up, feel free. If we get ordered out of here or they shore up the defense enough they don't need me I'll head into the city and try to meet up with you."

"Oh, um, I think we're trying to meet up with some people, and then we're going to try and get across the river, we want to check on all the kid's families, after that I don't know what we'll do. Kitty-kun and the others will probably make their own plans rather than become part of a larger group." Her voice had changed slightly from her normal spacey tones and she went on more seriously. "Kitty-kun and Saeko are our unofficial leaders and both of them aren't the kind who would willingly follow someone else if they thought they were wrong. And this whole thing is going to get worse before it gets better, so watching out for our own small group will take precedence. Ranma takes his promises seriously, and he promised to take care of us all, and he couldn't do that if he has to hand over our security to someone else."

Rika's eyebrows rose in surprise as she took a pull from her cigarette, taking time out of her conversation with her friend/lover (though they kept that part a secret, since Japan wasn't very friendly to those with alternate lifestyles, not that that mattered anymore, society as a whole would never be the same again after this) to point out a zombie for her partner as she thought of how to reply. While on the one hand she didn't like the idea of her friend and this group staying separate from an organized, lawful force, under the circumstances it might actually be safer. "Well, I'll still try to meet up with you. You remember that little place by the docks, the one with the fantastic ice cream and the great view of the port? If I can get away I'll meet you there." She breathed in deeply not wanting to say this next part, but she knew it needed to be said. "But if I don't show up in a week, you're going to have to move on without me whatever your long term plans."

"Don't say stuff like that Ri-chan" Shizuka said, making her voice as cheerful as she could. "You're too tough for these zombie thingies to get to you. I'll see you soon okay?"

"Heheh. Alright, I'll see you soon Shizu-chan, love you."

"Love you too Ri-chan." With that she hung up the phone then looked up as the door to the hallway opened, and Ranma stepped through carrying two backpacks and a sword over his shoulders.

The others looked at him, wondering what was in the bags, noting the strange chain weapon wrapped around his waist and his armored gloves, but Saeko's eyes were drawn by the blade over his shoulder. "Hey guy an' gals," Ranma said, smirking and exchanging a grin with Kohta, who had also noticed how badly they were outnumbered by the fairer sex in their group. "No sign of Rei and Takashi, but I grabbed some changes of clothing that might fit ya Kyoko-sensei, and maybe Saya-chan too, though I don't know." He paused there, taking the opportunity to stare at her chest, "It might be a little too tight for ya, they're Rei's ya see. Oh I also got some medicine from the house for ya Shizuka-sensei."

He tossed the two teachers one of the backpacks then turned to Saeko, formally bowing and presenting her with his family's blade. "My mom said I could use this, but I know myself and my skills, and I think you can use this blade far better than I could Saeko-chan."

Saeko reached forward curiously and pulled the Miyamoto family blade out of its sheath, then gasped as the quality of the blade became apparent. "R, Ranma, I can't take this!"

Ranma straightened up, a wry grin on his face. "I want ya ta take it Saeko-chan. I ain't a swordsman, I ain't as good as ya with a blade, and I've got my own weapon anyway." He patted his new belt, causing the fine chain to rustle a little. "Please, ya need a better weapon than yer bokken, and this katana will see ya through." He blushed a little, leaning in to whisper, "Take it Saeko-chan, given our, um our relationship it's rightfully yers anyway."

She looked humbled for a moment and bowed thankfully to him. Then she moved off to examine the blade more closely, going through a kata and getting a feel for it. Ranma moved over to the others throwing a friendly arm over Saya's shoulder, "so how does the building project?"

Saya blushed a little at the act, taking a moment to revel in their closeness then shook his arm off making a point of huffing irritably. She didn't go too far however and when he again put an arm around her she didn't complain. "As you can see" she said a little snidely "it's going okay. Yuuki knows her stuff, and the rest of us have provided enough strength and hands for most of it but none of us are really good mechanics. The engine will still make some noise, but it will be a lot quieter than before, and we added some makeshift armor too."

Indeed Ranma could see that. The exit on top of the bus had been reinforced, the windows had been replaced by metal sheets inside, the large tires had been pumped up with more air and several other tires had been put onboard along with several pieces of equipment. Most of it wouldn't be useful to them, but if they met any other groups then they could use it as a trade. Saya had thought of that, realizing that money and the economy were just gone now, and a system of barter would replace it quickly.

"So where do we go from here" Yuuki asked looking a little irritated. She had really hoped that they could figure out a way to completely silence the engine, but this garage just didn't have the parts for it. No matter where they went they would still be making a lot of noise. Still, she had proven her worth to the group in this project regardless of the outcome, which was good.

Ranma shook his head, grinning encouragingly at her while Kohta patted her arm. "You tried your best Yuuki, that's all you could really do. It's not your fault that we couldn't completely 'pimp' out this ride, you made it as good as it could be for now. If we have to leave it for any reason at least we'll know we got as much out of it as we could." He looked around at the group. "On that note, I think it's time we get out of here, I saw a group of looters heading this

way, and there are a lot more zombies out there now. And we still have to cross the river somewhere. Does anyone know a bridge we could get across?"

Shizuka nodded, raising her hand like she was a student asking a question. "I think so, but it might not have been repaired yet. It's a one lane bridge about, u.... about forty minutes drive normally from around here."

"Sounds good Shizuka-chan," Ranma said, giving her two thumbs up.

"Wait" Saya said. "Before we go, did you see any computer stores around here meathead?"

"Yeah I did Pinky, it's about two blocks that way," he said pointing out the garage door and across the street outside. "Why?"

"Because I want to get a laptop of course," She replied as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. "It's part of the whole thinking ahead thing you asked me to do. Now come on let's go, you'll have to carry me of course, I wouldn't trust you to get the right kind."

She walked off heading to the hallway and the stares beyond and Ranma shrugged. "Ok, you guys get the bus moving, Saya-chan and I will find ya in a bit." With that he moved to follow the pink haired girl and the others started to scramble onto the bus, with Shizuka once more taking the driving seat and Kohta moving quickly to his perch up in the topside exit. They had filled a whole bag with nail clips and he had enough ammo now to hold off a company of zombies so was a very happy camper even if they hadn't been able to figure out how to make any long range weapons from the tools in the garage.

Yuuki took a seat right below him, not at all incidentally letting him see straight down her shirt. Despite the fact that she thought she didn't really need it, Yuuki was too used to using her sexuality to enforce her importance on others, more when Kohta or Ranma looked at her she didn't feel as dirty as she normally did. If Kohta wanted to look at her tits she was fine with that idea so long as he kept protecting her. Eventually she might be fine with more, but currently was taking a wait and see attitude for that. She was wondering if she should throw herself into the match for Ranma, but despite the fact she knew he found her attractive Ranma had been rebuffing her advances for a few weeks before all this and she wasn't certain that that would change in the current crisis. More she didn't want to go up against Saeko if she was the jealous type and the swordswoman had quite clearly staked her own claim on Ranma. So it might be better, safer for her and for the group dynamic if she set her sights on the gun otaku who had originally protected her back at the school.

Of course her ability to analyze things like that would have survived all of her 'friends' back at school, but it was something that came naturally to her. But she knew when to push, when to use her sexuality, and when not to as well as who to target for the least or most amount of disruption and problems. Before she had used her skills for her own defense and amusement, now it was even more important.

As Shizuka started up the bus Kyoko looked over and saw Kohta looking down ogling Yuuki and frowned a little but shrugged it off. She suspected what the girl was up to, after all she had seen Yuuki use her wiles for the past few years to get her way with men. She knew that there was a brain in that head, it was just that Yuuki went out of her way to cause reactions good and bad. Kyoko herself had already determined that none of the men in their group, not even the now absent Takashi, needed that kind of reinforcement to continue to protect the rest of them, and hoped that Yuuki would see that soon too.

When Shizuka started the bus the only noise was a murmur and everyone congratulated Yuuki as they pulled out of the garage, running over a zombie as they turned onto the main road.

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Ranma caught up with Saya as she began to pace in front of the open window and she turned and smacked her hands together, "Come on, we haven't got all day, chop chop meathead, let's go."

Ranma growled a little then decided to get a bit back at her and instead of turning around so she could get on his back grabbed her around the waist and lifted her into a princess carry, the hand underneath her very deliberately on her ass.

She squeaked in shock then blushed heavily and smacked him on the chest. "Watch where you're hands are baka!"

"You promise ta stop callin' me names and orderin' me about like that and I'll change my grip Pinky," Ranma retorted, blushing only slightly as his tomcat instincts came out to play. They had been coming out more and more during this

crisis, with him in combat mode almost all the time. Ranma jumped out the window to the next building over and began to move from one building to another in the direction he remembered seeing a computer store.

"Tha-that's stupid, no way! I refuse!" Saya said still smacking his chest ineffectually, blushing up a storm.

"Then my hand stays where it is," He said then unable to stop himself gave her rear a gentle squeeze marveling at the feel of it through her school uniform's skirt.

Saya eeped at that and her blush became nuclear and she stammered. "All, alright, I'll stop calling you names, just, don't do that." Her voice trailed off, a part of her wondered if she really wanted him to as she felt her body begin to react to being so close to Ranma, her breasts pressed against his chest and his strong, sinewy hand on her rear.

Ranma's nose twitched, smelling Saya getting a little aroused but he shook it off, knowing now was not the time to take this any further. He kept his own arousal out of his voice and made certain that he held Saya far enough up his body so she couldn't feel it as he shifted his hand under her to the outside of her thigh. "There was that so hard Saya-chan?"

She mumbled something unintelligible, unconsciously burrowing into his chest as she tried to calm down. They soon came to the computer store and Ranma set Saya down gently, keeping her close. "Follow me close Saya-chan," he murmured as they entered the store, cursing the fact the store had an automatic door with a merry little beep going on when it opened.

Saya nodded and followed him in. They found four zombies inside all clustered around the doorway and they charged forward as the door opened but Ranma leaped to meet them, hands and feet flashing, and they swiftly fell, their heads gone, crushed or knocked off entirely. After that they found another zombie near the back of the store but it died even faster, but Ranma stayed close as Saya began to search around.

The pink-haired genius browsed through the store, her mind hard at work wondering which laptop she should take. She wanted something durable, it didn't have to do much but it had to have a long battery life and a fast internet connection. She had a lot of things she needed to look up, and the internet was still up for now but who knew how long that would be? Hell, who knew how long the city would have power? Thankfully this store seemed to have a wide variety of laptops and she eventually chose the Panasonic Toughbook 31 laptop. While a little heavy for her tastes normally, in the present circumstances it was perfect. She nodded at the locked storage cabinet underneath the one on display.

"Can you break tha..." she didn't even get to finish as Ranma knelt and shattered the glass with a single punch of his armored glove covered hand. He spent a few seconds to remove the glass so that she couldn't cut herself then stepped back and impatiently waved her forward. She grabbed the Toughbook box she wanted, then grabbed another, ripped it open and grabbed the battery from it. She did this two more times then opened the computer's box and tore out the protective cardboard packaging, stuffing in the extra batteries instead.

With that done she handed the lot to Ranma. "We're done here."

Ranma turned, and knelt down, letting her clamber up onto his back. She decided to get a little revenge and pressed into him hard, her breasts flattening against his back. "lets go Ranma," she whispered in his ear, blowing into it a bit.

Ranma shuddered in reaction and turned to stare at her, and the look in his eyes before he shook it off made her breath catch in her throat and her body tingle. He turned away, a grin appearing on his face. "Sure, just hang on okay?" A moment later she was glad she did as Ranma rocketed forward, barely letting the door open before he was outside. Ten zombies had made their shambling way toward the store, but before they could charge them Ranma jumped forward off the ground, his feet smashing into the head of the lead zombie and using it to jump up to the roof and away.

Within five minutes they caught up with the bus and Ranma jumped to land on top of the bus's roof, grinning at Kohta before motioning him out of the way. Kohta moved down the ladder with an answering grin and Ranma handed Saya down then jumped in himself.

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Since he had napped earlier that day Ranma ordered the others to conk out now while he stayed awake as Shizuka drove the bus through the city, coming upon more and more people, fires and zombies as they moved through the center of the city toward the river.

They came to an intersection that wasn't deserted rather quickly however and Ranma looked out a little angrily at the amount of carnage that he could see. People from all walks of life were running around screaming while a few seemed intent on gunning down everyone they could see zombie or human, much like the yakuza pack he had seen earlier. However unlike before these crazies didn't seem to come from a single walk of life like everyday salary men (and a few women), a person dressed like a grocer and another like a cook were blasting away with a mix of guns at the zombies and anyone else they saw, ripping into cars and stores and stealing everything they could.

He watched as a few of them pulled a young couple out of a car and one of them gunned them both down when the woman tried to pull out a tazer, then watched as the same person turned and gunned down a zombie before turning back and rummaging through the dead bodies.

When a few of them turned their attention on the bus Ranma gleefully took that as an excuse. Uncoiling his weapon from around his waist he looped one end, the hidden blade end around his shoulders and began to twirl the other end, letting a bit more of the chain out of his hands every revolution, feeling the drain on his ki as the chain lengthened at his mental command. As the men tried to run forward his hand rose and the end shot out smashing into the man's face and sending him backwards in welter of gore, his skull crushed. With a sharp tug Ranma sent the chain into the air and then flicked it around twisting it just so to make the small blades pop out all along its length. The two men who had just raised their weapons gaped for a second, then died as the rope, which would have impacted their chest and maybe simply curled around them instead sliced into them and away, leaving their guts to fall out behind it. Ranma flicked the chain again, making the blades retract and he tugged the chain back towards him as it started to run out of momentum. He looped the chain around him again slowly, its length going back to normal, his eye hard as the bus kept going through the now silent intersection, as the rest of the crazies backed off turning away to go after easier targets.

He looked up as Saeko reached out from her seat to touch his shoulder, and she nodded understandingly at him. Ranma reached up and touched her hand gently, then wordlessly moved to stand by Shizuka, looking out the windscreen as they continued to move.

Soon after that they reached the river bed and followed along the road set up an embankment from it towards the bridge that Shizuka remembered. But when they neared it they found the bridge locked up and blockaded by cars and zombies. Shizuka groaned aloud wondering how they were going to get across, and Yuuki muttered "I wonder if we could go back and make this a hydrofoil or something? Big enough tires on it and maybe we could get it through the water?" She said this last in a tone that implied even she didn't think it was possible.

"Wouldn't work" Saya replied frowning a little as she looked at the mess in front of them. "The engine block isn't waterproofed along the bottom, we'd sink and the engine would stop working and we'd be stuck there."

Ranma looked out at snarl of traffic on and around the bridge, seeing the number of zombies on it as well as the number of people running away from them. He couldn't quite see the other end but he figured that there was probably a police cordon there. He felt that was sort of like trying to stop the flood after it had already hit the city but it was still a good idea to try and stop the spread of this epidemic. "If we can't get across" he said slowly "where would Ray in Takashi go to try and get across?"

None of the others had an answer for that, and the bus continued forward, looking for a side road to turn around at. However the nearest place they could turn was right at the backend of the traffic jam, and they watched in horror as more zombies suddenly came out of the apartment complex on the other side of the traffic jam, rushing forward to aid their weight to the zombies already attacking the people there.

"Turn us around," Ranma said softly, "get us out of here." Shizuka nodded a little fearfully and put the bus in reverse, turning the bus around as hard as she could but before they could move further Saeko, who had been looking out the side window, shouted "wait look down there!"

Down below them along the riverbed was a speeding bike, with Rei and Takashi on the back of it. Takashi was the one controlling the bike while Rei was on board behind him. Kohta began to wave frantically at them from his perch and Rei noticed and waved her makeshift spear back, pointing them out to Takashi, who turned the bike to make their way up the embankment.

The people on board the bus were so happy to see their friends they didn't even notice that an out-of-control car was barreling down the side road straight towards them. The first they knew of it was when Ranma, warned by his sixth sense somehow turned and gaped then shouted, "Look out! Car incoming, everybody grab hold of something!" He reached out and pulled Shizuka to him, diving down into the indented staircase leading out of the bus, shielding her body with his own.

The car, the driver having been bitten by one of his children in the back who had been Zombified, slammed into the front of the bus destroying its engine and pushing it onto an angle and shattering the front windscreen, sending glass through the bus. Shizuka gasped as she looked over Ranma's shoulder, knowing that would have killed her if he hadn't pulled her to safety. The momentum imparted from the impact slammed the bus back into the snarl of traffic around the bridge, crumpling the back end too. The people on board the bus cursed, shrieked or yelled during all this but thanks to Ranma's warning the worst injury was Kyoko slamming her forehead into the windowpane hard enough to cut her skin, but not enough to give her a concussion. Kohta had hung on like a monkey to the ladder at his position at the top hatch and his arms would be feeling it for a while, but that was all.

As soon as the bus stopped moving Ranma shouted "everyone out, go out the back this thing might blow at any second!" He didn't know much about engines or mechanics but he had seen enough action flicks the past few months to know that at least.

Yuuki nodded grimly already able to smell the engine oil. She grabbed Kohta's legs, pulling him down sharply not even noticing as his head banged along the ladder then shoved several bags of nails and other things into his hands before grabbing up the two packs Ranma had brought from his house and jumping out and away from the bus. Kyoko did the same, grabbing several bags from the teacher's lounge, living behind most of the stuff they had taken from the garage while Saya grabbed up the box with the laptop in it before running after the older woman. Saeko jumped out carrying the katana Ranma had given her and another bag of miscellaneous things while Ranma grabbed Shizuka and picked her up princess style and raced out after them.

The missing duo had at this point come up behind the bus and looked on shocked and horrified at the sudden reversal of what had been a relatively serendipitous reunion as everyone jumped out of the bus, racing over to the embankment to take cover. And not a moment too soon as the bus engine exploded as Ranma skidded down the slope still carrying Shizuka, who was torn between fear and simply enjoying the sudden ride. The explosion went on for a few minutes, and when it was over the entire front half of the bus was just gone, as was the car that had run into it and the zombies inside. Unfortunately this large noise attracted dozens of zombies from the traffic jam and bridge and they all turned toward it, making their way toward Ranma's group.

Rei and Takashi had taken cover as well and as the explosion ended looked at the others with wide eyes. After a second Takashi essayed a small smile and said "Um, hi guys?"

They all looked at him and then back at the bus still a little shell shocked at how quickly their fortunes had changed. Yuuki on the other hand wasn't shocked she was pissed. She stood up shouting at the top of her lungs, "What the bloody fuck! We spent two hours trying to change that engine casing and make that bus into a fucking fortress, and a single thing happens and it goes boom! Fucking cock-sucking zombies!" She kept on cursing and everyone else stared at her mesmerized as her curses became more inventive then switched to stare worriedly at the zombies coming forward from the congested area.

Saeko and Ranma however were looking at them eagerly, wanting to vent their own frustrations on a target.

Kohta moved forward and tried to calm Yuuki down saying "Yuuki, come on

Yuuki rounded on him angrily, "Shut it, I'm not done yet!" She heard movement behind her and turned to look at the zombies but instead of falling back in fright she reached into the bag that she had lugged off the bus and pulled out the holdout pistol taken from the teacher's lounge and fired at the nearest zombie. "And I don't want to hear anything from you!" The thing went down without a sound and she gasped, the sight of it falling to the ground dead at last finally knocking her out of her rage.

She fell back even as Ranma and Saeko both laughing a little charged forward spreading to either side of the charging zombies, Saeko with her blade held at a strike position straight at shoulder height and with Ranma beginning to twirl both ends of his modified meteor hammer with about three feet of chain and the ends to play with on either side of him.

Takashi and Rei brought up the rear, making certain that they weren't encircled, but really just watching as the two main fighters went to work. Kohta took out a few zombies along the edges, having fully restocked his nails, but really it was beside the point.

"I bet I kill more of them than you do Saeko-chan!" Ranma said gaily, one side of his meteor hammer lashing out to crush a zombie's head as it came within range.

"Ara, and what would the consequences of this bet be exactly?" Saeko answered, moving swiftly to the side, her new katana bisecting a zombie trying to get around their position.

"I'm sure we'll think of something!" Ranma shouted, and that was the last word that was spoken for a time. Ranma lashed out with his weapon's ends and his legs, crushing three zombies all at once before he used the chain to block the questing arms of another, twisting and slicing the things legs out from under it before rolling forward and crushing its head with the other side of his weapon, grimacing as a zombie grabbed his forearm, but a quick twist activated the blades in the chain, slinging out and killing two more zombies before getting stuck in one. He then looped the other end around another zombie and used his grip on the chain to flip himself into the pulling it with him and then lashing out again and again with both ends of his meteor hammer, before looping the chain around his chest in midair using the blunt end and three feet of the chain in one hand while he used his ki claws in the other, snarling happily.

Saeko wasn't so feral or random, but she was just as deadly. The Miyamoto family blade sliced through zombies almost as easily as it did the air, and she moved in a whirling dance of death, dodging zombies left and right as her blade flicked out ending their undead existence.

The two fighters worked in tandem and with rather wild grins on their faces slaughtered over 30 zombies in under a minute. The duo turned back after little while, motioning the others to start moving away from the pile up and the pile of zombies they had created. Rei and Takashi led the way and the group retreated, following a few minutes by the two fighters.

Ranma fastidiously cleaned his face from zombie goo nodding at the others. "That lot is going to keep attracting zombies, and while I don't personally have a problem with that we still need to find a place to fort up for the night." Ranma said looking up at the sun which was going down. Saeko nodded, a little irritated that they had to leave having enjoyed herself immensely. *I'll need new panties after this.* The ones she had on at the moment were utterly drenched, and she looked over at Ranma who looked over at her, his nostrils flared and she realized with a jolt that he could actually smell her arousal. His eyes became a little brighter, as he looked at her, letting her see the desire in his face before he turned away, and she smiled. "Does anyone know any placed nearby where we could hold up? Oh, and Rei" he turned to her "your mother is going to have words with you about going off on your own."

"You got in touch with my mom?!" Rei asked. "Wait, what do you mean she's going to have words with me?"

"Heh, yep yer mom is with my mom, they're heading towards a police station on the other side of the bridge but my mom didn't know which one neither did yours apparently. The police are trying to set up an evacuation point, but it kept on changing so they couldn't tell me which one. There was even someone talking about using the school instead of the police station for it, but yer mom is going to rip you a new one for going off on your own."

Rei nodded gulped a little, "you, you told her about me going off alone?"

"Yes," Ranma said maliciously, "I did. And since I had ta listen first-hand to their irritation with that idea you get to take the blunt of it when we actually find them." Rei growled a little but nodded and Ranma went on. "I have no idea what yer problem with Shido-shit is, but if ya had told me about it, or even asked fer help I woulda kicked him off the bus even sooner than I did. Hell, ya could have done it yerself with Saeko-chan backin' ya. I don't want ta know now what yer problem is, but ya can't just run off on yer own like that, not with the carzy ass shit happening now. Ya stay with the group and ya tough it out whatever the problem is, understand? I ain't facing our parents and telling 'em I let anything happen to you got it?"

Rei gulped, and nodded again, not meeting his eyes. In retrospect running off on her own rather than facing Shido down had been really stupid, especially after Ranma's show of force. "I, I understand. Its just, the very sight of that bastard, and, well, I just couldn't stand being around him anymore and it made me act stupidly okay!"

She glared at her cousin, some of her normal fire back, but then she gasped as her pulled her into a rough hug. "We all do stupid shit sometimes cos, just don't do it again okay? Whatever yer problems, we're all hear for ya now okay?"

Rei struggled for a moment in his arms then gave up and just nodded. *Maybe, maybe I should share what happened between me and that creep, its not like his father could do anything more to my family among all this.* She vowed to do a better job of thinking things through from now on, and maybe not jump to conclusions about her cousin as much. "All right you big lump, I understand now let me go will you!"

Ranma did so with a grin and began to lead the way away from the traffic jam and the numerous zombies still moving among it. While this side conversation had been going on, the others had been debating on where to go.

Ranma tuned back into the main conversation when Shizuka piped up "oh I know where we can stay! I have a friend who lives near here," she said looking around just then realizing where she was.

Yuuki grinned at the huge breasted nurse. "Is this your boyfriend's place we're talking about here?"

"O-oh no, nothing like that," Shizuka said, waving her hands wildly, taking a glance over at Ranma who had moved to stand by Saeko looking back at the fights still going on by the bridge. The only indication he was listening was that he had cocked his head towards the others. "This is my, um one of my girlfriend's place. She gave me a key a few weeks ago since she's been busy over at the airport."

For a moment Kohta thought of Shizuka dressed up in a French maid outfit cleaning the place for her friend, but then he frowned. "Is it an apartment or a house? Does it have a good view?"

"Oh yes, it's a mezonet apartment, and it's nearby so we can even walk there pretty easily. The row of apartment has its own fenced off area, oh and she has a car that's built like a tank. Its huge, like thiiiiiiis big!" She said holding out her hands and bouncing in place in a very pleasing manner to every male there. "And it's quite nice inside, great kitchen and a huge bathroom and everything!"

All the girls perked up at the phrase bathroom, and even Ranma, fastidious given his cat-like nature nodded. "Takashi go on ahead on the bike and see if this place is a great as she says it is, Shizuka-chan go with him to give him directions, the rest of us will follow." He pinned his meteor hammer in place around his waist and reached over to grab the two heaviest bags as the others prepared to get moving again.

"Aw," Shizuka said pouting a little "I wanted to go with you kitty-kun."

"Sorry," Ranma said shaking his head. "There's a reason I don't have a drivers license. Let's just say that moving vehicles and I do not get along."

Rei nodded firm agreement about one, she had heard how he had been sent in for his driver's license by Nodoka a few weeks after he arrived. Rei felt it was just an attempt to get him to stop roof hopping, but it hadn't worked. Instead, he had driven two of the driving instructors to resign in terror with his tactics and insanely quick speeds. It wasn't so much that he couldn't drive; it was that he was a danger to everyone and everything else on the road. Put him alone on a road with no obstacles and in an indestructible care he would be fine, anything less, even in a situation like the one they found themselves in now, was just asking for trouble.

Takashi nodded agreement and started up the engine on the motorbike again while Shizuka climbed aboard behind him still pouting. As soon as they were moving however she began to enjoy herself and pressed herself against Takashi's back in a very distracting manner enjoying the wind in her face. The others moved off after them, Saeko at the back and Kohta and Rei at the front with Ranma loaded with as many bags as he could carry, Saya carrying her laptop, and Yuuki carrying one bag and Supporting Kyoko, who, now that her adrenaline rush had died, was wobbling on her feet dazed by the pain from smacking her head into the side of the bus.

The sun was very nearly down by the time they arrived at the house, but thankfully it was just as Shizuka had described. The apartment was one of a trio of two story apartments set into a row overlooking a bend in the river, and it did indeed have a high stone and metal fence around it and only one entrance. On the road in front were spaces for cars, but only one car remained there now, sitting alone yet dominating the area.

Yuuki looked at it and nearly salivated at the idea of working on it while Kohta simply stared at the piece of military hardware with something approaching lust on his face. Shizuka smiled happily. "See, it really is pretty nice huh?"

However after a moment they saw movement inside from a few zombies, and Ranma and Saeko exchanged a glance. "The rest of you follow us in, Saeko and I will go in first."

Ranma led the way with a small grin on his face in his hands wide not even bothering to unhook his weapon while Saeko simply smiled a little manically and followed him blade at the ready while the others nodded and as the two fighters charged in lugged their packs inside and firmly closed the gate behind them. Thus ended the first day in their new world.

End chapter

As always read and review, and like I said, don't expect more chapter for this story for a while. Tell me how you liked Ranma's weapon and how i wrote out the last fight there. Also, how do zombies actually fight? do they just try to grab and bite or what?

***Chapter 3*: Well It's better than Superman I guess**

the Harry thing has been corrected

I don't own the monster boobs or the martial artist.

Some reviews I'd like to mention:

Xbox432: I've been thinking of taking a few weeks off writing new stuff to go back and edit all of my stuff, but at the moment I'm using writing as therapy more than anything else, just a way to let my imagination go. Rewriting doesn't let me do that, but if you point out specific mistakes and I see your review I will go back and change it.

god of stuff: Honestly you're not the only one who wants him to have a curse. In this story it just won't happen, however I might someday (like two years from now at the least) go back and write another story in this crossover that starts later, and he might have his curse (or a different one) in that story. Until then, if you want to write your own RanmaXHotD wherein he does have his curse I would love to read it.

Euphemism: Hmm... Ryoga... I don't know. I don't particularly like his character, and I already put him in China and had him lose the trail. So that would be a reach. I favor smaller groupings too, but other than Takashi/Rei, and Ranma/Saeko/Saya, everything else is still up in the air. Any choice by the teachers will be in the future.

TJG: Your comments are always interesting and well thought out. In this story however none of the main characters are going to be involved in anything more than surviving and protecting themselves. Some of your ideas for a protected community will make an appearance via Saya, but on a very small scale.

Anon42: Ranma's weapon is a powerful one, but it comes with a powerful price too, which will be seen in this chapter. Then imagine him trying to use it in a large scale battle.

One reviewer mentioned I should be calling the zombies Them, like in the original, but I always thought that that was really contrived, they're zombies, any child could see that, so no that won't be happening.

Got another review that said the bra sizes are wrong, just telling you people I am using the bra sizes from the HotD wiki page. I assume they are Japanese, which would make sense since this story happens entirely in Japan. Don't tell me anymore that the sizes are wrong and go and look at the manga and wiki. In other news I am changing Kitty-chan to Neko-chan, making it sound more Japanese. I'll go back and change it at some point this weekend.

In other news, this chapter holds, my first full lemon! It will be marked off as such, thought honestly I feel that kind of break takes away from the story's flow, if others agree with me on that I won't use them in the future. Remember, this is a full lemon, not a tease like in most of my other stories, if you read it you know you are a pervert, don't blame me for your falling to the dark side, blame being human.

Now on with the show.

Chapter 3 Well it's Better Than Superman I Guess

The apartment Shizuka had led them to that belonged to her friend was from a defensive perspective excellent. The apartment complex was separated into two different stacked two-story apartments, the topmost only accessible from an exterior staircase with a concrete rail on the outer side. The apartment of Shizuka's friend was the topmost apartment in the first section in from the gate and besides that had a small balcony on the corner of the building overlooking the entrance in the wall that surrounded the complex, the street beyond and even had a decent view of the nearest bridge.

Shizuka produced a key to allow them access and once inside the group found the apartment even better on the inside. The first floor was a sitting area large enough for them all to sit comfortably. Through a doorway on the side was great kitchen, though small they would find it decently stocked with food and drink. The entrance to a bathroom large enough for at least four maybe five people at a pinch to have a bath at the same time. On the second floor was a bedroom with a queen sized bed in the center of the room, a locked cupboard and a dresser along one wall. A glass door led out to the small balcony, which wrapped around one corner of the building.

"Very nice," Ranma said looking around, coming down after checking the upper floor for zombies.

"What the hell does your friend do?" Takashi asked looking around in shock. Not only was the position of the apartment in a prime spot but the inside was fantastic, and most of the furniture were of high quality, including the flat screen TV that dominated one wall of the sitting room. A place like this would be really expensive, heck it was better than his family's house, and that was with both his parents bringing in money.

Shizuka looked away, not meeting anyone's eyes. The identity of SAT officers was supposed to be a secret, so she couldn't actually tell them about that, even if it probably didn't matter anymore she had promised so she just said, "Um Rika-chan works with the police force."

Kohta looked around too gaping in shock. "All this on a police officer's salary, wow, what branch does she work for!?"

Ranma however had his mind on more important matters. "I call dibs on the shower."

This immediately roused a protest from all the girls except for Kyoko, who was holding her head flinching at all the noise but trying not to lash out right now. The injury she had taken from slamming her head into the side of the bus when that out-of-control car crashed into their bus was really throbbing now, and both the lights and the noise were adding to her pain.

Ranma overrode their objections holding up his hands. "Who has the most blood on their hands, answer me! Besides, I'll be quick, in and out in fifteen minutes tops, promise." Ranma wouldn't normally have spoken out against the girls having first dibs on the bathroom, but his cat instincts were currently going haywire. Cats were fastidious creatures, and now that they were someplace safe those instincts were urging him to get clean, and Ranma really didn't want to keep dealing with the urge to lick himself!

The girls took in his appearance, something they had all been subconsciously trying to avoid doing save Saeko who also had quite a lot of blood splattered on her as well. They all nodded reluctant agreement to that save Saeko who, with a small smile on her face and a wicked look in her eyes said "Well if we are going to use that as an indicator of priority, perhaps I should go in with you."

The shout of "No!" came from every female throat, including Rei, and she went on as the other girls looked at one another askance. "I'm not going to use a bathroom where you two have done anything like **that!** That's just wrong, and this isn't the time for it!" Saya nodded firmly in agreement.

Ranma shrugged then without another word turned and made his way into the bathroom.

While Kohta looked around downstairs, Takashi went upstairs to check out the bedroom and look out from the balcony out onto the city. Night had fallen and they could still hear noises and shouts in the distance, but they were slowly falling silent. In the surrounding neighborhood he could see sixty or so zombies wandering around, both singly and in groups, and there might be more in some of the houses.

The girls began to rummage through the clothing Ranma had grabbed from his and Rei's home for something to wear after their own bath, with Rei of course getting first choice. After about a minute of this however Yuuki began to inch her way towards the door to the bathroom only to be stopped by a firm hand from Saya. "What do you think you are doing?" She asked, scowled angrily.

Yuuki smirked at her reaching out to poke her in the chest then leaning in conspiratorially. "You can't say that you're not curious? Don't you want to see how Ranma looks without that baggy uniform of his?" Ranma in fact did wear a school uniform that was a size too large, thus giving him more maneuverability in the limbs.

Saya blushed a little, but shook her head firmly. "No I'm not," she exclaimed angrily, who would be interested in that dumb meathead anyway?"

Yuuki smirked while Rei rolled her eyes and Saeko giggled. "I never said you were interested in him Takagi, I just asked you if you want to see him naked. You're the one that jumped from that to being interested in him." Saya gaped at her, her blush spreading over her entire face and Saeko's giggles became a little louder while Rei began to pointedly ignore them.

Instead she turned back to the backpack of clothing to pick out a pair of jeans. She scowled as she realized Ranma hadn't grabbed any underwear for her. *Wait I should be happy about that, the idea of him going through my underwear like that, well that's just wrong.*

Shizuka blushed a little tempted to join Yuuki in trying to look, but she decided to take care of Kyoko first. The spectacle wearing teacher was now leaning against the wall looking a little woozy. The nurse wordlessly moved over

to her and helped her up the stairs to the second story where she knew her friend's bedroom was. Thankfully the sheets had probably been changed since the last time she was over...

Shizuka noticed both boys outside on the balcony but ignored them in favor of putting Kyoko on the bed and checking her head wound. From what she could tell it was just a very bad bruise, and she cleaned it a bit with Kyoko wincing all the way then gave her several painkillers from the nurse's office that Shizuka had grabbed on her way out. They were more powerful than the ibuprofen and other medicine that Ranma had grabbed from his house being for students who were suffering from injuries and hopefully it would knock Kyoko out for a bit.

Below Yuuki had slowly but surely convinced Saya to let them look, a task which had been made far easier when Saeko joined in. Rei had left with a huff to look around the apartment, marveling at the TV in particular. She also found a liquor cabinet, and was very tempted to break something out. After the day she had she felt she deserved it.

The girls opened the bathroom door to see inside, and were sad to see that Ranma had already finished his shower. Yet what they saw was interesting enough. His back and his rear was facing them as he began to get dressed in a clean pair of martial art pants and Chinese shirt that he had grabbed from his house. The girls were faced with the single most flawless male back they had ever imagined. Even Yuuki, who was far and away the most experienced girl there, had never seen the like. There wasn't any body fat there and the muscles of his back, all sharply defined, twitched and moved under his still wet skin as he finished driving himself off. The girls gaped for a moment, burning the sight into their minds before watching as Ranma pulled up his pants. When he leaned back down for a clean silk shirt they all retreated quickly.

The girls barely got back to the kitchen before Ranma came out fully dressed and tying his hair back in his typical pigtail. "All yers gals," he said cheerfully feeling much better now that his cat instincts weren't telling him to lick himself. It was amazing how disconcerting a concept that was to deal with.

None of the trio trusted themselves to answer verbally and simply nodded.

Takashi came down the metal spiral staircase with Kohta following him. The gun nut was muttering about the locked cabinet and what might be in there but Takashi had other things on his mind. "Do you think we should spread out to the other apartments or stay concentrated here?"

Saya shook her head. "The more area we spread out to, the more we have to defend, besides which why would we? This place is more than big enough for all of us."

Takashi nodded at her point but said, "I understand it's big enough for us to live in but it doesn't have enough beds for all of us. Are we going to sleep on the floor or what?"

"That's easily solved," said Ranma. "You and me'll go and raid the other apartments for mattresses. While we're doing that Kohta, why don't you check around for a perfect sniper position for yourself, you're the only gun guy we've got, which means it's your call where ta set up." Ranma looked at the shorter boy apologetically. "I think ya should also be on first watch tonight, if we're gonna have trouble it'll be then or early morning, and I'll take that watch alone."

Kohta nodded seriously and turned back to go upstairs to check out the balcony again as well as see if he could somehow get onto the roof without Ranma having to carry them up. He'd rather avoid that, as it looked more than a little humiliating, to be carried like a sack of wheat by another boy.

Takashi and Ranma moved out the front door as silently as they could, heading down to the apartment on the first floor where they had already cleared out the zombies.

As they left Shizuka came down and moved into the kitchen asking "Could one of your girls please cook us something to eat, I'm starving and I know we could all use a real meal. Something that will keep, I want to let some for Kyoko-chan." Saeko answered in the affirmative saying she would start something now that could simmer while they were in the bath and Rei swiftly moved to join her. Shizuka nodded and wet a towel to clean off Kyoko with. The other teacher wasn't in any shape to clean herself after all. "In that case I'll be down in a minute, please don't use all the hot water, pretty please?"

Yuuki laughed, looking up from where she had gone back to going through the clothing choices available from Rei's place, wondering if she could find something better upstairs. Most of Rei's stuff was too childish or tomboyish for her tastes. "No promises sensei. Just call it incentive to join us as fast as you can."

Shizuka pouted but turned and made her way up the staircase again, wincing as her feet bothered her. She hadn't changed into flats yet, but after her bath it was going to be the first thing she did. After all, she kept a pair of her shoes

and some clothing here for when she stayed over with Rika.

After a moment Kohta came barreling down blushing furiously. When Shizuka cleaned someone she cleaned them and she didn't even bother trying to cover the other teacher up bar leaving her bra and panties on as she did it, not even noticing Kohta was in the same room. Well she had, she just didn't care. In fact she found his reaction hilarious.

Yuuki smirked a little at his blushing face and decided she would tease him some more later. He was a little too innocent for her tastes really, but making him flush was entertaining. More, Kohta was such a strange contrast. When it came to girls he came off as a typical NEET cherry boy, someone who wouldn't know what to do in any kind of social situation, let alone with girls, if you drew him a manual, in other words he acted as he always had back in school. Yet in a fight with a gun in his hand he knew instinctively what to do and possessed an almost manic lethality that was astonishing. And since this crisis had begun he had been a rock of dependability.

The two boys swiftly came back and were let in by Saya, who had positioned herself at the door for this purpose, carrying a futon each which they threw on the ground in the sitting room. Luckily the apartment directly below Rika's had two twin beds mattresses that they took, and more importantly no security alarm. Ranma left the door ajar so they could go back and scavenge more food if they needed it.

Saya looked over at them as, the choices of clothing made, the other girls made their way over to the bathroom, Shizuka rushing down the spiral staircase and through the kitchen to join them. "Good work you two," Saya approved. She then scowled at them and Kohta, who was sitting still trying to get over his blush on the sofa. "We're going to takes a bath now, any of you peak, you die!"

Ranma shrugged, the idea not having even occurred to him. Despite his tomcat urges, he really wasn't a pervert. Takashi blushed a little and looked away, but Kohta blushed and his nose to leak blood as he imagined what the girls would look like showering together which earned him a kick upside the head and a cry of "Pervert!" from the pink haired girl.

Justice done she turned with a huff to join the others as they walked into the bathroom. She wished she could wait and take her own turn like Ranma, but she didn't have as good a reason as him and under the current conditions their all taking a shower together would mean they would be ready to move that much faster if they had to, even if they took their time.

Ranma went upstairs to check on Kyoko, who had already fallen asleep thanks to the pills that Shizuka had given her and fifteen minutes ago. After pulling up the blanket to cover her more completely, blushing slightly at the fact that the blanket had fallen down so that her top was visible in a rather risqué red bra. He then moved out onto the balcony carrying one of his armored gloves.

Looking over the cityscape he frowned angrily. Somewhere out there was his mother and his aunt, as well as Takashi and Saya's parents. *Is it better to know that you can't do anything to help your parents, or have them so close you could but have no idea how?* He shelved that thought for now and sat on the balcony's railing where it met the wall, leaning back to stare up at the stars as he thought of their current situation.

Ranma wasn't one to think long term, he left that area of concern to Saya, who would handle it better than him. No, he concentrated on what they had figured out about the zombies, as well as what other physical threats they could be facing eventually. *The zombies don't have eyes, but their hearing is insane, better than mine even, and they got some kind of pack mentality thing going on where they know what noises are made by other zombies and what're made by us, that makes them way more dangerous than if they were just mindlessly reactin' ta every sound they hear. They ain't got no weapons or martial art skills, they just grab and try ta bite, but they're seriously strong.*

He grimaced at that thought as he looked down at his left armored glove. The armor that covered his forearm had been crushed a little from where a zombie had gotten a hold of his arm there. The grip had only lasted a second but it was still enough to bend the metal. With a grunt of effort he was able to push it back into shape, but it was a sign of how strong the zombies were.

Still, even with their strength they ain't a real threat to me or ta Saeko-chan except in huge numbers. Problem is, they do come at ya in huge numbers. How many people're in the city, a million, less, more? Tonkosou ain't as big as Tokyo or any of the other big ass cities but still. So fighting them in a single place is out, no matter how many ya kill there'll always be more of 'em. You'll get tired, they won't, and it'll only take one bite ta kill ya. Moving around will be the key, which means teachin' Saeko at least ta move silently and roof hop. And put some more time inta learnin' the umi-sen-ken, maybe it could fool the ears of the zombies.

And then there's the human element. Ranma thought grimly, changing gears a little. *Shido-shit ain't the only one*

who'll be acting like that, the yaks and the crazy bastards are just a few examples. People everywhere are gonna be looking for ways to prey on other people and surviving. We'll need ta be as wary of strangers as we are of the zombies. And we'll want ta keep the group small and mobile, though how that'll effect the way we go about checking on our folks I don't know.

He sighed, looking over toward the bridge, where he could spot several spotlights working to light the area, wondering what was going to happen next.

OOOOOOOOOOO

In the bathroom, Yuuki was underneath the shower along one side of the bathroom's wall, her hands slowly caressing down her body as she wondered if she could get some much-needed relief now or if the others would throw bitch fit. There was nothing like a good jilling off to take your mind off your troubles, but she decided it really wasn't worth the bitching she'd get from the other girls.

Shizuka and Rei had swiftly gotten into the bath after a very brief obligatory dousing and Rei was currently gaping at the size of Shizuka's chest. "Sensei, those are huge!"

Shizuka smilingly hefted her breasts, which were big enough that she would need three or four hands to really cover even one. "Yep," she said happily, "I get that a lot."

Rei's eyebrow twitched. "So smug," she muttered and then reached forward grabbing and pulling Shizuka's tits "Take this!" she exclaimed

Saya, who was sitting by the wall on a stool peering blearily (without her glasses she was practically blind) at a bottle of shampoo and conditioner, groaned aloud. "This is not an eroge people!" she muttered, then turned to Saeko, who was sitting next to her. "Is this shampoo you think?"

Saeko looked at the label and nodded but realizing that Saya wasn't able to see it said "yes!" out loud before going on. "This might not be a game, but it is an outlet. I think we all deserve a bit of downtime don't you?"

"Well I suppose so," Saya said as she began to pull her hair out of its normal ponytails. "Still this seems a little oaAHHHH!" she broke off into a squeal as Saeko sneakily dumped a bit of cold water down her back and onto her rear.

She gasped and twitched up right throwing her rather large (though nowhere near as much as Shizuka's) breasts out, causing Saeko to look at them and the swordswoman frowned for just a second as she realized they were actually bigger than her own before she smirked at the younger girl. "Ma, what a magnificent sound, the boys must love that."

Saya recovered quickly, glaring at her a little and sneakily filled up her own bucket with cold water then dumped it down Saeko's back. However rather than squealing or yelling as Saya hoped Saeko simply let out a low, guttural moan, shivering in place as she hugged her knees. The smile she sent Saya just pissed the pink haired girl off even more and she muttered "Che, so mature."

That was too good an opening for Yuuki, who came over and straddled the bench next to the purple haired swords woman. "Yeah," she said grinning cheekily as she trawled for information. "I bet Ranma loves it...."

Saya looked at Saeko with new interest, one eyebrow raised as she rinsed her hair with both hands while waiting for the senior's reply. Saeko however merely smiled, answering her interlocutors calmly. "He has not heard any such sound from me just yet, though hopefully he will soon."

Rei looked up from where she was busy molesting Shizuka in the bath and said, "What do you see in him anyway? I mean I know he's good-looking and everything, I'm not blind, but he's a total jock! He doesn't care about anything other than martial arts, he's so blunt it's irritating, he talks like a hick, and all that cat stuff of his is freakish."

Saeko merely smiled. "On the contrary I think he is very kind and gentle when you get to know him despite his blunt attitude. And as for being concentrated on martial arts, that label could be sent my way too you know. And I think his cat like nature is very cute." *At other times*, she thought to herself, *it can be a turn on, much like his strength*. She did not mention how alike they were in other ways, the secret of her hidden darkness, her desire for blood and battle, was something none of them would understand.

The other girls save Rei nodded, though Yuuki didn't particularly think that Ranma's kindness was a particular point in his favor. Kind people were a dime a dozen in her opinion, but most of them were also powerless. . Ranma had power, a very blunt, very physical kind of power that attracted her just as much as the rest of him did and despite his

kind nature Ranma could also be ruthless, as seen by how he dealt with Shido. She was still uncertain if she wanted to make a move on him though, that hadn't changed, even if he did the sexiest back she had ever seen.

Rei frowned a little at the apparent agreement on her cousin's good points but shrugged. To be honest despite her dislike of Ranma (she just couldn't get used to his cat like attitude sometimes, it honestly freaked her out) she was glad that he was with them during this catastrophe. In this current crisis having someone as capable as he was around was a godsend.

Shizuka adroitly change the subject, asking the girls if they followed a soap opera hat she was into. This led into a discussion about TV specials and other things, until Rei out of the bath to grab at Saya's chest from behind crying out, "Oh my god another pair of giant tits!"

After a time however the girls all got a little too prune and one by one exited the bath. Saeko moved into the kitchen to look over the food, but Shizuka made a beeline to the liquor cabinet. She took out two bottles of wine and several glasses then turned to the younger girls, smiling a little wickedly. "Anyone want to join me?"

Saya frowned but nodded, while Rei and Yuuki both nodded eagerly. Soon enough all four women were gathered on the sofa, drinking and giggling together.

OOOOOOO((()))OOOOOOO

As the girls were in the bath on the second floor Kohta had grabbed a crowbar from their packs and was trying to break the lock on the cupboard and Takashi had begun to help him. Hearing the shrieks from Saya as Rei grabbed her Takashi smiled a little. "It sounds like they're having fun."

Kohta smirked in reply, not looking away from his attempts to work the crowbar into the lock. "You want to go peek? It's almost our manly duty you know."

"I don't want to die just yet," Takashi said firmly then changed the subject. "Are you sure there's something in here?"

""Why the hell would they have this heavy a lock if there wasn't anything in there? Besides which, Shizuka said that this friend of hers, this Rika is a police officer, but there's no way a normal police officer could afford this kind of place on their normal salary, that means there might just be something **special** in here."

Takashi conceded the point, having noticed how good this place was when they arrived. A moment later the lock finally broke under their combined efforts, the sharp retort of it breaking Ranma out of his thoughts out on the balcony. He looked in and gaped seeing the guns in the locker, "Wow."

Takashi simply looked at them all his eyes wide. "Well you are right Kohta, her friend sure as hell isn't a normal officer."

"A Springfield M1A1 semi-automatic, well the full version is automatic, but this version is less wasteful ammunition wise!" Kohta muttered, his eyes gleaming manically, and with a strangely vicious grin on his face.

Takashi gaped at him, backing away slightly. "Um, Hirano, hey Hirano..."

"A Knights SR equipped with a scope... wait, no, you can't get that kind of thing in Japan so it must be an AR-10 that was modified from top to bottom! She even has a crossbow in here, a Barnett wildcat C5." Kohta went on, fondling each gun in turn, ignoring Takashi for a moment. That ended when Takashi reached in and pulled out the last gun in the locker. "That's an Ithaca M35 riot shotgun, one hell of a badass shotgun!"

Takashi brought it up and was about to accidentally point it at Hirano when Ranma, who had been walking toward them from the balcony, slapped it back down. He frowned a little at seeing all the guns but then shrugged. "Well I think everyone should learn how to use these, 'cept for me and Saeko-chan maybe. But ya know they make a lot of noise, and that would only bring more of the damn zombies down on us." He stared at Kohta, his eyes serious. "That means that ya only shoot when you absolutely have ta understand? Until then you stick with your nail gun, or that crossbow if it's quiet."

"I understand our rules of engagement," Kohta said somberly. "But these guns may be the difference between life and death for us all at some point." More, he knew deep down that his skill with firearms was the only real thing he brought to their group. Without them he felt useless, a burden on the team.

Ranma had no way of knowing that and nodded but still said "I understand that but keep the shooting to a minimum okay? In a city like this, there's always gonna be more of those bastards around than we've got bullets." Kohta

nodded and Ranma reached down and grabbed a pair of binoculars from inside the locker and went back outside, leaving the two boys to look over the guns.

Kohta turned back to his prizes, taking out one of the clips and a box of bullets. "Give me a hand Here Komuro, its actually pretty tough to get these bullets in."

"Did you learn all this from air guns?" Takashi asked, following Kohta's example and putting bullets into the magazines for the guns with difficulty.

"Hell no, I learned on real guns." Takashi gaped at him and Kohta explained. I went on a trip at one point and went to this kind of self-defense place with army training run by a former Army instructor who took me under his wing for the month that I was there."

Takashi looked at him and shook his head bemusedly. "I'm really glad your with us for this crap, and I'm glad we're not enemies."

Kohta chuckled then looked down at the magazine in his hand and the box of bullets. "Seriously though, what kind of person is this Rika woman? All of these guns are definety illegal. They're not borderline illegal either, you'd have get all thses parts special ordered and put them together yourself, and even then it's still illegal to own them. Unless she's part of the SAT..."

Takashi shrugged, not willing to look a gift horse in the mouth. A loud giggle from the first floor made them both look over at the stairwell. "They're getting louder, do you think we should tell them to keep quiet?"

"Don't bother" Ranma called in from where he was standing out on the balcony. "There still a lot of noise and movement by the bridge, that'll attract most of the zombies, so we should be safe enough here fer now."

The two boys nodded and Takashi turned on the TV, which was showing a local news channel that was actually covering what was going on over at the bridge. While Ranma remained outside looking through the sniper scope, Kohta and Takashi watched and shook their heads at the stupidity they were seeing.

One side of the bridge was as they had thought now defended by a police force complete with water cannons and barricades, but instead of coming forward calmly and working with them to be cleared a large portion of the civilians on this side of the bridge was acting like they were at a political party, shouting angrily at the police and blaming the government for the current crisis, calling it a result of a secret government bio-weapon.

Takashi scoffed. "Yeah right, no way could someone have come up with something like that, a bioweapon that spreads like rabies and changes people into undead? No way."

Kohta chuckled. "Yeah, its more likely to be some kind of magical curse or something right? Who cares where it came from, we just need to band together and real with it, these guys are just lashing out at their normal target in an attempt to ignore the real problem. Whoa!"

That exclamation was caused by the sight of a elderly police officer shooting the lead rabble rouser down in cold blood then ordering the rest to disperse. Unfortunately the new agency decided to cut to commercial in reaction, leaving the two teens staring at the TV.

"Damn, I wonder if that will help them keep control or not?" Takashi asked.

Kohta shrugged and looked over at him then gasped in shock. "Takashi look out!"

Takashi turned to look behind him and was swiftly enveloped in a warm marshmallow heaven as Shizuka collapsed onto him, her towel clad breasts meeting his face. "HHEHEHHEHEH, Koo-muu-roo-kun!" Shizuka slipped down his body, her breasts now pillowed into his chest as she kissed his cheek.

"S-sensei, are you drunk?" Takashi stuttered.

"Just a teensy weensy bit, fufuuu..." She gazed past him, catching sight of Kotha, who in her inebriated state she hadn't noticed before. "Ahh, Kohta-chan!"

"Chan, um, hehe err," Kohta muttered, blushing heavily.

Shizuka lunged forward, grabbing him in turn and kissing him on the check, which had much the same effect as a final combo in a fighting game, putting him down for the count.

As Kohta collapse to the ground, blood gushing from his nose Shizuka turned to Ranma, who had just come in from the balcony, his stomach reminding him he hadn't fed it in a while. "Neko-chan!" she exclaimed in charged forward but Ranma dodged around her lunge adroitly, grabbing her around the middle to keep her from falling.

His catlike instincts were at war with each other now. On the one hand this was a fine figure of a female and she was clearly ready for some fun, on the other hand she smelled **horrible**. The alcoholic on her breath was a major turnoff. "I think ya need to lay down sensei," he said leading her over towards the bed.

"NO, why, I want to play, I want to drink some more! We all need some after today!" She reached out and grabbed Takashi again, "You agree with me don't you Tak-kun?"

"Um, er," Takashi stammered.

Ranma looked up, hearing something outside and turned back to the balcony, letting Shizuka glomp onto Takashi again.

Takashi tried to get her off him, but his hands ending up pressing into her breasts. "Hya, Takashi-kun, you're just a little pervert aren't you?" Shizuka giggled.

"Um, well I'd be lying if I said I wasn't enjoying this..." Takashi muttered, trying to move his hands away from where they had landed.

A voice from the stairwell cut into Takashi's fun like a buzz saw through butter. "And what the hell are you enjoying huh?" He looked over and saw Rei walking up the staircase slowly, one arm clamped on the banister to steady her, and what she was wearing caused Takashi to gulp audibly and blush even more than touching Shizuka had. Rei and the others hadn't bothered to dress for the day, simply putting on enough to get through the night. In Rei's case that meant white panties and a tight pink top with very thin straps that came down to just below her waist. Behind her he could see Yuuki following Rei up the stairs dressed similarly in a very tight shirt that fell to a little below her waist and white looked like black panties.

Yuuki and Rei had followed the drunk off her ass teacher up the steps, though only Yuuki wasn't nearly as effected by the alcohol intake that she had Rei was seeing three, able to walk but barely. Saya had fared even worse than Shizuka, having just been knocked out by the wine as soon as it hit her.

As Rei marched up to Takashi and demanded what he was doing with Shizuka, Yuuki approached the bed, ostentatiously leaning over to check on Kyoko and flashing her assets at Kohta who woke up with a massive blush on his face. After that she turned and laid down next to the teacher and started doing some leg exercises and staring at him. "So," she said, "How did you get so good with guns anyway?"

Kohta looked at her blushing heavily and she laughed a little and proceeded to do leg lifts, wondering if she could kill the bully through blood loss. Kohta however rallied and began to give her a more in-depth version of the story he had given Takashi.

At this point Ranma came in again from the balcony. The noise had been a small dog running around the neighborhood barking, but none of the zombies had bothered it.

He caught sight of Yuuki on the bed and for a moment the look in his eyes as he looked at her made Yuuki flush, again reminding her of her current dilemma. She was very much undecided about which of the two boys she liked more, she didn't even give Takashi a second thought, his devotion to Rei was hopping on the line between romantic and plain sad. With Ranma it was pretty obvious that she wouldn't be, and he would also be with Saeko at the very least and possibly even Saya. The teachers, she wasn't so sure about. What was worse was she didn't know how badly that would affect the group dynamic. Kohta was a sure thing and she knew he could control him, but did she really want to be in control?

To try and ignore the idea of being controlled by Ranma she looked back at Kohta and said "So tell me about that Hummer outside? I've never worked on those things, never even seen one before, what are their specs?"

"Before that," Ranma said interrupting the conversation, "Kohta I want ya to take my place outside, we need at least one person on guard. Don't shoot whatever ya do. In fact don't even bring out yer gun," he said, not totally trusting Kohta would follow that order if he had a gun in his hand. "Just yer nail gun. You two can keep talking quietly, but I want you guys also to concentrate on what's going on around us out there, and keep the lights off just in case, we don't want ta attract any attention okay?" With that he handed the binoculars he had been using over to Yuuki and walked inside. "I'm going to go get some food, I'll relive ya two in about two hours."

As the gun nut and the petrol head began their discussion again Ranma reached out gently picking Shizuka up from where she was sitting at the foot of the bed watching Rei and Takashi argue about something laying her down on the bed next to Kyoko. She mumbled something at him, but her breath stunk of wine and he moved away from her quickly.

Ranma tucked Shizuka in adroitly avoiding her grasping hands then patted her head, forcing it back down onto the pillow. She made one last attempt to grab him and drag him down on top of her then her eyes began to close and her hands fell back limply to bounce of the bed.

Ranma smiled down at her then turned, adroitly passing where Rei was remonstrating with Takashi for some reason and heading down the spiral staircase.

Downstairs he found Saya asleep, splayed out on one of the mattresses wearing only panties and a very short muscle-T which obviously did not have a bra underneath it. Her pink hair was loose and going everywhere on the cushion, and her chest was rising and falling gently as she breathed in and out, her face, which was normally screwed up in irritation, slack and almost peaceful if not for the little bit of drool leaking out.

Ranma whimpered a little at the sight his cat instincts telling her to just go over and take her right now, remembering the smell of her arousal when he was carrying her to get her laptop. In fact one of his hands was already reaching out for her breasts, and he grabbed it with the other hand and pulled it back fighting with himself.

It took him a moment but he was able to control himself enough to not give in, seeing her begin to curl up and shiver a bit. Instead he grabbed a blanket from a cabinet and spread it out over her.

As he pulled the blanket up her body and his hands brushed her chest his control broke. With a low growl he began to play with her breasts a little. They were so large his hands he could barely hold them and so soft too, even the feel, as if the breasts underneath it somehow changed the common cotton to something softer and he could feel her nipples under his palms begin to harden under his ministrations.

He might have continued doing this but after a minute Saya moaned and mumbled in her sleep causing him to jump away, and as he watched wide-eyed she turned onto her side and curled up under the blanket. He shook his head and smacked himself upside the head for a bit as he tried to gain control of himself.

As soon as he did he moved into the kitchen and saw something that made him lose it entirely.

LEMON STARTS HERE:

Saeko hadn't found any clothing among the things Ranma had grabbed from Rei's room, and hadn't wanted to leave the kitchen long enough to go and search for more, and had to make do with what she had.

So she stood at the kitchenette clad only in a pair of tight black panties that disappeared between her ass cheeks and covered by a cooking apron. From the doorway leading into the kitchen he could see the gentle curve of her breasts, showing that she wasn't wearing a bra, and her bare back showed the apron and her black panties were all she was wearing.

Ranma growled, a deeper primal sound, his control shattering at last.

Saeko turned her head slightly, the growl startling her a little, one hand stirring a pot of something with a ladle. She smiled at the sight of Ranma standing there, though seeing his eyes on her almost glowing with desire shot a shiver of pleasure through her. "Ranma," she said a little more throatily than she meant to, his gaze affecting her more than she had thought. "I'm just cooking something for breakfast tomorrow, that way we'll have something on hand just in case. There's a plate of rice balls and a pot of miso soup for tonight already in the fridge for dinner if you want some."

Ranma moved forward on silent feet as she turned back to the meal and she gasped a little as his hands encircled her waist. "You and the other girls," he said softly yet with a very husky tone of voice that she had never heard before. "You're all enjoying tempting the hell out of me, are ya trying to kill me?"

"I assure you I don't want you dead," Saeko said, smirking a little then gasped aloud as Ranma move forward slightly, his crotch impacting her rear.

"You feel what you do to me?" He said huskily, beginning to nip at her neck.

Saeko moaned a little pushing back at him with her hips. His hardness felt like a rod of steel resting along the crack of her ass and his hands moved along her sides until they gripped her breasts firmly over her apron.

"I'm not teasing," she moaned. "I want you to take what we both want." She turned in his arms and their lips met in a heated kiss as her arms went around his waist. This was not just the culmination of their day of teasing one another on and off, this was the end result of over two months of flirting, and she wanted it badly.

Not a second into it Ranma opened his mouth and their tongues began to duel, first in her mouth and then in midair as he broke off the kiss moving down her body. With his thumbs he lifted and pushed the cooking apron above her breast into a thin strip between her breasts. While they weren't as large as Saya's they were still more than a handful and they were as firm as the rest of her, pliant and smooth under his hands. Saeko closed her eyes, letting out little low moans as he began to play with them. One hand began to tweak one dark pink nipple while his mouth latched onto the other and his tongue began to lavish attention on it.

In another lifetime, Ranma would have the ability to read a person's ki so easily that he could tell what made them feel pleasure just by looking at their aura. In this one he didn't, and needed to play it by ear. This is not to say that this was a difficult proposition, as Saeko's moans and groans made clear, making him learn quickly what she liked and didn't like, and pushing the passion higher.

After a moment, he ran one hand down towards her panty covered core and found her completely soaked, so much so that it had soaked through her panties and actually made a dark spreading stain on the front of the apron.

Saeko looked down at him as he went to his knees before her then giggled as he lifted her up slightly to sit on top of the kitchen sink. Once she was situated he dove down, and Saeko threw back her head with a low guttural moan, bringing one hand up to bite at her knuckle to keep any more sounds from escaping as he began to work his fingers and tongue over her most precious area through her panty, her smooth, toned thighs spread to either side of his head.

Ranma moved the cloth of her panty to the side, and stared at the magnificence thus revealed. Her pussy was wide and engorged, flooded with blood and seeping liquids, and it sat there like a budding flower as he moved his fingers lightly around it, topped by a hard nub that judging from the pictures he had seen in those magazines while stuck in that room back at the Beast's Cry School was her clit. Surprisingly there wasn't a single hair visible, and he looked up in surprise at Saeko, one eyebrow raised.

Saeko noticed his look and answered, blushing lightly. "I wax, I've never liked having hair down there. I should be good for a few months yeEEEEEE!"

That minor mystery solved Ranma dived back in, and with the thumbs of both hands held her pussy open as he thrust his tongue in as deep as he could reach, eliciting the squeal that had interrupted Saeko. *Those magazines I read are really coming in handy* he thought to himself as he worked her over. At the time he had been so bloody embarrassed by it that it wasn't even funny, but they were coming in handy now. He looked up and smirked, Saeko was biting on one of her knuckles in an attempt to keep her from screaming aloud in pleasure, as he lavished her pussy with attention, her hair matted against her face.

She tried to thrust her hips out at him, tried to form words in an attempt to get him to use his fingers on her, tried to push him into teasing her deeper, but Ranma kept on playing with the outside of her pussy and her inner thighs and licking at it rather than fingering her. Just as she was about to reach down and rip his hair out in frustration he smirked and used two fingers of one hand to thrust into her center and she came with a cry, audible even with both hands clamped over her mouth. "AHHHHHHHH!"

She bucked off the kitchen sink and might have fallen if Ranma hadn't held her in place as she thrashed and shuddered in place. No sooner had she begun to come down from that peak however that Ranma went back to work, having found something that was easily the tastiest meal he had ever had. Even as her head lolled back and her eyes closed she kept one hand clamped over her mouth.

A gasp from the doorway brought her out of it for a moment and she stared over to see Takashi staring at the two of them, his face bright red. Exhibitionism wasn't among her fetishes and Saeko's eyes narrowed angrily, but before she could even think about what to do Ranma turned around slightly growling at the intruder, his teeth bared. It was a deep possessive, primal sound, and it called out to her deep down. Before Ranma could move and do something, and even he later was not certain what he would do, she clamped her legs around his head forcing him to stay in place, glaring at the intruder. Takashi backed away, stammering apologies and turning around, literally running back the way he had come. Ranma frowned a little then moved back to what he had been doing.

Soon enough Saeko was nearing the peak she had been at before, and was about to go over it again when Ranma pulled his tongue away from her hole and bit down slightly on her protruding clit at the top of her pussy. This added sensation didn't just send her over the edge it threw her over and Saeko learned the joy of multiple orgasms.

Ranma held her in place, his hands on her inner thighs as he gently kissed the sides of her thighs as much as he could with her legs clamped around his head, waiting as she came down from her high.

After a full minute of being a shuddering, gasping wreck Saeko was able to recover herself and let go of her grip on his head with her legs then pushed him away slightly with her hands on his forehead. He stood up and she grabbed him, kissing him hard, tasting her own juices on his mouth and finding she liked it. After a moment of fierce kissing she pulled back and spun them around so that he was facing away from the kitchen sink, his ass smacking back against it. She then slowly went to her knees in front of him, her hands running up under his shirt, reveling in his rock hard abs then down to his pants.

Ranma's hands went to her head and the feel of his fingers working their way through her hair spurred her on. The look in his eyes was intense, showing his desire for her, and re-lit the fire in her. With a final tug his pants fell down around his ankles and she moaned at the sight that greeted her.

Teuchi of the Beasts Cry School had been correct in saying that Ranma would make some woman very happy someday. He was aptly named, and had a nine inch dick and was as thick around as her wrist

Seeing it hard and thrusting in front of face nearly caused Saeko to lose it entirely but she began simply by kissing the tip, causing Ranma to jump a little. "Someone's happy to see me," she murmured wickedly then began to kiss along the side of his shaft down to his balls. After a moment she moved back up and took the head of it in her mouth, lathering it with her tongue.

From the groans and moans Ranma was releasing she was doing something right, she thought idly and reveled in the power this gave her over him. She leaned back after a little while however, her jaw a little sore from the unusual exercise. But she had other means to pleasure him, and she sat up a little further, capturing his cock between her tits. The feel of the cotton of the still bunched together apron between her tits as well as the feel of her naked breasts on either side nearly made Ranma lose it right there.

She kissed the tip again and was about to begin moving when a shout from behind them interrupted their proceedings.

Lemon End

Kohta's voice echoed into the kitchen from the second floor, interrupting the two lovers yet somehow not waking up Saya or even Shizuka from their drunken stupor. "Guys you might want to come and look at this!"

Ranma made a fist with one hand and pounded on the kitchen sink, making a dent in the wood work. "This is not happening!"

Takashi, who had gone into the sitting room with Rei rushed past the doorway up the stairs to the next floor. Soon his voice came down towards them as he joined Kohta and Yuuki out on the balcony. "There's a few survivors moving around near us! What should we do?"

"This is not happening!" Ranma growled and slammed his hand down again making yet another dent in the kitchen top.

Saeko sighed and leaned back regretfully. She re-covered her breasts with the apron and stood up sadly. "We will have to do this some other time."

Ranma ground his teeth and began to think unsexy thoughts. It was only when he began to think of his father naked that his hard on finally died down enough to let him pull up his pants. "I'll hold you to that," he muttered and moved past her up the stairs. Saeko remained behind to see if she could find something else to put on, not wanting everyone else to see the evidence of her and Ranma's activities.

Ranma swiftly joined the other two boys and Yuuki out on the balcony as they were looking through telescopes at the action happening about a block away, taking the time to turn off the lights and plunge the apartment into darkness.

Takashi looked over at him as he came out to join them, blushing heavily and looking away. The action in the kitchen (what little he had seen of it before Ranma's growl had made him fear for his life and run away) had been among the hottest he had ever seen, way hotter than any porn film or magazine.

Ranma frowned heavily, as they watched a few of the survivors get pulled down and torn apart from the zombies.

Takashi snarled and reached down to grab a gun but Ranma's grip on his arm stopped him. "What are you going to

do?"

"What do you think I'm going to do, I'm going to shoot them!"

"And if you do," Yuuki said coldly, "You'll lead the zombies right back to the rest of us, remember they react to sound. I understand you want to save them but we have to think of ourselves first. This place is a godsend, but we don't have enough resources to protect all the people that will gather if they find us here, and the more people the more noise which draws the zombies in."

She glanced over at Kohta, who reluctantly lowered his gun as well. Behind them Saeko came up, dressed in one of Ranma's shirts and her still damp panties. Yuuki looked over at her and grinned for a moment, able to see the signs of what the two martial artists had been up to, before turning back to stare out at the madness going on all around them.

Ranma nodded reluctant agreement. "We have to look out for ourselves but..." He broke off as one pair of survivors caught his attention.

A father and daughter pair, or at least he thought that was what they were, was trying to get into a house about a block down the street. Evidently there were people already in the house because as the man raised an axe to chop into it the door opened. Ranma began to smile at that but the smile froze on his face as someone in the house stabbed through the slightly open doorway with a makeshift spear and deep into the father's chest.

Before the man finished collapsing Ranma was already moving. Ranma rushed into the room and grabbed up his weapon where he had left it on the dresser then ran back outside. "We can't save them all, but we can save her," he said angrily, not willing to leave a little girl like that to her fate.

Saeko looked at him and he motioned towards the roof with one hand and she nodded understanding. "I'm still a martial artist after all, and one of the most sacred tenants of the martial artist is to defend the weak. You guys stay here but only shoot if you have to defend yourselves, and only with a nail gun or that crossbow. I'll be back."

Yuuki frowned, but nodded, knowing there was no way she could stop him, not when Saeko seemed to understand what he was going to do and agreed with it. The other two boys simply nodded, Kohta far more reluctantly given the restrictions of weapons but he understood the reason for it.

With that Ranma leaped up, grabbed the edge of the roof above them and flipped himself up and onto it. From there he jumped to the next roof over toward the house the little girl was outside of, keeping his movements as light and silent as possible.

Between jumps he began to whirl the meteor hammer's chain first one side, then pressing the button on the haft to make the blade pop out and twirling that side. He landed lightly on the last house before his target but saw a zombie already lunging toward the girl.

With a grunt of effort he channeled his ki into the meteor hammer's chain and hurled its blade edge forward.

The little girl on the ground by her father's body gasped in astonishment as the zombie's head flew off its shoulders as a scythe cut straight through it moving past it to slice through the stomach of another zombie before zooming through the bars of the metal fence outside of the house she and her father had tried to beg entry to. The blade then looped back and twirled around three of the bars.

As soon as the chain was wrapped around the bars of the gate Ranma jumped to the roof of the house the little girl was in front of then down to the ground, whirling the other end to crush the head of the zombie his blade had sliced in half, the chain shrinking as he came nearer the end he had thrown. With a grunt he released it, dizzy and weak from the ki drain. He lashed out at the last two zombies in the yard, killing them both but nearly losing his balance from the high kick he used to kill the last one. *Damn two fights with that thing and I'm already feeling the strain of using it. I need to build up my ki reserves if I'm going to use that feature of it that often.*

Shaking his head to clear it of such thoughts Ranma turned and went down to one knee in front of the little girl, surreptitiously checking her for bite wounds, and breathing a sigh of relief when he didn't see any. "Hey, what's up?" He winced, god that sounded so lame.

The girl had watched him with wide astonished eyes and now she raised one hand and pointed at him exclaiming "Ninja!" at the top of her voice.

Ranma shook his head bemusedly, ignoring the fact that more zombies were now trying to break down the gate

thanks to her shout. "Well it's better than Superman I guess. The names Ranma, what's yours?"

"Alice," the girl answered, then her eye moved over to her father, who was lying on the ground. "Ninja-san, my, my dad... he..."

Ranma nodded, putting a gentle arm over her shoulders. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw a small puppy of some sort race through the legs of the zombies outside the gate and through the bars, racing up to the two of them. He idly noticed it was the same one he had seen running around before, and smiled at the little dude's toughness before turning his attention back to the girl. "He was a good man," he said softly. "He tried to protect you with everything he had."

He left the girl there for a second and walked over to a washing line, pulling off a sheet from it. He returned and gently laid it over the dead man on the ground. "Don't worry sir, I'll watch out for yer daughter for ya from now on." Alice sniffled a little then buried her head against his leg and cried softly. The little dog whimpered as if he knew something bad had happened and nuzzled into her side.

Ranma let her have a minute to recover then reached down and picked her up, settling her on his shoulders. "Let's go, we seem ta have warn out our welcome." He looked down at the puppy. "You want ta come too?" the puppy barked surprisingly loudly in answer and Ranma smirked and reached down again, picking him up and stuffing him down his shirt. The puppy wriggled a little but didn't try to get out, and eventually settled down with his head sticking out of the neck of Ranma's shirt.

Once his two passengers were situated he reached over and with a grimace unwound the meteor hammer from the iron gate, keeping his hand free from the queuing hands of the zombies with difficulty. The gate groaned as even more zombies pushed against it, but Ranma jumped onto the concrete wall around the house. He paused there, wrapping his weapon around his waist, pushing the button to make the blade retract and holding the ends in his hands "Okay, from here on out, you can't make any sounds okay, we need to be quiet so we don't lead any of these bast... Er zombies back ta where me and my friends are stayin' okay? And make sure ya hold on as tight as ya can."

The girl nodded showing she understood and Ranma ran forward, as sure footed as a cat along the wall and then jumped from the edge of it up onto the roof of the next house.

He had to pause there for a moment, his ki exhaustion getting to him again, but he rallied swiftly and moved on, his feet as quiet as he could make them. He moved much more slowly than before given his passengers and his ki exhaustion. The need to keep his weapon quiet made Alice need to hold on by herself, and he had to pause before to make certain that she had a good grip on him before jumping to the next house. After one such jump Alice spoke up hesitantly. "Um, ninja-san, er, I need to pee."

Ranma paused, one foot raised as his head turned to look at her. "C-could you repeat that please?"

Alice blushed a little, her cheeks almost as pink as her short cropped pink hair. "Um, I need to pee."

"Right, that's what I thought ya said." Ranma sighed, feeling his exhaustion setting in even more. "I don't suppose ya can hold it can ya?"

Alice shook her head and Ranma groaned, "Alright." He moved to stand by a chimney on the roof they were currently standing on. He wrapped his meteor hammer around it, then kneeled down and let Alice off his back.

The dog in his shirt took the moment to happily lick his face a little. This human may make him a little nervous, some kind of smell he couldn't make out under the smell of blood and other things tonight, but he had helped the little human and him, so the big human was alright in his book.

Ranma absently pushed the puppy's face away from his neck, holding one of Alice's hands. "Go around this chimney and piss there. But don't let go of my hand, 'cause this is a sloped roof and I don't want ya ta fall."

Alice blushed a bit but nodded, and slowly moved around the chimney, pulling Ranma's arm up and behind him as she did.

Ranma ignored the sounds of pissing, looking around the street and toward the apartment where he and his friends were staying. He could already see Saeko's smirk at this little stop... Other than that the zombies were still moving around mindlessly, some staying where they were and others moving toward the sound of Alice's pissing for a moment then away as they seemed to understand somehow that it didn't mean food or couldn't get to it or something. *I wonder how the hell they can do that? Back at the school Saya did that experiment, and they attacked a locker for a*

bit then just stopped and moved on. How can they think that much, and how can they tell what noises are made by prey and what ain't? they didn't attack the puppy when he was running around, and they're turning away from us but movin' toward the noises still goin' on over at the bridge, which is blocks away from here. How good is their hearing really?

Alice came back around the chimney slowly tugging embarrassedly at his hand. "I, I'm done ninja-san, Ah, bad dog!"

"Huh?" Ranma looked down at his shirt where the dog, apparently taking his lead from Alice had pissed all down his shirt. Ranma hadn't heard it over the sound of Alice peeing around the chimney and hadn't noticed the wetness lost in his thoughts about the zombies. "Oh god damnit! Bad bloody dog!" Ranma reached in and pulled the dog out, wincing as he realized not only was his shirt now covered in piss, but it was pulled out of shape as well. *Good Chinese silk too* he groused. "I will boot you like a soccer ball dog!" He whispered.

"No!" Alice whispered fiercely, tugging at his arm and smacking his shoulder, pouting fiercely. "Bad, don't hurt the poor puppy!"

Ranma rolled his eyes, making her understand that he was joking, then let her get back on his back as he wrapped his arm around his waist. "I wasn't serious Alice-chan, just a little irritated, this is a good shirt ya know. Now, ya ready ta go?"

Alice nodded, and Ranma went on, a little faster thanks to the rest but not so much. After another two roofs and Ranma made the long jump from the nearest house to the roof of the apartment complex and then down onto the balcony and the waiting arms of his friends.

Well they were waiting with open arms until they smelled the piss on his shirt, then they backed away rapidly. Rei and Saya had joined the others in waiting for him. The two teachers were still asleep on the bed. The pink haired girl was holding her head as if it pounded, and he smirked a little, as he set Alice down gently and let the unnamed puppy out of his shirt. "Someone can't hold their drink," he said in a singsong voice.

Saya glared at him through half-lidded eyes. "Shut up meat head! I take it you've been idiotically heroic again. Who's the kid?"

"I'm Alice Maresato, who're you nee-chan?"

Saya growled a little reaching down and ruffling her hair roughly. "That's onee-sama to you brat, and the names Takagi Saya."

Kohta smiled at the little girl, waving at her. "I'm Hirano Kohta."

Saeko smiled and introduced herself, followed by Yuuki and Rei, who motioned to the two sleeping teachers on the bed and introduced their names too, then smiled gently as she noticed Alice was falling asleep where she standing, her hands up and rubbing tiredly at her eyes and mouth open in cute yawn. "You can sleep up here with the two of them if you want Alice-chan."

Alice nodded and moved over to the bed, then blinked in shock as she pulled back the covers seeing the two extremely well-endowed teachers laying there with a towel and bra on respectively. "Oppai monsters!" She exclaimed.

Ranma looked away while Takashi and Kohta looked on blushing heavily until Rei and Saya slapped them upside the head. Yuuki merely laughed at them while Saeko smiled happily at Ranma for looking away. "I think they both get that a lot," Saeko said diplomatically. "Still it's the only bed in the apartment so..."

Alice nodded tiredly then the boys left and Saya and Rei undressed Alice and put her to bed. "We'll talk more tomorrow and tell you a bit about us then okay Alice-chan?" Rei said, gently ruffling the younger girl's hair as Saya pulled the covers up to cover her and the two teachers again. Alice merely nodded, then dug into the pillow her eyes closing. It had been a very long, tiring and emotionally exhausting day for the little girl.

Saya and Rei went downstairs, passing Takashi who was on his way up to take his turn on guard. Saya was not pleased to find Yuuki had taken her place on one of the mattresses. "That's my spot." She said, glaring at the girl. She and Yuuki had never talked at school, despite them both knowing Ranma, and while they were courteous they weren't exactly friends. Worse the other bed, by mutual agreement was going to be used by Ranma and the others on guard on rotation.

Yuuki smirked at her stretching out and drawing Kohta's eyes from where he was taking position in the doorway,

leaning up against the wall with a pillow and a blanket as a first line of defense just in case. She smiled wickedly at him and he turned away, his blush visible even in the dim light of the sitting room, before turning back to Saya. "I don't see your name on it princess."

Saya growled at the nickname, knowing it was a dig at her parents being so rich as well as her general attitude. *Of course, it's difficult to not act superior with the bunch of retards and idiots I had to deal with back at school.* Still the dig actually calmed her down a little and she marched forward and pulled the blanket off Yuuki despite her grip on it and plopped down next to her, glaring defiantly at the other girl.

Yuuki scowled at being out-manuevered but was too tired to make a big deal about it. The two girls spent a few minutes glaring at one another, with Rei giggling at them quietly as she took exclusive command of the large sofa, curling up and closing her eyes tiredly. Thus she missed Saeko and Ranma not being there.

OOOOOOOOOOO

Ranma was so hungry he ignored his cat instincts going crazy with how dirty and smelly he was again, sitting down and downing two bowls of miso soup, some grilled fish and rice balls that Saeko had told him about. Saeko joined him, taking a few rice balls for herself. She was no longer dressed in panties and an apron, but in one of his shirts and another pair of panties, this time red in color, taken from Rika's dresser. The two talked quietly as Ranma ate, talking about the zombies and their odd hearing and their strange instincts and how the hell they worked, and Ranma's problem with using his meteor hammer's extension ability.

After half an hour Ranma finished eating and looked down at his body grimacing. "I'm gonna take another shower." He glared at the little puppy, who was munching contentedly on a piece of meat from the fridge. "If you ever pee on me again dog I'm gonna fillet ya."

The dog whimpered a little, seemingly understanding his tone and Saeko giggled. "Mou, Horsy-chan don't threaten the little thing. He was just doing what nature demanded."

Ranma pouted a little. "Whatever, and what's with that nickname? I know my name means wild horse but..."

Saeko smirked sexily, her eyes half lidded as she looked over the small kitchen table at him. "I believe it is most descriptive actually."

Ranma shivered at the look then got up abruptly. "Er, right, see ya after my shower Saeko-chan."

Saeko smirked and cleaned the dishes off the table, putting them in the sink for later than followed after her beau, stripping off her shirt and kicking off her panties as she went.

Lemon Start:

Ranma stood underneath the shower head lathering his body, getting rid of the smell of dog piss and sighing happily. He frowned as he heard the door to the bath open then stiffened as he felt a female body press up against his back, long thin and very strong hands going around his waist and taking the bar of soap from him. He relaxed a little, well most of him anyway, when Saeko's voice purred into his ear. "I believe I promised we would continue another time."

Ranma shivered a little as her hands found his cock and began to play with him, bringing him to full hardness swiftly. He turned around and grabbed her pulling her into a hug as his lips sought hers. She moaned as their tongues began to twist and slide along one another, his hands gripping her back and ass pulling her tightly against him, his cock caught between them at just the right angle for it to bump against her clit.

After a moment she turned and pushed Ranma down to the floor, sitting down astride his thighs. Originally Saeko had only thought of finishing the job she had begun before, but now, now she wanted him inside her, and she wasn't going to take no for an answer. She looked down at him legs to either side of his, his cock bumping against her pussy and passed it to her stomach. She reached down and grabbed it with both hands, her eyes locked on his. "Put it in me Ranma-koi. I want it, I want it now!"

Ranma gulped. "Are, are ya sure about this Sae-chan?" She nodded and Ranma watched as she rose up slightly, lining his cock up with her pussy then slowly lowered herself.

She winced a little and Ranma's hand's clamped down on her thighs holding her in place. She frowned at him but he shook his head and waited until she became used to his size then nodded and he let her lower herself slowly down his length.

Saeko threw back her head, her eyes wide but unseeing. She technically wasn't a virgin, her hymen having disappeared long ago thanks to her martial arts exercises, but she had never used any toys when she had her alone time, so having something as large as Ranma in her was taking some getting used to. It was like having a sword sheathe plunged slowly into her pussy.

Ranma was having an entirely different problem. Other than during his time getting over the Penitent Monk Point, he had never really touched himself, and had never felt anything remotely like what he was feeling right now, not even earlier when Saeko was giving him a tit and mouth job. That had been amazing, but this, Ranma didn't know the word to describe this feeling. It was like his cock was in a warm, wet velvety vise, and it took all his self-control not to start moving, trying to heighten the experience. But he wouldn't he wanted Saeko to enjoy this, and that meant letting her take control.

After a moment Saeko looked down at him, her hands needing his chest and she nodded. Ranma nodded back and experimentally raised up his hips a little. Saeko moaned as his cock went deeper into her, and she dropped her hips to meet his thrusts. "God you feel so big in me koi, you feel me to the brim!"

"You're so damn tight Sae-chan, this feels incredible!" Ranma reached up, grabbing her and pulling her face down to his, kissing her fiercely as the two began to move against one another. One hand reached down grabbing her ass hard while his other hand began to play with one of her nipples, tweaking and pulling on it.

The two of them continued, kissing and feeling one another up for ten minutes or so until the sensations began to overcome Saeko, making her lose control of her hips and instead of just matching him she began to thrust down at Ranma more erratically. "Yes, oh gods yes, RanmaaaaaHHHHH!" She came with a final downward thrust, her entire body tensing for a moment, then going completely limp, and she collapsed on top of him.

It was all Ranma could do for a moment there to not cum with her as Saeko's pussy clamped down even harder on him. "FUUUUCK, Saeko-chan!"

She giggled a little, pulling her now sweaty hair out of her eyes. "More, love, more!"

Ranma nodded and sat up holding her to her as he turned them around, laying her gently on the bathroom floor. He kissed her softly, then moved down, taking one of her nipples in his mouth then as she moaned and began to respond again he thrust into her stronger than before, causing her to moan even louder than before. "YES, oh god, yes, AHHH!"

Ranma moaned as she clamped down again, her arms about his neck and her legs clamped around his waist, driving him deeper. "Fuck, Sae-chan, so tight, so wet!" One of her hands went down to his ass gripping it and pulling him even deeper.

Saeko kissed her way up his chest even as she began to lift her hips responding to his thrusts. But eventually he overpowered her and she just lay there ya back, moaning and thrashing under him. Occasionally her hands would reach around him to knead his ass or grip his hair urging him on, but she was content to lay there for now and let him take the lead.

Ranma began to feel the urge to cum rising in him, and he bit his lip, trying to push it off as much as he could, but his ki and general exhaustion began to tell. "Sae-chan, I'm gonna cum soooooon!" He whimpered as she bit down on his neck, but hers legs didn't let him go, too busy cumming yet again, his cock having hit this one point inside her as he changed the angle of his thrusts slightly.

Now Ranma had just enough higher brain functions at the moment to know that cumming in a girl was a BAD IDEA, and he reached back and wrenched her legs apart and leaning back just in time, his cock going off like a cannon the moment he pulled out of her. His cum spurted out in long thick loops, hitting her face, her breasts and her stomach, ten shots, the smallest of which would have been normal for most non-martial artists.

After it was done Saeko looked down at herself astonished at the amount of cum that was splattered all over her, literally coating her tits and her stomach like someone had used a water gun filled with syrup. With a weak, quivering finger she scooped some off her tits and brought it up to stare at it, amazed by the feel and the thickness. She tentatively gave her finger a lick then shuddered again, smiling over at Ranma.

He smiled a little then fell back, his exhaustion overcoming him at last. He collapsed to the side, his eyes closing before he hit the bathroom floor.

Lemon End

Saeko weakly moved over to the shower, turning it on and wiping the sweat and cum off her, then crawled over and grabbed Ranma, putting an arm under him and heaving him to his feet. It took her several minutes, as weak as she felt, but the two of them eventually made their way over to the empty bed by the staircase, and collapsed into it, not noticing Kohta's wide eyed stare before Saeko too succumbed to sleep.

End chapter

HaHa, I bet you all thought that I'd leave you hanging after that first scene with Saeko, huh? HAHaHa psyche your minds. Quick question, should I introduce some O.C. male characters to the group? My gut reaction is no, but the number of girls (which will be added to some more going forward) kind of asks for it. Next time plans, short and long term will be made, and we see several cameos of other characters, some of which Ranma has met and some he hasn't as the plot diverges from canon. As always read and review.

***Chapter 4*: We can't save Everyone**

I don't own the horse or the dead.

THANKS TO *Tikitau* for sending me a PM pointing out grammar, wording and spelling mistakes. I always appreciate it! They have now been corrected.

I looked again at the HotD crossover section and i was appalled. People, I am going to say this just once, there are other male characters you can use in crosses other than Naruto! What the fuck! it is utterly appalling how he has almost utterly conquered the crossover section.

I loved everyone's reviews, as always, especially *YMYRR*, *Narsil* (is that name from the Lord of the Rings, been meaning to ask, always great to meet a fellow fan) *Syn Julianus Serafim*, and *TJG*.

JohnC25: Respect man, anyone who can read another language has my respect. I can't understand any other language written or spoken even after years of Spanish class and over a ten years of being an anime fan. I'm glad you like the story and hope you continue to like it going forward.

Fenrir of the North: I love your idea of blaming the sudden spread of the contagion or whatever on Ryoga, but honestly, I've been mean to him in all my other stories in some fashion, I'm afraid in this one i just don't want to deal with him anymore.

And now on with the show:

Chapter 4 We Can't Save Everyone

Kasumi ran, keeping her footsteps as silent as she could, not looking back at what she was running from, she had seen more than enough of Them to have no interest knowing precisely who they had once been, neighbors, shopkeepers, or whoever else. Some things were too painful, but at least she knew they were not her family.

Kasumi had been shopping when she noticed a stranger walking around drunk. Before she could go over to offer him some aid someone else had moved toward him, and the man suddenly attacked, biting and ripping the grocers neck out with his teeth. There had been a lot of screaming involved and for the first time in her life Kasumi had felt real, honest fear. It was a feeling she was well used to now.

She had run home to tell her father, and found him already searching for her, his face an alloy of fury and concern, the weeping, rather sad man he had been since her mother died gone, replaced by the martial artist he had been. Apparently he had gone to see a friend and met another of Them on the way attacking a group of teens skipping school. He had killed it, but saw that those it had bitten were turning into whatever it was, and raced off to find her and her sisters.

After she armed herself with her largest frying pan and he had grabbed his naginata, they raced toward the school hoping to find her sisters there, but that hope proved to be in vain before they even got there. They found Nabiki outside Dr. Tofu's clinic, already turned. Neither knew why she was there with another student, a girl from her class going by her uniform, but she was now one of Them. Dr. Tofu lay dead, half in and half out of his clinic's door, his face gone and a large amount of his neck as well.

Something in her father had shattered seeing one of his precious daughters turned, and he had started sobbing like he had done for years, his armor of rage doused by grief. His sobbing however had roused the Nabiki Thing, and several more of Them in the area as well. Soun had seen them and raced to fight them, but there were too many and he was too mad with grief to protect himself, too slowed by his armor and his general lack of condition. Yet he bought time for Kasumi, crying now but keeping quiet, to race away in search of Akane.

Kasumi had been forced to defend herself a few times on her way to Furinkan, her trusty frying pan seeing service well outside it's normal purview. But she was a daughter of marital artists, and could swing one heck of a mean frying pan. Eventually however she reached the gates of the school.

There she found Akane fighting off a horde of Them with the Kuno boy by her side. The unlikely duo had seemingly fought their way out of the school only to be ambushed by an even larger horde outside. As she watched, despite putting up one hell of a fight Akane went down first, her outstretched arm bitten and practically torn off before she could pull it back. She screamed and fell clutching at the stump and Kuno could not hold them back alone. He went

down too, still swinging.

Kasumi had turned and ran, and had been running since, sticking to the open spaces and making as little noise as possible, yet They were everywhere, and she had been forced to run and run again more times than she could remember.

Now a day later, exhausted, sleepless, and with her body, despite her keeping in shape through constant housework and a bit of martial arts training from her younger years, Kasumi was close to collapse. Even her arms were sore from swinging her pan so often the metal of the pan warped and dented, she had lost count of the number of Them she had been forced to kill in self-defense.

She came to a small bridge for pedestrian traffic over an aqueduct, but at the far end was another group of Them, already turning toward the sound of her pattering feet and she sobbed brokenly. She looked back and saw the ones chasing her were barely two strides behind her. She turned and jumped up onto the railing and with a sob was about to throw herself into the river when she felt herself being lifted up, and then the air was all around her as they left the bridge behind, still heading down into the water.

She looked down into a wizened face much like a prune or raisin on a small man that barely came up to her thigh. He seemed to grin at her for a moment as they were in the air. "Don't worry deary, I won't let someone with such magnificent hotchas die on me now. The undead do nothing for me you know." That was the last thing she knew before her mind, overcome with fatigue and grief, gave in and she collapsed into the darkness.

OOOOOOOO

Ranma woke up from what had been the most up and down, topsy-turvy day of his life. On the one hand the zombie thing happened, but on the other hand he wasn't a virgin anymore!

He looked down at Saeko where she was cuddled up against his side in the bed, a small line of drool coming from her mouth and onto his chest, something that brought a grin to his face. The site of her reminded him of all the things they had done yesterday, and he could feel his body respond. New desires flooded into him, a desire to do it again, to see her moaning and writhing under him again and to have her scream his name. Of course if she screamed his name is loud as he wanted to hear her to they'd pull the zombies down around their ears, a thought which shocked his mind out of the gutter it had fallen into so suddenly.

This was helped by Takashi coming down the steps and kicking the bed softly. Ranma lifted his head a bit to look at the other young man indicating that he was awake and Takashi said quietly, "it's your watch." Indeed he looked exhausted, and Ranma wondered how long he had been awake.

Ranma nodded and quietly got out of bed so as not to wake any of the others, but he ran into a problem because Saeko would not let him go. With a smirk he solved this by simply lifting her out of bed as well holding her in his arms. Her head lolled against his shoulder and she kept on making these little cute snoring sounds, more like a whistle really, but still funny.

He turned from her to look up the Takashi who was smirking at them a little but mostly staring longingly down at the bed. "Get some rest Takashi, I'll keep watch for the rest of the morning." Takashi nodded and without any further prompting collapsed onto the bed as soon as they vacated it.

Ranma moved up the stairs and out onto the balcony still carrying Saeko. There he found that Takashi had grabbed a chair from the corner of the bedroom and put it outside on the balcony, and had also grabbed a blanket too. He set Saeko down gently to lean against the balcony's railing, and then walked back inside and grabbed some energy bars for himself from the kitchen. When he came outside Saeko was shivering and looked like she was about to wake up but subsided as he picked her up again to set her in his lap as he sat down in the chair. He pulled the blanket over them both, and stared out over the nighttime cityscape, seeing the first lightening of the new day coming, yet still hearing some noise in the distance. Nearby it was quiet, and he didn't see any zombies moving around nearby.

As he munched quietly on the energy bars he could almost feel the energy coursing into the room from them and this brought to mind how drained he was after using his meteor hammer. *I need to think of some way to get my ki level up*, he thought to himself between bites. *How to do that though...*

This thought occupied him for another two hours until the sun began to rise, the light of which came over the rooftops and once it was shining on them, slowly Saeko up. As she did Ranma stroked her back softly causing her to shudder a little as she woke up fully. This took a while, as Saeko was not one of nature's early risers. As his hands roamed around her back and she began to twitch and move around in his lap he couldn't help his physical reaction, which

made Saeko wake up much faster, as his cock began to rub up against her rear.

Lemon start:

She smirked a little up at him raising her head just a little off his chest and scooting back and off his lap, the blanket falling to the balcony floor around them. "I'm a little too sore for any fun down there Ranma," she said, her voice a little breathy as she opened the fly of his pants to let his cock spring out. It looked even larger in the morning light than it had in the kitchen last night, and she marveled at the thickness of it, the veins standing out prominently, the feel of it, like a steel bar covered with skin. "That thing was inside me," she muttered to her herself, "no wonder I'm sore."

"However she said, looking up at him before leaning down and licking at the top of his dick, cleaning off a bit of pre-cum and finding the taste good, "that doesn't mean I can't help you with your current situation."

Ranma was about to say that she didn't have to when she leaned down suddenly and engulfed his cock head with her mouth, and he groaned a little at the sensation, his head falling back as his eyes closed in pleasure. Saeko took this as encouragement and began to go to town, trying to take as much of him into her mouth as she could, but as this was only her second time giving head she could barely take a third of his length. Her jaw began to hurt after that point, and somehow Ranma figured that out and pulled her up off it before she could try further and maybe hurt herself.

This did not dissuade her however, and she started to use her hands to jack off the portions of his cock that she couldn't take into her mouth. While she was doing that Ranma leaned forward over her, reached down underneath her head and began to play with her breasts and nipples. She moaned a little at the sensation, then was very thankful that her mouth was full as she nearly screamed as Ranma pulled on her nipples between his thumbs and forefinger. The sensation was amazing, and she could feel her juices start to flow.

"Maybe I'm not as sore as I thought I was," she muttered, and made to stand up, but before she could Ranma reached down and lifted her back onto his lap. "Great minds think alike," she said throatily, and she reached down with both hands and guided him inside her for a second time. After a wince of pain as she got used to being filled again Ranma thrust up causing her to nearly scream but he covered her mouth with his own to deaden the sound, and her arms went around him and she just hung on for dear life as he pounded on up into her.

Last night Saeko had sort of taken the lead a bit in their meeting in the bathroom, but this time Ranma seemed to be re-energized, and it was all Saeko could do to keep up for the first few minutes. She ran her hands down his back and up under his shirt, pulling it off him and throwing it to the side so she could feel his muscles against her.

Ranma's hands were on her rear, urging her on and she lifted herself up and down off him as wildly as she could, wanting more of this pleasure more of this feeling, and suddenly he changed direction just a little, allowing his cock inside her to scrape along a new bundle of nerve endings and she nearly screamed again as she went over the edge.

She clamped down around him, and it was all Ranma could do to keep from coming again, the build up from being in her mouth for so long having nearly brought into the edge already.

Saeko seem to realize this and got off at him quickly and went down on wobbly knees taking him in her mouth again. She pushed herself up enough so that her tits were either side of his cock and she worked them furiously, and that added sensation plus her tongue moving around his head caused him to explode without warning into her mouth. She took him as far down as she could, and the shots went down her throat and hit the back of her mouth for the most part before spilling out of her mouth and down onto her breasts. She estimated that he had cum as much as two or three a normal man's load, and she was actually feeling a little full from sucking it down.

His cum tasted sweet, and was one of the tastiest things she had ever tasted and she moaned as she gulped the last load down. She brought her hands up and began to clean her breasts also, bringing them up to her mouth to lick the cum off of them, then stared in shock as she realized that Ranma's cock hadn't flagged at all. She smiled and was about to stand up and ride him again when noises from inside startled them both out of their sexual euphoria.

Lemon end

Ranma swiftly reached down and grabbed the blanket throwing it over Saeko and pulling her into him while she reached down frantically scrabbling around to grab both of their shirts. It wasn't that she was afraid of showing that she had claimed her man to the other girls, but she had remembered that there was a young child with them now, and showing her certain things just would not do. Then too, she was wondering, now that she had been shocked out of her lust, how this would impact the group dynamic. *Not that I care what the other girls think*, she thought, *but dealing*

with their bitchiness would be irritating.

Ranma swiftly pulled his shirt over his head, and then surreptitiously rearranged himself so that his cock was back in his pants and covered. Saeko moved out from underneath a blanket to allow him time to calm down, having already put on her shirt. She moved to stand and look out over the cityscape, smiling a little as she heard the growl that came from Ranma as she leaned over the railing pointing her ass back at him.

"You are a fucking tease, you know that," he said to her as he stood up to join her looking out over the city. He reached down and took one of her hands bring it up to his mouth and kissing the back of it softly. "And fantastic, have I told you that recently?"

Saeko smiled happily, amused at how blunt he was, yet so romantic at the same time. "Not recently, nor is it something that any woman can hear too often."

"Well you are," he replied and then leaned in and kissed her on the cheek gently before moving away.

He reached down and picked up the binoculars from where they had kicked in their earlier activity, and began to use them looking out over the city, while inside most of the others continued to wake up.

OOOOOOOOOOO

Inside Alice had begun to wake up, some odd noises from outside having disturbed her rest. She lay there for a moment trying to remember where she was and with a jolt remembered what it happened yesterday.

She opened her eyes and was about to start crying when saw the woman with the huge breasts was about to turn over on top of her. Before she could do anything she was trapped underneath the blonde woman, her huge breasts on either side of Alice, smothering her with their size and weight. She began to flail her arms in panic, and thankfully someone responded and pushed the nurse off Alice, pulling her to safety.

Alice looked up gratefully, and then quailed a little at the look that the other teacher was giving her.

Kyoko cocked her head quizzically. "And who are you? And how did he get here?"

Alice looked down a little sadly, remembering how she had been saved and what happened to her father. "I'm Alice Maresato," she said sniffing a little. "Ninja-nii rescued me last night when my daddy..." she paused and sniffed again looking down.

Kyoko translated this easily enough and pulled the girl into a hug. As the girl began to sob against her chest she sat up slowly, trying her best not to dislodge her and leaned her back against the head rest, putting her arms around Alice gently. *So Ranma pulled out some more heroics last night, I suppose I should've expected that,* she thought to herself. *I hope he realizes he can't save everyone.*

As she thought this she looked over and frowned heavily at the sudden movement she saw beyond the curtains out onto the balcony. She couldn't make out everything, but what had she had thought was just one person had suddenly become too scrambling around for something. She had been a teacher for several years now, and well knew what was probably going on out there a few moments ago. *I'll have to talk to whoever is out there about appropriate times for such things* she thought a little grimly.

That thought brought to mind when she herself would be doing if she had the chance. She had been attracted to Ranma up for quite a while before this all began, but her professionalism had always negated that. Now however being a teacher mattered not at all, nor their disparate ages. She wouldn't say she was in love with him, he wasn't really her type mentally or emotionally, but lust, oh yes that summed up her feelings nicely. But she also knew that Shizuka, Saya and Saeko all had interests in Ranma, and maybe Yuuki as well. Still, in the present circumstances certain social mores might well be set aside.

The continued sniffing from the young girl in her arms broke her out of such thoughts. She turned her attention away from such ideas for now, simply wrapping her arms around young girl and giving what comfort she could to a young girl who had lost everything.

OOOOOOOOOOO

Downstairs Rei had woken up with a pounding headache, her first ever hangover, and the realization that drinking was just not worth it. After a moment she was able to open her eyes without pain, and, after several false starts, pushed herself up and out of the sofa. Once on her feet she wobbled a bit in place, her hands going to her head in an

effort to keep her head from splitting open.

Rei then made her way into the kitchen, where they had left the bags and backpacks of stuff they had gathered. Most of the stuff they had gathered from the teacher's lounge, and all of the stuff they had taken from the garage except for a second nail gun and a bunch of nails, had been left behind when they had to vacate the bus so abruptly the day before. However the stuff Ranma had grabbed from their house was still there, and she grabbed the bottle of ibuprofen that was there, downing four pills with a glass of water.

She sat down at the table, head between her hands to block out the light, waiting for the pills to kick in. After that she got up and moved into the bathroom with the intent of having a morning shower.

Her plans were interrupted however as she walked into the bathroom and noticed some white stuff on the ground. She leaned down quizzically thinking it might be some kind of shampoo or something that had gotten onto the floor, but when she got closer she could see what it really was and reared back in disgust. She recognized that smell from a few times when she had given Hizashi a hand job, and she wondered which of the idiots had been in here and why the hell they thought this was an appropriate time to whack off.

A moment later however she noticed some long purple hairs on the ground and frowned even heavier. "Damn it those two were in here together!" She decided to forgo the shower and marched out, muttering furiously to herself.

This woke up Saya and Yuuki from where they were sleeping on one of the purloined mattresses. The two of them had somehow gotten tangled together in their sleep, their legs tangled together, their knees pressing into each other's panties and both woke up wondering why they felt like they needed to rub one out.

Yuuki in particular was wondering what was in her mouth, and she opened her eyes to see that she was embedded in Saya's chest with her mouth open locked around a mouthful of tit. Saya too was wondering why her chest felt so weird, and looked down at Yuuki who looked up at her, her eyes wide. They looked at one another for a second of surprised silence then Saya scooted back rapidly, disentangling herself from the other girl at the same time Yuuki did the same.

After a moment to gather her composure, the pink-haired genius looked up at Rei and asked, "What the hell are you muttering about, what's got under your skin?"

Yuuki nodded, looking around and motioning over to Takashi, who was sleeping through Rei's mutterings, and over at Kohta, who was sleeping in the vestibule. "And keep your voice down, those two need their sleep."

Rei growled at her, her voice rising with every word. "I'll fucking talk as loud as I wa-"

Yuuki had leaped up and slapped one of her hands over the other girl's mouth. Now she stared at the girl angrily. "Whatever your beef is, keep your fucking voice down, got it? Those two were probably up most of the night watching over us, trying to protect us, got it? The least you can do is keep your harpy screeches to yourself, understand?"

Rei had been about to punch the other girl out for the hand over her mouth, but halfway through her little speech her eyes had flicked over to where Takashi lay, and she flinched guiltily, then nodded and Yuuki let her go.

Rei took a moment to make certain her voice was quite and then began, her voice low but angry. "I was just in the bathroom, those two idiots, Saeko and Ranma were in there together and they left behind... evidence of what they were doing. Disgusting! I mean come on seriously, we're supposed to all be sharing that bathroom, they can't muck it up like that!"

A stab of jealousy went through Saya at that news, and she ground her teeth angrily. *Damn it!* She thought to herself. She had been interested in Ranma for a while, but hadn't figured out the right way to broach the subject with him before all this began. Now if he was with Saeko those chances went up in smoke.

Yuuki on the other hand merely grinned. She knew even if she went to Ranma she wouldn't be the first to get with him and wouldn't even be the first in his heart. Saeko getting with him first just meant that she could figure out what she had to look forward to if she did try to pursue him. She got up out of the bed, ignoring the fact that her panties were a little damp as she pulled on a pair of Rei's jeans that she had grabbed the evening before. They weren't her normal style but they would do until she raided the upstairs bedroom for more. "Well then," she said, "if you'll excuse me I need to go find out some answers to some questions."

"And I know what kind of questions you're going to ask you bitch," said Saya to herself but shook her head. Even though she too was curious, the jealousy of it overrode her curiosity. Luckily she had a job that would distract her; she

needed to start on the long-term planning Ranma and the others had asked her to do.

She looked over to where Takashi had slept through Rei's shouting, and then over at Kohta who was asleep by the doorway. "I guess those two stayed up most of the night," she said looking back at the angry girl. "Don't wake them up okay? Yuuki was right about that at least. They need their sleep and we'll need them alert later." Rei scowled a little but looked over at where Takashi was sleeping and her face softened, then she nodded and went into the kitchen for some food.

Saya got out of the bed, rearranging her shirt over her breasts again as well as pulling on a new pair panties and a skirt from Rei then sat down in the leather chair and pulled out the laptop box she had placed there before beginning to drink with the others last night. She plugged it into the wall next to her, and began to power it up and personalize it. That took about 20 minutes, after which she began to surf the Internet which happily was still online. How long that would be the case she didn't know, so she began to rapidly download anything and everything that she thought might be important, maps, city plans, news files, how to do build stuff, do it yourself plans anything and everything, then she began to put her mind to work and figure out how their group was going to survive long term.

OOOOOOOOOO

Yuuki ascended the stairs and waved at Kyoko who nodded back still comforting Alice. Yuuki was a little surprised that the girl was awake at all, and very amused at Shizuka, who was sprawled out on the bed next to the pair dead to the world and even snoring a little.

She went outside and saw Ranma and Saeko looking around at the city, and then smirked a little as she grabbed the purple haired girl's arm. She tried to pull her, but that was like pulling at a freight train, Saeko might not look it but she was incredibly strong for her size. Giving that up for a lost cause Yuuki instead leaned in and whispered into the other girl's ear as she turned to her. "So, how was the wild horse? Did he live up to his name?"

Saeko shivered a little at the feeling of Yuuki's breath all along her ear, but nodded conspiratorially, a small but smug and very satisfied smile on her face. "That and more."

Yuuki grinned and pulled her inside to have a more private conversation while Ranma studiously ignored what they were saying. He also ignored the arousal that he had felt when Yuuki first came out, her braless tits practically on display through a very tight white shirt, complimented by a very tight pair of jeans on that showed off her legs admirably. It was as if having sex with Saeko had woken some new aspect of his cat persona, and it was taking a while to get used to the new urges. He would get used to them eventually of course, he wasn't going to be controlled by such stupidity, but right now it was an irritant.

During their conversation Yuuki was intrigued and impressed, but not so much as to override her brain, and she decided she would have to postpone making a try for the wild stallion.

While the others all saw her as, well a bit of slut if they were honest with themselves (except for Ranma who had never listened to rumors and couldn't care less about them), she understood social dynamic and what could change them far better than any of the others, so she knew what would happen if Kohta or even Takashi didn't have someone around to be connected emotionally to. A bit of leg, a bit of chest, these things worked to remind men what they were fighting for, not just personal survival but survival of the group.

She could tell that of the girls in the group only the little girl Alice and Rei weren't interested in Ranma, and that kind of disparity wouldn't sit well with either of the other boys. Takashi was so fixated on Rei it kept him stable but Kohta needed someone around, flirting with him and paying attention to him to anchor the gun nut in the here and now, the defense of the team. Then too, it wasn't like Yuuki was uninterested in the gun nut, so it worked out in the end.

OOOOOOOOOO

Shizuka woke up about an hour later, and was introduced to Alice before mumbling something about coffee and heading downstairs. At the same time Rei, now minus the last vestiges of her hangover yet still incensed came up the stairs to give Saeko and Ranma piece of her mind. But the site of Alice stopped her cold and she frowned heavily.

Alice had gotten out of bed to thank Ranma for saving her and the two of them were talking outside on the balcony as Rei approached them, Kyoko, Yuuki and Saeko listening in with smiles on their faces. "No it doesn't have a name, it's just a meteor hammer, whoever heard of naming a weapon. That kind of thing only happens in old epics and movies."

"But all special super duper weapons are named, Ninja-nii," replied the little girl stubbornly.

"I told you I'm not a ninja my name is Ranma okay, and if you think it's that important why don't you name it? So, did you use ta live around here?" he said changing the subject.

"Yep" Alice said then sighed, sniffing a little and pointing to the right. "We lived about four blocks that way. I was at school near here when this all started and my daddy..." she sniffled some more but Kyoko's arm around her shoulders kept her from breaking down again. Even after only a few hours Kyoko had taken to the role of mother for the young girl easily.

Ranma went on briskly hoping to get Alice to concentrate on something else. "So do you know of any stores or anything around here?"

"Yep, there's a convenience store about ten blocks that way," she said pointing straight and a little to the left after getting her bearings, "and it's right next to a garage of some kind. At least I think it is, there are some cars all the time outside of it."

"Now that's useful," said Yuuki thoughtfully, looking at Ranma and the others "I thought of this last night. We have that Hummer, but we're going to need something to run it on. Kohta said that he can run on practically anything, but I think we should start scavenging fuel for it now. Also those things make a lot of noise, and I want to see if I can quite it down."

Rei scowled angrily at how they were all ignoring her but decided to take part in the discussion. She could shelf her irritation with the two sex fiends for later. "Remember our short-term plan is to hook up with our parents. Ranma and I know where our family is, but Takashi's mother is still out there, and Takagi's too."

Ranma shrugged. "I think we should use this place as a base of operations for a little while, though I'll leave long-term planning to Saya and Kyoko here," he nodded at the teacher who smiled a little at his deference. "I know what I am, I'm a fighter, a short term kind of guy, point me at a problem and I'll deal with it, but anticipating them down the line I'll leave to someone else."

Saeko smirked a little and nodded. "Indeed," she said "I think yours and my time could be better spent training the others a bit."

"I've already got training," barked Rei angrily. She wasn't exactly happy about how badly outmatched she was by the two of them, and didn't like anyone else pointing it out.

Ranma waved his hands in the air. "We weren't talking specifically about you cuz, I was actually thinking about Takashi. Kohta as a sniper's too good a resource ta risk, but Takashi needs to get better at close range. And Kohta should give ya all lessons on how to shoot."

"Takashi and Kohta are both still asleep," Yuuki said, "I don't know how long he was awake last night but I suppose we should get him up just in case. This place is nice and safe now, but the more time that goes on the more zombies are out there and the less safe we'll be remaining in one place."

Ranma nodded. "All right let them sleep for a little while longer, but sometime today I want ta take Rei and Saeko down ta the parking lot and teach 'em some moves." He grinned at the two of them. "I bet I can get you roof hopping within a week Rei, and Saeko-chan, I bet ya can do it within two days." He looked at the others seriously. "I'd like to say that to everyone, the added mobility would be fantastic for us to have, but I don't think it's going to happen anytime soon."

Kyoko scoffed amusedly. "Of course it won't happen. I'm in shape to keep my figure," she said running her hands down her sides dramatically, and was pleased that Ranma gave her a once over at that comment, something that made her preen a little. "But I'm not a martial artist and I don't have the training or the inclination to be one." She turned to Rei. "Rei-san, take Alice downstairs and get her some food and a shower."

Saeko reacted at the word shower, a light blush suffusing her face but Ranma missed it entirely and Kyoko smirked a little inside as she took charge in tried and true teacher fashion. "Then see if Kohta can get up and start training us how to use the guns he found here last night." She frowned thoughtfully touching her head and wincing a little. The migraine she had had last night had dissolved into a dull throbbing, it wasn't bothering her just yet but she was going to take something anyway, and she nodded at Alice. "I want to talk to Ranma for a bit and then I'll join you."

Rei broke off her glaring at the two martial artists and took Alice's hand in one of hers. "Come on Alice-chan, let's see what we have for you to eat here. We got a lot of energy bars and rice balls, takoyaki and stuff like that, but we'll see if we can find something more filling. Are you hungry too Saeko?" she asked trying to be civil.

Saeko had by this time recovered from her slight embarrassment and shot Ranma a wicked little look. "No thank you I ate my fill already this morning." Rei cocked her head not getting the reference at all, but Yuuki and Kyoko did and so did Ranma if his blushing face was any indication. Kyoko frowned oppressively while Yuuki simply giggled. "However I will take a shower first, that will let me... cleanup a bit." That phrase went straight over Alice's head but Rei nodded of agreement fervently. The three girls left with Alice, leaving Ranma and Kyoko alone for a moment.

Kyoko looked over at Ranma who was leaning against the balcony looking out over the city again, his blue eyes dark. "You did a very good thing last night," she said softly nodding her head in the direction of the spiral staircase. "But you can't go around saving everyone you know that right? The more people we have, the more resources we need, the more noise we make and the more of a target we are for both scavengers and zombies. It's harsh but there you are."

Ranma nodded somberly sighing a little. "I know that, but I couldn't just leave her out there could I?"

Kyoko shook her head. "I'm not saying you should have, I'm simply saying that you can't go around trying to save everyone, every time you do you put us in danger."

"I know that sensei," he replied, "and I'll try to keep it under wraps." He frowned angrily over at the house where Alice's father lay and shook his head. "Some people I wouldn't save even if I could."

Kyoko followed his gaze and nodded agreement able to make out the little bundle of Alice's father even at this distance. "Still, keep it in mind okay?" She reached out and ruffled his hair playfully and he pulled her into a fierce hug before letting her go and hopping up onto the roof to see what he could see was going on around the river. She blushed a little smiling at the show of affection and went inside.

About an hour later Shizuka came up and called Ranma down to join them. As soon as he landed on the balcony she pulled him into a fierce hug and said "Neko-chan you're such a good boy to save little Alice like that," she said kissing him enthusiastically on this cheek. "You're a regular hero."

Ranma blushed a little, feeling her huge breasts pressed up against into his chest as she began to drag him inside. When they entered the apartment he found that Kohta had taken over the bedroom and was teaching Rei and Yuuki how to point and shoot with the guns he had taken from the locked cupboard last night.

He nodded at all four of them as he was dragged along like a rag doll by Shizuka, a sight that made Yuuki grin and Kohta chuckle. Rei however hadn't gotten over her irritation at Ranma and Saeko for their desecration of the bathroom and simply glared. Ranma wondered what he'd done to his cousin this time, but shook it off as unimportant as Shizuka pulled him down the stairs.

Downstairs Takashi was still asleep in the bed pushed against the far wall, having woken up very briefly to move so that that could be accomplished. Saya was sitting on the sofa now fending off Alice who wanted to look at the laptop. "No you can't have it yet chibi," she said smacking Alice's hands aside. "Go upstairs and take that puppy with you, play around a bit, but get out of my hair."

Kyoko nodded agreement and shooed Alice off. Alice pouted. "Meany Onee-chan," then she scampered off after sticking her tongue out at the pink haired girl.

Saya grumbled a bit about insolent brats then motioned Ranma over to join them on the sofa, glaring a little at Saeko as she came out of the kitchen.

Saeko wondered what was that was about, and then noticed that Saya's eyes had flickered over to Ranma and realized what the other girl's problem was.

However Saeko had already come to understand a bit of how different life was going to be. She wasn't about to stop herself from enjoying the pleasures of being a woman now that she had been introduced to them with Ranma, but nor was she going to be so crass as to stop others from doing the same. She also knew that there was an attraction working between Saya and Ranma, and it went both ways. Ranma's affection towards the other girl was very apparent to her even before this and she had decided last night that sharing a pie was better than trying to own it entirely and not getting a further taste.

Ranma didn't know what his girlfriend was thinking, so simply acted as he always did. He sat down and pulled Saya into a one armed hug before ruffling her pink hair affectionately. "I see ya've been putting that bright brain of yer's ta work and thinking ahead already Saya-hime. What've got to show us?"

Saya huffed trying to fight back a blush at the nearness of him, and the smell. There was just something about Ranma that male kind of smell that got to her a little. "Of course I'm thinking ahead meathead, we can't all live by the seat of our pants like you do."

Ranma chuckled a little nervously at her glare, but she turned back to the computer and booted up some information before he could say anything. She gestured to him to look and Ranma did. On the screen were several news articles from the day before from all over the world in many different languages.

"This thing," she said seriously pushing her glasses up from where they had fallen down her nose, "is everywhere!" She leaned back a little and Ranma let loose a little rumbling sound, as she put her arms underneath her chest thoughtfully, making her breasts stand out even more than normal. He shook his head, trying not to look over at Saeko and hoping she hadn't noticed his reaction to that.

Saya went on having not seen it either. "We're not talking about an isolated incident here, and it's not something that's going to stop spreading anytime soon. It hit practically every city in the world at once, whatever it was doesn't really matter anymore. Civilization as we know it is going to change drastically. I'd be surprised if there are 20 million people left spread across Japan by this point. Remember most of the people in Japan live in the cities, there aren't nearly as many policemen as people think for the number of civilians, were all jammed in together..."

"You don't have to finish that thought," Kyoko said grimly, remembering the news before they left the high school. "If what's happening here is happening everywhere a place like Tokyo for example is probably even worse."

"Almost certainly far worse," said Saya grimly. "That's one of the reasons we can't stay in the city for long."

Ranma cocked his head quizzically not understanding that point. Saya growled a little and reached out pulling at his pigtail to get him to listen. "It's about sustainability meathead! Cities don't sustain themselves, food and water comes in from outside of the city to get processed and sold. The city only makes things it doesn't create them! And the city needs people running it, the water, the electricity, everything really. The more people die from this thing the less the city will be able to live, like an organism infected with a virus."

Saeko nodded thoughtfully. "Also we'll need to watch our noise emissions. Right now there are still a lot of people out there running around panicking and trying to blindly run away and pulling the zombies to them. But eventually the zombies will have no more easy prey, and then the nearest noise or sign of people like us will bring them down in their hundreds."

Ranma nodded having already thought of that point. "So what are long-term plans Saya-chan," he asked bumping his shoulder against hers.

Saya smirked at him, feeling a little prideful that he was trusting her with that task. "Well, we can't stay in the city, and any place in the countryside is likely to be as bad or will start to get worse as the zombies move out of the cities searching for food. We've seen that the zombies keep moving around, so eventually they'll leave the cities in search of more food. I know in the short term we're going to search for our parents, but the long term is what concerns me."

She frowned a little at the thought of her parents, having left a message for them on their answering machine but having not gotten a reply. She hoped it was because they were just too busy and yet a part of her thought that they shouldn't be too busy to look for their own daughter regardless of what was going on. She'd always resented the amount of time that was taken away from their time together as a family by her father's politics, but this was even worse.

"First we should also gather as much supplies, long-term supplies, as we can. I'm talking about canned goods, as much as we can find, energy bars as much as we can find, anything with seeds which we could plant, clothing eventually but we've got enough of that for most of us for now. I've already downloaded as many things off the Internet as I could about farming, finding fresh water and a lot of recipes took for how to make food from scratch, and, hell anything else I could think of that could help us."

"I can live off the land easily enough," Ranma said stroking his pigtail thoughtfully "I've done it before often enough when I was younger. I can teach you guys all about that kind of thing."

Saya shook her head adamantly. "We don't want to stay on land very long. There's no way of group a small as ours can find a place to fort up where we won't have to fight off other people as well as zombies. Not in a place as crowded as Japan."

Ranma shrugged at that, after all he had been to places in Japan that weren't crowded at all, but he understood her

point. After all, most of those places already had people, and they would be leery of welcoming strangers. "So what's the plan?"

"Get out onto the ocean and find an island that we can take over." Saya said bluntly. "Some place like Hachijō-kojima or Gajajima, abandoned but hopefully with buildings still standing. Move in with as many resources as we can, fortify the island, cut us off entirely from the rest of the world until this whole thing starts to simmer down if it ever does."

"If it ever does?" questioned Kyoko worriedly. "Surely you don't think that..."

"Sensei," Saya responded, ignoring propriety and cutting her off mid-sentence, trying to hold onto her temper more because Takashi was asleep in the corner than anything else. "This is happening everywhere in the world! Society as a whole is crumbling as we speak, and I for one am not going to let myself be blinded by hope that everything can go back to normal in the near future, if ever! What will rise from the ashes I don't know, but I'm not going to stand around and be forced to join up with some local bully boy or other!"

"No worries of that ever happening," said Ranma grimly cracking his knuckles. "Outside of a few of the martial arts Masters I trained with I doubt there's anybody on the islands that can fight me."

Saeko interjected softly, "But they wouldn't have to fight us head on Ranma-chan. All they'd have to do is gun you down from a distance, as good as you are even you can't survive being shot. It's guns that will decide which warlord or other takes over portions of the world."

Ranma grimaced but had to acknowledge the point. He could dodge an arrow, kunai or crossbow bolt easily enough, but a bullet was something else entirely. In another world he would have gone through training enough to toughen his skin enough to survive far more than a mere bullet, but this was not the case in this world.

Saya nodded grimly. "That's also a concern since in Japan most people don't own guns. There's a social stigma against them and numerous laws against personal ownership of firearms as well. So the only people who will have major weapons are the police, the army, or criminals. The police will have taken a battering everywhere because of this crisis, the army won't be effective if it is also dealing with its own outbreaks, which leaves just the criminal element, who are used to surviving, working together and preying on other people. Even with the danger of bringing more zombies down on top of them, as long as the bullets last those with guns will be a danger to groups like us, or maybe especially to groups like us."

She gestured at the bodies of the girls around her and Saeko and Kyoko, even Shizuka, who had merely been listening silently up to this point, nodded grim understanding. Ranma's eyes went flat and hard as understanding dawned but Saya simply went on. "Yet another reason why we should be ready to leave the city as soon as we possibly can."

Ranma sighed and leaned back closing his eyes and wondering what his mother was up to, and what they should do from here on. When he opened them he was surprised to see that the others were staring at him and he blinked. "Why are you all looking at me like that?"

"Ranma," Saeko said giggling, "you're our leader. It's your choice, what do you want us to do?"

"E-excuse me" Ranma said sputtering a little, "Since when am I the leader here?"

"Since you threw Shido-sensei off the bus," said Saya sternly and Kyoko nodded. "Like it or not Ranma you been acting like a leader from the very beginning. You haven't exactly planed ahead" she said smirking a little and poking him in the forehead, "but it's because of you that were all alive right now."

He looked over at Saeko and was about to speak but she shook her head. "Myself and Shizuka might still be alive, but Kyoko, Yuuki and the others would not be. And alone the two of us could not survive out here. It is to you we look for leadership Ranma," she finished, taking one of his hands and kissing his palm gently, causing Saya to glare. "It is your choice on where we go from here."

Saya nodded agreement despite wanting to do nothing more than reach out and claw the swordswoman's eyes out. Kyoko nodded too and Shizuka grinned giving him two thumbs up.

Ranma sighed and closed his eyes again for a brief moment before shaking his head and leaning forward intently. When he opened his eyes they were focused, hard and purposeful and the power behind his stare was almost palpable. Saya shivered a little and Kyoko did as well at the power of his presence. "All right. Short-term, Takashi and Saya still want to find out where their families are. I'll take Takashi out with me later today and see if we can get to the

elementary school where his mother works. Maybe we can pick up her trail there or something." He looked at them all and shook his head slowly making them understand that he didn't think they would be that lucky before going on. "After that we'll split up into foraging teams. Saya I'll take you with me once ya find us a nearby electronics store or something. Flashlights and other things right?"

Saya nodded and he turned to Saeko. "Saeko-chan, you'll take two of the others Kohta for preference for one and someone else just in case and hit up the local grocery store. That Alice-chan mentioned. Grab as many canned goods and stuff like that as you can and bring them back here."

Yuuki, who had come down the stairs in time to hear the speech about Ranma being their leader, and agreed with it wholeheartedly, spoke up at this point. "Like I said before, I'd like to see if I can silence the engine on that Hummer, if I can that'll give us more lift capacity that we can actually use, far more than just us grabbing stuff off the shelves. As it is it's of limited utility."

Saya gestured toward the computer. "If you know the parts we can search for dealers in the city, and Ranma can take you there."

Ranma nodded. "My roof-hopping gives us a lot of mobility, I think we need to use it."

Kyoko frowned a little. "There is a mall on the other side of the river isn't there? Surely if we hit that up we can take most of what we need in one stop."

"If Yuuki can get the Hummer working quietly we'll definitely hit it before leaving the city. That thing can go through the water right I think Kohta said something about that last night?"

Yuuki nodded emphatic agreement. "It's waterproof, and it can run on anything from pure oil to alcohol fluid. It's quite a find, but like I said, it's not exactly silent."

Ranma nodded and turned to Shizuka. "You got in touch with yer friend right, ya want ta try and set up a meeting?"

"I can call her again," Shizuka said happily. "I don't know if she'll be able to get here though, maybe we should think of someplace else to meet up?"

Ranma nodded, "Do it." He turned to Saya and said. "You're still in charge of long-term thinking, make up lists of stuff we need long-term and give them to us before we leave this afternoon. Then check and see if you can figure out where we should go to get a boat. Small, fast and well-stocked would be my preference, but I know that's not going to happen, so small and easy to get to will do in a pinch."

Saya nodded having already thought of a few places. "Hopefully I'll find a place down river at the port. It's not a major port by any stretch, but it should still have a few boats for us to use."

Ranma nodded. "I think that's as much planning as we can do for now. Shizuka, Kyoko, head upstairs, and I'll join you in a minute, I'm gonna walk you guys through some hand-to-hand combat moves. Yuuki, make up that list of parts for Saya-chan, then join us upstairs." Shizuka made to protest and Ranma held up his hand. "If I'm the leader I'm going to act like it, and that means make sure everyone here has the tools to survive."

"What about Alice-chan?" Asked Shizuka sadly. She didn't want to learn how to hurt people, not even to use it against zombies, but the idea of the little girl doing it was even worse.

"The TV still work? If it does, find her a channel ta watch fer a bit, some normality would do her good I bet just keep the noise level down and that door closed. Hell bar it as much as possible. When we leave on our scavenging runs we'll go out the balcony."

Saya nodded firmly. "And if we're still here tonight no lights at all. We'll keep someone out on the balcony to watch, but no lights after dark. I'd estimate that by tonight most of the stragglers and runners will have been brought down by the zombies, and they'll be searching for holdouts like us. At that point any noise or light we may attract them and other people too."

The think tank broke up and Saya handed the computer over to Yuuki for a moment so she could type in the list of parts she'd need, then got up to grab a snack and put something else on but was stopped by Saeko tapping her softly on the shoulder and leaning close. "I don't mind sharing under the current circumstances you know."

Saya glared at her a little. "That's not nice," she said gritting her teeth to keep from yelling at the bitch. "You've already won, you don't have to rub it in like that."

Saeko shook her head and leaned in and kissed the pink haired girl briefly on the lips. She pulled back and said simply, "I'm serious," and then walked off into the kitchen.

Saya stared after her, a welter of confused emotions going through her before she shook them off and grabbed some jeans and a shirt. By the time she pulled it on over her head (very tight in the chest, she'd need to see if this Rika character had anything better upstairs) Yuuki had finished making her list and left the laptop on the sofa.

She started to use Google maps and Google search engine to find where the parts are being sold that Yuuki needed to silence the engine of the hummer. Then used the street view to map out a route to them, and look around to see what kind the traffic of a zombie nature was like around it.

Upstairs Rei and Yuuki were again being taught by Kohta how to load and fire their guns, and Ranma was walking Shizuka and Kyoko through some self-defense classes with a heavy cleaver that he had taken from the kitchen.

Instead of going to watch TV Alice had opted to play with the puppy and was busy running around up and down the stairs. Ranma wondered idly, *how the hell is Takashi sleeping through all of this, the guy must have been dead on his feet.*

Shizuka was not having fun, and because of her unwillingness to learn neither was Ranma, even if Kyoko had proven an alright student of the cleaver arts. Kohta was having a much easier time of it with Rei and Yuuki, who were both much more serious minded individuals than Shizuka. He just wasn't making any progress with the big breasted nurse, and it was with relief that he gave up the ghost as Alice ran up to him and said, "Hey ninja-nii, do we have a name for the puppy?"

Ranma shook his head reaching down and ruffling her hair. "What've I told ya, my names Ranma, squirt. And nah we don't but if you want you can name him too. Have ya thought of any names for my meteor hammer yet?"

Alice shook her head. "None that really feel right" she confessed. "How about fang splitter, or zombie slayer, or..."

"No slayer anythin'," he said making an X with his hands. "Come up with something original okay?"

He looked up as Kohta asked him "Hey Ranma, do you want to learn how to shoot as well?"

Ranma shook his head. "No thanks bud, I'll leave that to the rest of you. Saeko and I are much more useful in close range than at a distance, and if I need it I've got my meteor hammer for emergencies. I don't want to take a gun out of someone else's hands and put them in mine."

Kohta nodded agreement. "How long are we staying here anyway?"

"Two days," said Ranma, "maybe three, possibly four if we can swing it, but that's doubtful."

He turned back to Shizuka and gently took the cleaver out her hands. "I'm sorry Shizuka-sensei, I know ya don't want ta learn this, but I had ta try. The world we live in now, ya all need ta learn ta protect yerselves."

Shizuka nodded sadly. "I understand that neko-kun, but I just can't do it, it goes against everything I believe in to learn to hurt someone like this. I'll just have to make do by relying on the rest of you."

Ranma nodded and gave her a gentle kiss on the forehead. "That's fine by me Shizuka-sensei. Just do yer best ta stay out of trouble and keep our spirits up, and we'll call it even okay?" Shizuka nodded, bringing him into a big hug then leaned down and wrapped Alice in an even bigger one, picking her up and taking her and the puppy downstairs to watch some cartoons.

Kyoko smiled faintly. "I think I'll do better with the guns as well Ranma-kun. I'm not built enough to make close combat truly viable for me, and I used to be the archery clubs advisor before moving to ping pong." She did not mention that was because even with a chest guard on her breasts got in the way of her shots with a bow. That hadn't stopped her from being very accurate when she could get a shot off.

Ranma sighed resignedly, already seeing the limits of his 'leader authority', but nodded and waved her off to join Kohta's group.

Saeko came up then and smiled slightly. "Since you are free perhaps we can get some lessons in. Two days I believe you said?" Ranma perked up immediately and Saeko giggled at how easy he was to distract with martial arts. *I wonder if he is as easily distracted by the marital arts as well? Something to test out at some point.*

The two of them grabbed Rei and exited via the balcony landing gently in the parking area, where Ranma began to instruct the two girls in ways to strengthen their legs enough to jump high distances. Saeko took up where they had left off her instruction last time, and Rei surprisingly listened intently, and followed Ranma's instructions to the letter.

After that the three of them reentered the apartment, Saeko surprisingly able to already jump high enough to grab the balcony railing, though not enough to go over it and land on the balcony like Ranma.

Saya came up at that point with the first two lists of supplies and parts. She handed one to Saeko, who looked at the others and said "Homuro-kun and Kyoko-sensei could you come with me please?"

Saya turned to Ranma and said, "Takashi's awake and having something to eat, he and Rei should be enough to guard this place, so we can go now if you want."

Ranma nodded agreement and turned to Saya. "You ready to go then Pinky or ya want ta eat something first?"

She growled a little at the nickname but nodded. The two of them walked out to the balcony, and Ranma picked her up gently in his arms and jumped up onto the roof leaving her there before going down and picking up Kohta and Kyoko and dropping them down onto the street where Saeko swiftly joined them jumping down herself.

The group waited until Takashi and Rei came out onto the balcony and waved at them, along with Alice who was waving frantically and the little puppy who was wagging his tail and looked like he wanted to bark but Alice's hands were over his muzzle. They all nodded grimly and then moved off in different directions.

OOOOOOOOOOO

Saya and Ranma headed straight towards an electronic store about 15 blocks away, but because of Ranma's speed they'd arrive there far before their friends arrived at the nearby grocery store, which was only four blocks away. This was especially true since Ranma traveled in a straight line once Saya figured out the direction, and Saeko and the others would have to follow the roads and avoid any zombies in the area.

Saya however had no thought for their other group, as Ranma had once again picked her up in his arms, with one hand on along her thigh just barely touching her rear with his pinky. It was enough for some reason to get her blushing, well that and his smell in her nostrils and feeling his muscles move and bunch against her cheek and side as he ran along with her.

Ranma was having his own issues at this point. Feeling Saya's body against his was intoxicating despite their intervening clothing and his tomcat side was acting up badly, his urges in that direction strengthened hugely by his being with Saeko. Yet it was that very relationship that gave him the strength to resist. Ranma refused to betray Saeko like that, and that thought allowed him to ignore his inner tomcat's yowling, regardless of his attraction to the girl in his arms.

After about ten minutes travel Ranma slowed to a stop above the electronics store, and put Saya down gently. He looked around the roof, making certain there was no threat or indeed anyway for anyone other than another marital artist to get onto the roof, then nodded. "Wait here for a second Saya-chan, I'll clear out the store then come back up for ya." Saya nodded, still blushing a little, and Ranma jumped down leaving her there alone to look out over the city and regain some of her usual composure.

Luckily there weren't any zombies or looters around outside, and he entered the store swiftly, the door making one of those irritating jangling noises. That roused the instincts of the two zombies inside, but as there were only two in the store he quickly dispatched them with a single blow to the head each. He stalked silently through the store making certain there was no one else around. After that he went back outside and brought Saya down into the store with him.

She tossed him one of the two backpacks that they had brought along, and pointed him in the direction of the batteries. "Double D batteries AA batteries, all the rechargeable ones you can find as well as a recharger just in case, as many regular batteries as you can too, as well as any and all flashlights, preferably LED outdoor types, as robust as you can find." she said by rote and then moved over to where there was a shelf of radios.

Saya looked around and found the one she wanted, one of those weird ones that had a battery inside but could also be powered by use of a crank, or even a small solar panel strip along the top. She hefted it frowning a little at the weight, but shrugged and stuffed into the backpack, then moved over to where there were walkie-talkies kits or four, and stuffed them in as well. They were the kiddy kind, simple to operate and with not a lot of range, but they'd be useful at least. Maybe they could eventually find some army depot somewhere, but for now they were good. *Let's see, we've already got enough batteries for the computer, next we could use some tools, we lost all the ones Yuuki*

grabbed except for the second nail gun when we had to abandon the bus. She looked around for the tools section and found it in a display case by the store's bathroom.

As she opened the case to get at the tools within she looked up at a creak and screamed. "AHHHH!"

The door to the bathroom had opened and a zombie Ranma had missed, never even noticing the bathroom in his sweep came out lunging toward Saya. It was a girl, about her own age, wearing some kind of uniform and with a name tag on it. Evidently one of the workers had been bitten but got away to retreat into the bathroom but alas one bite was enough.

Before Saya could move it was on top of her, and grabbing and dragging her in to bite.

Before the zombie could drag her close enough to bite however Ranma appeared as if teleporting over the intervening distance, and a roundhouse kick slammed into the side of the thing's head, sending the entire body flying away. Ranma then jumped forward with both feet slamming down onto the thing's head crushing it before the zombie could try to get back to its feet.

With that done he ran back to check on Saya who was kneeling on the ground shivering in fear. Ranma gathered her into a hug and she clung to him desperately, trying not to sob in relief. One moment everything had been nice and calm, the next she had nearly died and been turned! It was moments like this that she realized she was never going to get used to this kind of life.

She clung to Ranma like he was her anchor, and in a moment of insight she realized that was indeed the case. He'd been there for her since the beginning of this whole thing, he'd been there before that, and now he was really the only lifeline she had. She wasn't quite ready to take up Saeko's offer of sharing him, but she was closer than she ever thought she would be to agreeing to something like that if it meant being close to him.

"Are you all right?" he said, his voice a deep rumble in his chest against her cheek, and she blushed heavily.

"I am now," she muttered then reached up and kissed him on the underside of his chin. Then she resolutely stood up out of his arms and gathered up the stuff she had been looting. "We need to get out of here, my scream will probably bring a few more of these things down on top of us we don't get out of here fast."

Ranma nodded grimly and ran back to pick up his backpack, already full of as many batteries of various kinds, chargers and flashlights as he could find, both large and small, enough to give each of them two apiece. He had also taken a power drill, and a few cell phones. While they wouldn't work on their own like the Kiddy radios that Saya had grabbed, they would still work for a while.

They met up at the front of the store and Saya was dismayed to see that she was correct, her scream had garbed the attention of several dozen nearby zombies and they were all shambling towards the store. Ranma frowned, put the backpack on his back and lifted her in his arms then raced out, turned and jumped onto the roof as soon as he cleared the little awning above the entrance. The weight of the bags and the girl didn't bother him much, and he landed easily on the flat roof. Even as more zombies congregated to the store he left away, keeping his leaps and footsteps as quietly as he could.

Within twenty minutes he was back on the street where Rika's apartment was, and within another minute he was leaping up onto the balcony as Rei and Takashi moved to either side, having kept watch on the apartment from there while the scavengers were away.

Ranma let Saya down onto her feet, dropping the backpacks into Takashi's waiting arms who grunted a little at the weight of them. "Any trouble out there?"

Ranma shrugged sardonically. "A bit of a zombie issue, the usual for these days."

Takashi grinned at him and Saya just shook her head blushing heavily as she remembered how Ranma had saved her and the little kiss she gave him after. "Baka," she muttered and walked inside.

Ranma looked after her quizzically. "Was it something I said?"

"Don't look at me, man," Takashi replied. "Women are a mystery to every man at the best of times, and that doesn't even consider the situation we're in."

Ranma nodded, "True that."

At this point Rei smacked them both upside the head and walked off in a huff.

The two men grinned at one another for a moment then Ranma became more serious. "Are you going to be good to go in a few hours, say around four or so? I don't want us to leave until Saeko and her group comes back, but after that we're going to book, and you'll have to direct me to your mother's elementary school."

Takashi nodded grimly, "I'll be ready."

Ranma nodded in reply, then turned as Yuuki came out of the sliding door to stand with the list in her hand. "You ready to go Ranma?"

Ranma gulped a little, seeing her in her new clothing. Yuuki was now wearing a pair of ripped Levi shorts that were just this side of decent, and a loose top that showed her midriff.

Yuuki smirked a little at the reaction she received from both boys, proof that even if he was devoted to Rei Takashi still had a pulse, and that even with him now being with Saeko she could still get a rise out of Ranma. *After all, even if I've chosen not to go after him alone, that doesn't mean I can't have a little fun.*

Ranma gritted his teeth and shook his head to override his inner tomcat's yowling for a moment. *I am not going to jump her bones damnit, I'm with Sae-chan now, that's more than enough.* After he was certain he had control of himself he nodded mutely.

The vixen grinned and leapt forward toward him and he caught her reflexively, not even grunting under her weight. Yuuki smiled saucily up at him then reached up and patted his cheek. "Come on hero, let's go."

Ranma fought back a growl and the desire to take this willing female then turned without a word and leapt onto the roof and away.

The two of them raced on towards the first of the shops that had the parts Yuuki needed to quiet the engine of the Hummer, but this time was going to be a little different. Most of these parts were large, many of them were heavy and all were cumbersome, therefore they'd have to make multiple trips even with someone of Ranma's strength doing the lifting.

They were also going to different shops, since no one shop outside of a single major automotive store on the other side of the river had all the parts they needed.

The store in question was about five blocks away from the electronic store Ranma had been to with Saya, and they found it easily enough, with Yuuki luxuriating in his grip and not at all unconsciously rubbing her breasts against his chest as they went along, simply enjoying teasing the hell out of him.

When he set her down onto her feet she could feel his 'reaction' to her teasing as she slipped down his body and found it very flattering in need. *It feels as if Saeko wasn't exaggerating* she thought to herself, a shiver of desire going through her, but she moved away, reminding herself of her desire to keep flirting with Kohta too so as not to mess with the group dynamic, but it was far harder to keep that in mind now.

Ranma, despite his physical reaction to the wench in his arms, had been able to control himself by remembering Saeko and their connection, and moved away from her quickly. Unlike the electronic store's roof, this one had a doorway leading down into the store, and he waved her over into a corner of the roof as he moved to the doorway, wrenching it easily off its hinges and swiftly entering the darkness within.

Unlike the electronic store were there had been only a few zombies inside, this store had fifteen zombies scattered around the inside of it, and several of them heard the noise of Ranma's forceful entry and made his way toward them up the stairwell.

Ranma cursed a little but raced to meet them, his ki claws already out and shimmering along his fingers. The first three died before the others could respond, and moved on, but was mobbed by an even larger group the moment he opened the door on the ground floor. Despite their numbers and the close range Ranma was a whirling dervish, smashing them aside and slicing them into pieces while easily dodging their grasping hands and gaping mouths.

After the last zombie fell he moved towards the entrance to the actual garage section and found several more zombies there. With a dark smile of pleasure Ranma stalked the store clearing out the zombies and slaughtering them as he found them. After making a final walkthrough he turned around and exited the store the way he had broken in. "All clear Yuuki, let's go."

Yuuki nodded and followed him down, then began to immediately move around the storage area pointing out parts for Ranma to grab.

Ranma simply followed her orders, for a bit, moving the parts to a pile by the door, then looked askance at the large pile of stuff. "You sure ya need all this stuff?" he asked, being almost completely ignorant of anything to do with electronics or cars or anything of that nature.

Yuuki nodded grimly, "Yeah, I do. Modifying a military grade Hummer like Rika's isn't easy for a civilian to do, and trying to quiet the engine down while still letting the engine case retain its waterproof property is going to be tough. I'll need all these tools, and the parts we'll get from our next stop."

Ranma frowned a little but nodded then hefted some of the tools and boxed parts and shook his head. "I can carry all this but it's going to make a an unholy clang if I try to carry it all at once. I'll have to make three or maybe even four trips in order ta keep from making enough noise ta lead any of the zombies or other survivors back ta our base."

Yuuki nodded. "Do you want to carry me back first or let me stay here and go through the parts again?"

"Do you think you can find anything else we need here?"

Yuuki nodded firmly. "I saw a whole row of car batteries back there, we could use a couple of them, and we lost our power tools that I took from that first garage when the bus exploded." She snarled a little at the memory of that, all her hard work going up in flames.

Ranma nodded. "All right if you think you can look after yourself between my trips we'll do it that way. I'll carry this stuff up to the roof for now, if you can finish finding the batteries and tools ya need I'll carry it up, then ya can stay up on the roof with the rest until I come back for ya."

Yuuki nodded and they both split off. Ranma grabbed up the first few pieces and brought them up to the roof, returning to do the same again three more times. By that point Yuuki had brought two of the larger batteries she had seen in the storage room and he grabbed those and put them up on the roof as well, followed by Yuuki lugging a few of the heavier tools she needed to work on the Hummer.

Once they were there Yuuki went around double checking they had all the parts she wanted, and nodded at Ranma when she was done. "How do we want to do this?"

"I'll carry you back home now then come back for the parts and carry is much as I can without making a lot of racket."

Yuuki nodded and Ranma grabbed her around the waist and carried her back to the apartment, dropped her off and returned for the parts she had gathered.

By the time he was back with the second load she had already begun work on setting up a makeshift workshop, with Takashi following her around helping her set up an overhead light, a place for her tools by the Hummer's now open engine block and another place where he had placed the laptop so she could look at a schematic of the engine.

Ranma smirked a little at the blush that Takashi had on his face following the sexy petrol head around, a smirk that widened ever so slightly at the ferocious scowl he could see on his cousin's face as she stood watch on the balcony above.

After he was done transporting parts and tools Yuuki moved over to him, a second far smaller list of parts in her hand. Wordlessly Ranma picked her up and raced off over the rooftops, wanting to get this job done before Saeko and her team got back.

Yuuki again flirted with him for a bit, rubbing her tits against his chest as he carried her, and once more by the time they reached their destination he was sporting a very visible sign of his response to her.

Unlike the first shop this place didn't have a door leading inside from the roof, and Ranma left Yuuki there as he went down to the front entrance.

This store, and indeed the street outside looked to have been the site of a battle against the spreading zombie menace. there were dozens of bodies on the ground around the store and the intersection it was next to, including two dead policemen laying near a makeshift roadblock.

There were also at least twenty zombies moving around listlessly, many of them by the roadblock. Not enough to bother Ranma alone, even without his meteor hammer along (left behind because it clinked and he had to hold an

end at least to keep it quiet) but taking them on and protecting Yuuki without making noise to draw in others in the area would be far more difficult.

We'll have to be as quiet as we can here, Ranma thought than moved over to the store. He didn't see anyone inside, and looked up as far as he could. While this door unfortunately had one of those annoying chime things it was a mechanical rather than electronic one.

Ranma gently eased the door open an inch, reaching up inside quickly to grab the little bell and hold it still. Then he opened the door, grateful there was no creak and went inside. He then removed the bell from the mantle of the door by ripping it out easily, a noise that elicited no response within the store or without.

There were several bodies inside, mangled and ripped to pieces, but only two zombies back in the garage area, and Ranma dispatched them with ease. Then he went back up and grabbed Yuuki, taking her down and in the store.

Yuuki immediately began ordering him around, pointing out parts to grab and pinching his ass whenever he bent over. This elicited a response a low growling sound from him that sent a shiver down her spine and caused her nipples to harden.

However even though she was doing this she was still able to go around and find the remaining parts she needed. That done she brought them out to the front of the store, piled them up there and then went back to grab some gas containers. By the time she did, Ranma had already moved the other parts up to the roof and come back.

When he saw what she was carrying Ranma cocked his head quizzically and she smirked at him. "I've got a credit card, so we can fill these up from a gas station, that'll save us some time later."

"Good, I'll fill 'em up some other time, let's get out of here, the number of zombies out there worry me and I want ta get ya out of here."

Yuuki nodded too but inwardly she was a little irritated that she wouldn't have any more alone time Ranma. To make up for this she jumped on his back as he turned to look at a zombie passing by on the street below them. He moved a little under her weight but that was all, and she wrapped her legs around his middle and ground her barely clad tits against his back making certain he felt her nipples, hard as pebbles, against his back. She whispered into his ear "Then let's go big boy."

Ranma twitched a bit and a low growl came out of him, but he still retained his self-control and the two left the store easily, with Ranma carrying both of the containers and not five minutes later they were back at the apartment complex and he dropped her on the pavement near the Hummer. It took Ranma three more trips to carry the stuff that Yuuki had grabbed this time.

Ranma jumped up to the balcony, keeping his inner smile to himself as he saw Rei's continued scowl. "Anything happen while we were gone?"

Rei shook her head, turning away from the view of Takashi following Yuuki's orders like some kind of hormonally driven obedient dog. "No, it's been really quiet over here. We haven't seen any zombies near here, but there's been some movement over by the river. We can't see much with the buildings in the way, but I guess most of the zombies around here have moved over there."

Ranma frowned a little, seeing that would probably make their eventual crossing of the river more difficult, but it worked in their favor right now.

Rei however had moved on to another topic. She looked around, making certain Alice was still downstairs, and then leaned in to whisper to her cousin. "Hey, look, I'm not unhappy or anything that you and Saeko are together or anything like that, but god-damnit keep that kind of thing to yourselves okay, don't fuck up the bathroom! Even after Saeko cleaned in there it still smells a little, even Alice could smell something 'fishy,' in her words."

Ranma flushed a little, then noticed that Rei was blushing, not with anger but simple embarrassment and he smirked, seeing a way to turn this back on her. "What's a matter cuz, ya jealous?" Rei's blush deepened and she glared at him, causing him to chuckle a little. "Well don't worry Rei, from how he looks at ya all ya gotta do is wink and Takashi will help ya shower or whatever ya want." Ranma wondered idly where this newfound confidence was coming from, but at the moment he just decided to roll with it.

"Fuck, I knew you were a pervert Ranma!" Rei hissed, backing away a little, her fist clenched, but her face was still red at the idea of being with Takashi like that.

It wasn't like she had never thought of it, but did she want to jump that far into a relationship with her childhood friend that quickly after he killed Hizashi before he could finish turning into a zombie? Despite what some people thought, she hadn't started going out with Hizashi just to twit Takashi for not pushing things, that was merely a bonus, she had honestly had feelings for him. The way he made her the center of his world and made her feel special was just what she needed at a very dark point in her life. How would it look if she simply forgot him and moved on quickly, especially since she was always comparing Takashi to him like she did last night?

Ranma noticed her faraway gaze and how she was now frowning and backed off. "Well I'll promise ta try and keep Saeko-chan's and my relationship to ourselves as best we can, but we don't exactly have a lot of privacy right now y'know?"

Rei came back to the here and now, frowning at what he had just said then sighed a little. "Just don't do anymore, well anymore anything like that in the bathroom or other place like that ok? If you have urges like that you can go next door for a few hours or something."

Ranma simply nodded agreement then turned to go inside and play with Alice, who had just run up the stairs followed by the puppy and Shizuka, smiling. She had been able to contact her friend again, but hadn't been able to set up a meeting with her. She ran up and grabbed Ranma into an exuberant hug. "Nee, nee, neko-chan, I called Rika-chan again."

"Oh, can she meet us here in a bit?" Ranma asked, his voice muffled as Shizuka had literally thrust his head into her massive chest, and he was in danger of suffocating.

Shizuka pulled back, pouting a little. "No, she's being kept busy being a, a special kind of shooter, you know the kind, they shoot realllllly far?" She spread her hands as if to indicate how far, her chest bouncing in response and Ranma forced his eyes to stay on her face. "She's over at the airport, and she's really busy. She and her partner are the only special shooter people on the island, so she's got to protect the entire place practically by herself! Oh, oh, but she thinks the idea of getting out to a island somewhere is a great idea, and she can't wait to meet up with us somehow down the road. She really wants to meet you neko-chan, I've told her all about your martial arts stuff, and Busujima-san, and Komuro-kun, oh and little Alice and..."

Rika was being kept busy as one of two snipers protecting the floating island Tokonsou International airport, which was situated about three miles out from the port. The port wasn't some kind of major traveling spot, but did a brisk business in bulk freight, while most of the civilian traffic came in at the airport and then over the massive bridge that linked the port with it. While Tokonsou wasn't huge like Tokyo or Kansai, it did have a lot of space to spread into, and had been growing in the past few years before this current crisis, making the airport an important public institution, thus it had an almost permanent SAT force to defend against terrorists.

At the moment Rika was too busy to even try and get away to meet up with them. She and her partner were the only snipers on the man-made island, and they were in charge of protecting all the outgoing flights carrying VIP's and normal civilians to a staging area elsewhere. With the land bridge there they were getting a pretty steady flow of zombies drawn from the noise of the planes taking off and hundreds had gotten onto the island before they could deploy to a defensive position.

By the time Shizuka finished explaining her friend's position Ranma noticed it was nearly 4 o'clock in the afternoon and Ranma wondered how the other scavengers were getting on. He trusted Saeko-chan to look after the others though, and turned back to play with Alice and the as-yet-unnamed puppy.

OOOOOOOOOO

Unlike Ranma who didn't have any problem moving across the city at will Saeko and her group were making very slow progress, moving from one hiding place to hiding place to another as silently as they could towards the grocery store that Alice had mentioned and whose position in relation to them Saya had figured out exactly using Google maps and the street view option.

They had to backtrack and move around several large groups of zombies, the smallest of which was 10 strong, and it took them several hours to get to the grocery store, by which time Ranma had finished with Saya and was halfway down his first stop with Yuuki.

The grocery store was a rather large one, nearly as large as the one whose parking lot they had stopped in to kick Shido and his burgeoning cult off the bus. Luckily it also had several windows looking inward, and they stared inside, seeing several zombies in view moving around. None were near the doors at the moment thought and Saeko looked at Kohta and Kyoko. "I'll take point, don't shoot with your guns unless you have to, we don't know how soundproof the

walls are, just use the nail gun Kohta."

Kyoko nodded agreement while Kohta simply hung his head disconsolately. He knew that was true, but he really, really wanted to try out the guns he got in from the apartment. He also knew deep down that his main worth to the team was his ability to shoot, and their current ROE didn't let him use it.

Without further discussion Saeko moved toward sliding door, which thankfully didn't have a little jingle and the group moved into the grocery store the two gun carrying members following Saeko inside swiftly.

Saeko stalked through the store like a lion over the savanna, killing every zombie she came upon easily and efficiently with single blows from her katana, the katana she had gotten from her lover before they even became lovers.

Kohta alas was unable to stop himself and when two zombies came crawling out of the meat department at the back of the store and he reached for the Knights SR that he had brought along rather than the nail gun, turning and raising the rifle to his shoulder in the same motion.

The sharp recoil and the bangs brought a evil grin to his face and Kyoko frowned a little as she noticed it. She wondered what that smile signified, and was very much afraid that she knew. If Kohta had the same issue that she knew Ranma had, about violence and liking to fight, it might cause problems down the line when the smart thing was to run.

Here and now it had already caused problems, the retort of the gun having grabbed the attention of the rest of the zombies and they all moved toward them. Saeko scowled angrily at Kohta, who looked a little sheepish, but mostly unrepentant, the joy of finally shooting the guns he had taken giving him a little more courage. "Baka, you and Kyoko-sensei get behind the meat counter. Use the nail gun from now on, we don't want to make any more noise that could be heard outside!"

Kohta nodded and the two shooters moved to use the meat counter as cover while Saeko smiled a little as she saw twelve zombies moved down the aisles toward them. While Kyoko kept an eye on the door into the meat departments back room, Kohta fired at the ones furthest away and Saeko used the open space around the counter to slaughter the zombies that came toward her. That took barely fifteen minutes and Saeko frowned a little at how easy it was.

Kyoko noticed that frown, as well as the odd light in the swordswoman's eyes and groaned inwardly. *Another one? Or is this simply a sign of the times, that you have to enjoy fighting to survive in this world? Regardless it's something I'll need to keep an eye on.*

Saeko didn't know what the teacher was thinking and merely moved on with their work. "That will do. You two stay here, I'll make certain there aren't any more around."

Kohta nodded glumly, knowing he was being punished a little and castigating himself now that the euphoria of finally shooting a real gun again had passed.

Soon Saeko it cleaned out the entire store, and the trio moved into the backroom. This took them more time to clean off given its disorganized nature, but there were only two zombies in the workers cafeteria and Kohta dispatched them before Saeko could move.

After they were certain there was noon around and the zombies had been wiped out for now Saeko nodded. "All right," she said pointing at the boxes with labels she recognized coming from canned food (not a major source of food in Japan) as well as ramen. While having little nutritional value, the instant soup would be nice to have come winter and was easy enough to heat up even over a fire. "You two start gathering that up, as well as the packets of that Crystal Light stuff, we may get tired of plain water soon enough, then please search around for seeds for fruits and vegetables, and anything small you think we can use. I'll be right back, I saw something a while back that I think we could use."

The two nodded and Kyoko set down her nail gun (which she hadn't actually used) and began to pull stuff off the shelf and put them in the basket that they had grabbed. They brought several backpacks, but even with them their lifting capacity was limited. None of the three felt like trying to make multiple trips, it was simply too dangerous.

Kyoko moved around, frowning a little as she realized they probably should grab some bags of rice, but they would be very heavy, and rice cultivation was very land intensive. She wondered if it was worth it in the long run then shrugged and pulled down two large bags of rice, pushing them into one of the backpacks.

Saeko exited the grocery store quietly and went next door to a store she had noticed that sold luggage. She went inside swiftly, closing the door silently behind her, and looked around, noticing that there didn't seem to be any zombies in the store. She moved among the displays and looked at several large duffel bags, hefting them in one hand as she pondered which ones to grab.

She froze for a moment as she thought she heard something moving, but when she looked over where she thought the sound had come from she didn't see anything. Still she brought out her blade again and carefully dropped the duffel bags onto the floor. She slowly made her way around the store, keeping her eyes open and her senses alert.

She turned swiftly as a voice from the back of the store spoke, its tone an alloy of arrogance and lust. "Well what do we have here, a little hottie like you still alive and walking around alone, must be our lucky day."

Saeko turned around again swiftly, her sixth sense alerting her to movement from her right coming around one of the displays. She stepped to the side avoiding a blow that would've taken her in the back of the head from a bat coming from a large fat man. Her sword flashed out, actually slicing his arm off entirely and biting deep into his neck. The man went down with a gurgle and the man who had first spoken gaped in astonishment.

Saeko turned to him and smirked a little. "Two big, strong men like you have to gang up on little old me? Ahh well." she said, flicking her blade so that the blood on it flew off in red arc. She stalked forward like a hunting lioness towards the frozen man behind the register. "I certainly hope you'll put up more of a fight than your compatriot. There is no joy in slaughtering the weak."

The contempt she poured into that last word seemed to goad him into a response and he reached down and pulled out a shotgun from behind the counter. But before he could bring it around to aim at her she was right in front of him and her sword flashed out, slicing into his forehead and blinding him. He fell back with a scream, and she reversed her grip and plunged her blade into his chest. She pulled it out with a little bit of a smile. It didn't last however, as she had been telling the truth. There was no pleasure in killing the weak.

She moved around the register and into the back room, finding little of use but no one else either. She turned, grabbed up the duffels and exited the store moving back over into the grocery store.

Kohta looked up sharply as she stepped into the back room where he and Kyoko were still working, bringing his nail gun up reflexively then lowering it with a sigh of relief, "Any trouble?"

Saeko shrugged eloquently. "Nothing of consequence," she said smiling a little mysteriously. "Nothing of consequence."

Saeko was not prepared to share her brief moment of dark joy of the killing of the two would-be rapists with anyone save Ranma, and she would do that later that night. When she told him Ranma would in turn absolve her it, but caution her to not take too much joy in slaughtering the weak, reiterating that it was just not fun. It was better to have an opponent that was worth the name, or a fight that could get your blood pumping, which Saeko would agree with.

The trio of scavengers filled the new duffel bags, able to carry far more than they would have otherwise. Carrying the supplies and the need to avoid zombies slowed down their return greatly, but they at last made their way back around five-thirty that evening.

OOOOOOOO

The sun wasn't setting yet, but it would in a few hours and Ranma and Takashi left as soon as the group was back, Ranma wanting to see if they could pick up the trail of Takashi's mother, or at least what happened to her now. Even he didn't want to move around the city at night, as a lot of the ambient noise of the city disappeared at night even without a crisis going on, which would make it harder to avoid the zombies attention. Then too, he wasn't going to trust his eyesight or his hearing at night against the zombie's hearing.

"So how are you going to do this?" Asked Takashi.

Ranma shrugged "I'm going to carry you like I carry the others."

Takashi gaped at him. "Dude, that's kind of gay."

Ranma shrugged. "You can't keep up on foot and you can't roof hop yet."

"What do you mean yet," asked Takashi weakly.

"Don't worry," said Ranma grinning a little. "I'll get you all roof-hopping eventually."

Takashi groaned but got on the other boy's back. As soon as he did however Ranma shook his head, twitching a little. "Takashi I'm gonna just say this once, it's the first time I've carried a guy okay, so if anything, you know reaction wise, goes on due to friction or whatever, I am prepared to kick your ass into the river and leave you there ta die, got it?"

Takashi nodded agreeably. "That sounds perfectly reasonable to me."

"Good." Without further ado Ranma turned jumped up onto the roof and away.

The girls all looked at one another and then broke into giggles, except for Yuuki who looked off into the distance after them, a light blush on her face and a bit of blood coming from her nose. No one there knew it, but besides being a petrol-head she was also a closet yaoi lover, and the idea of Takashi being the uke and Ranma the seme fired her imagination. Luckily for both she knew better than to bring up even the idea. She shook it off quickly thought and went back to work on the engine with Kohta now helping her. Despite the time spent teasing him, which was really fun for her, they finished work on it in another hour, which turned out to be a very good thing.

OOOOOOOOOOOO

The trip to the elementary school took them 40 minutes because they had to cross the river first and then move on a diagonal from there towards the school. Unlike what they had expected there were no people on this side of town moving around, and instead there were a lot of zombies. It appeared as if the police's attempts to keep the zombie outbreak on one side of the river had failed miserably, and Ranma wondered how his mother aunt and uncle were faring. He was almost tempted to go look for them now, but knew it would be incredibly tough to find them, and with Takashi on his back a little too irritating too.

Takashi directed him the last few blocks pointing out the route and soon enough the two stopped on her roof right outside the elementary schools walls, staring down at it. It was a small elementary schools, with about six different classrooms on each floor of its two stories, an outer wall about normal head height, and a decent looking play area outside. At first they thought the kids were moving around outside, and were astonished to see it under these circumstances, but when they looked closer that astonishment turned into cold fury as they both noticed that the children were zombies.

"How are we going to do this?" Takashi whispered.

Ranma tugged at his pigtail thoughtfully. "I can jump to the wall and then to that tree by the building and up onto a window on the second floor. You know what floor your mother's room is on?"

"Second floor third from the stairs," Takashi recited by rote. "Do you honestly think she'll still be here with all the zombies around outside?"

Ranma shrugged. "She wasn't home dude, and if she's not here, where exactly do you think we should start searching for her?"

Takashi shrugged eloquently and Ranma nodded in turn. "Besides," he said looking at the front entrance which was shut tight. "That entrance is closed, who knows maybe they simply were able to fort up inside somewhere."

Takashi knew that was grasping at straws as did Ranma but neither of them mentioned it. Neither of them were willing to really face the truth, that possibly the entirety of the population of the school had been turned into zombies. If the school population here had panicked as much as the high school population had with them that was more than likely.

"Do it," Takashi said and Ranma nodded. Takashi got back onto his back and Ranma leaped forward onto the security wall around the school and then from there into a tree branch. The rustling leaves seemed to draw the intention of the zombies for a moment but they didn't wait around and Ranma jumped swiftly up onto the second floor. He held on their by his fingertips of one hand and smash the window with his other hand, causing the zombies from all around to stare up at them and move towards the building, mindlessly running into the side of it for a moment.

The two boys moved inside swiftly, and Ranma killed two zombies grimacing as he did, disturbed by their childlike appearance, before they moved out into the hallway beyond. From there Takashi took the lead with his bat, Ranma following close behind. Before they reached the door to the room Takashi had indicated however Ranma grabbed him and pulled him back.

Takashi looked at him and Ranma shook his head. "If your mother's been turned," he said softly, his eyes compassionate, "you don't want to be the one to do anything about it. I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy."

Takashi froze for a moment, images of his mother throughout his life superimposed on an image of a zombie and he shuddered, nodding reflexively. "If, if she, if she's like that give her mercy, please make it quick."

Ranma nodded grimly. Takashi waited for a moment as Ranma entered the room as silent as a ghost. A moment later Ranma exited the room his face grim.

"Well?" Takashi asked, his face already pale and drawn.

Ranma licked suddenly dry lips. "Short light brown hair cut down to her neck, wearing small glasses?"

Takashi nodded convulsively his heart breaking.

"I, I made it quick, I promise," Ranma said reaching out and grabbing his arm. Takashi's mother had been right by the door actually, surrounded by three zombie children who must have bitten her while she was trying to figure out what was wrong with them, or maybe defending her other students while they ran out the door. Ranma had made it quick as he could, a single blow to the head of each, but that was all he could do.

Takashi's legs went out from under them all his energy leaving him. Ranma stopped swiftly and scooped them up as easily as if he were a child, not wanting to linger here any longer. He raced back to where they had entered the school, and jumped down, easily evading the zombies and up onto the security wall then on up onto the rooftops as Takashi began to sob quietly as Ranma glared around him at the dying city.

Takashi's grief was interrupted however by some kind of noise in the distant sky, and suddenly all the lights, all the noise, everything electrical in the city suddenly stopped working. At the sudden cessation of background noise Takashi looked up, then, as Ranma set him down on a roof, looked around in shock. "What the heck happened?"

"I don't know, but it can't be good..." Ranma said, looking around worriedly. The two teens looked at one another, then without another word Takashi got onto Ranma's back and the martial artist took off as fast and as quietly as he could through the silent city.

End chapter

And here we have another chapter done. I have seen the latest chapter, and the mystery female shooter might be Takashi's mother, but that feels too much like a cop out to me. In a zombie story there needs to be some grief, and it can't all happen to near strangers or at the very beginning or off screen. So how will this change Takashi, what will he do now? And what will it mean to Saeko's parents and what happened at their mansion that the teens weren't there? And how will the group dynamic work out from now on?

Oh I decided no O.C.'s will be added for a long while, though I may add another male in five or so chapters. As always read and review, i want your opinions on what you think of the idea of them moving out onto the ocean.

***Chapter 5*: Why, oh Why did it have to be J-pop?**

Thanks go to Tikitau for pointing out a lot of my errors in this, they have now been corrected.

I don't own High School of the dead or Ranma 1/2. If I did Rei would not be one of the main characters, and Kasumi would have been paired with Ranma right off the bat to live happily ever after.

Some reviews I would like to mention:

Tarnum1: Except that any such expansion would run into the remnants of the people's army and the Musk and the Phoenix. Frankly, what happens in that area would make an entire story on its own. If anyone else wants to write it I would be interested in reading it, but I am not going to mention the Amazons in this story at all until maybe the last few chapters. I'm giving them a lot of screen time over in the last few chapters of my Chaotic Space story, and that will be continuing for a while if you're interested in them.

TJG: Your reviews are always thought provoking and the knowledge you provided vis-a-vis the EMP and its affects were spot on to what I had assumed, many of the points you point out will be brought up by Saya in this chapter. In regards to your issues with retreating to an island, the island will serve as their base of operations, but that doesn't mean they will retreat behind its walls and just stay there. Saeko and Ranma are both extremely adept at living in this new zombie world, and can be sent out on missions to bring back items or services.

Janissa: Fresh water and weather will be an issue, but as will be pointed out in this chapter, it is essentially a case of choosing your poisons. In that environment you will have some issues, but none of them will be equal to the immediate danger of the zombies. To get to any really defensible place on the main islands of Japan they would have to travel overland, and that would be incredibly dangerous, and by the time they got there they may find someone already in possession of the place, given the distance. They can live off the sea for most of their food, and the island I have in mind would actually have enough space to have single large farm to give them vegetables and things of that nature. Rice they will bring along in as large amounts as possible. Happi and Kasumi will meet up with the group eventually, but not soon, and not before the group goes through several more ordeals. However his help, and more Kasumi's help, will be helpful to the group. Why Kasumi will be more helpful than Happi I will leave you all to figure out for now.

Lufio: Why? Saeko doesn't use guns, why would she think of grabbing it?

Tikitau: Thank you for the PM you sent, I posted the last chapter with the corrections you pointed out, and the chapter reads much better now. You're right, there is no perfect solution and I simply chose one which will allow the group to have a relatively safe base of operations. Meeting up with Rika will not happen for a few more chapters, but it will be very difficult when it does. And yes killing Hizashi only after he turned always struck me as a bit wishy-washy.

Narsil: In HotD it's shown a few times that he zombies won't even walk into the water. The group uses the water a few times to get away from zombies: Saeko and Takashi use it in the manga to get away from zombies by driving out to a tiny strip of land in the river, and the group crosses the river to get away from other zombies.

Concerning this chapter: I am not a psychologist, will not get the human reactions to drama and angst exactly right, I am trying to, but I don't know if I succeeded. Oh, and if the first section seems to oscillate wildly between seriousness and silliness, well that is the point of the person whose point of view it's told by. Now on to the story!

Chapter 5 Why oh Why Did it Have to be J-pop?

Happosai thoughtfully blew out a smoke ring, his precious ki-infused pipe in one gnarled hand as he looked out over the ruin of Tokyo. 'Ruin' was the apropos term at this point. The sheer number of people that had been turned into zombies once the outbreak began had insured no containment could work, and the police had taken hellish losses in their attempts to keep order. Now the whole city was ruled by the zombie horde, which continued to grow as survivors tried and failed to make a break for it.

The aged and diminutive (not to mention wrinkly and bald) master of the Anything Goes School of martial arts looked over at the young girl sleeping by his side, and for once had no desire to bury himself in her glorious bosom. Even he knew this was not the time for such things. Oh, he'd taken some pleasure in having her cha-cha's pressing into his back as he carried her, but the knowledge she was the last of her family left alive sat in his gut like that one time he had accidentally eaten a rock.

He had found Soun's body, ripped apart by a large number of zombies, that ridiculously heavy armor he insisted on wearing no protection against the zombies. At least he had died fighting, much like his youngest daughter and who Haposai supposed had been her boyfriend. He had mercy killed the boyfriend, who had survived long enough to turn after being bitten the first time despite the horde of turned teens around him, but sweet Akane, or at least that was what he thought Soun's youngest had been named (it wasn't like he had seen any of them for over 15 years after all) had been torn apart. He had only known it was her because he had found her head and it still had a faint ki signature that felt like Tendo's. The middle daughter seemed to have been killed by Soun before he was ripped apart, something that made Haposai shake his head in mixed regret and pride. Regret that the father had been forced to kill his daughter, and pride that he had the strength to end her unnatural half-life.

It had been mere luck that he had escaped the cave his two ungrateful students had imprisoned him in. A stray lightning bolt had cracked against the outer wall, opening up a hole in the cave higher up the mountain face than the original entrance, allowing him an exit. He had two blissful days of freedom, moving through three different towns and stealing as many silky darlings as he could on the way to the Tendo Dojo in Nerima, but then the zombies had begun appearing, the world had turned on its head.

Finding Soun and the majority of his family dead had nearly made his old heart give out in despair. Oh, he would have punished Soun for his part in imprisoning him, but it would have been more humiliating than painful. Despite the way he treated them, and his bizarre ideas of training, Haposai truly did care for his students in his own way. Haposai sighed again, wondering where his other student was, and if he had a son like he always wanted and how they were doing dealing with this madness.

He also wondered what they should do now. He of course wasn't in much danger from the zombies unless they took him unawares, something that would be incredibly hard for them to do given his own skills. Still, protecting someone else was different, and far harder. Despite the fact she had survived up to this point Kasumi wasn't a martial artist and training her to be anything like one would take time and a place to train in without the zombie threat.

His thoughts were interrupted as the girl beside him stirred, and he looked over at her, his wrinkled face as kind as he could make it. "Hello Kasumi-chan, how are you feeling?"

Kasumi stared at him blankly for a moment, then her eyes widened. "Grandfather! Where have you been?"

Haposai looked at her in surprise. "You remember me, dear?"

"Oh yes, you were at my second birthday party. The play you put on was very funny, with momma running after you and shouting like that. Where have you been? I remember you and daddy leaving for a few months after Akane was born, but you didn't come back with him."

"Oh, erm, I had duties elsewhere that took up all my time, and your father, um, wanted to help me, but he could only stay away from you for a few months before he missed you all too much to stay with me." Haposai lied quickly, thankful that the years hadn't slowed down his wits that much. He didn't want to tell the girl that the 'play' she remembered so fondly was his mother chasing after him for stealing some of her underwear, or that her father and Genma had drugged him and stuffed him into a cave before caving in the entrance so they could be free of him.

Honestly, he thought grumpily to himself, was my training so bad? All I did was push their endurance by making them carry bags of my silky darlings through town. Admittedly I told their owners and the other townsfolk about it beforehand but hey, what's an exercise without risk?

Kasumi again intruded into his thoughts, though this time not in a way he would have liked. "Grandfather, my father, he... my sisters, they, they're all..." She broke off, and large tears began to fall from those gentle eyes as her face scrunched up. Even now though, she didn't cry out loudly, or do anything that could draw the zombies to them, just sitting there sobbing.

Haposai shook his head sadly and reached out to touch her head gently. He couldn't very well pull her into a hug now could he, the size difference alone, it just wouldn't be conducive to him comforting her. "I'm sorry I didn't arrive sooner my dear, if I had maybe I could have saved them. As it is, they all have gone to a better place. Be thankful they aren't still out there, preying on the living."

Kasumi continued to sniffle and cry for a bit, but she eventually recovered enough to ask "So, So what do we do now grandfather, where are going to go?"

"That is indeed the question my dear." Haposai turned slightly to stare out over the city, more so that when he blew out the smoke from his pipe he wouldn't be doing it into the girl's face than anything else. "That is indeed the

question. Tell me, did Soun ever talk about his fellow student Genma Saotome?"

OOOOOOOOOO

From practically the moment she returned from her excursion with Ranma, Saya had gone back to her given task, that of thinking long term. She knew that the Internet would not be up for long, it would shut down in bits and pieces as the wireless and then the LAN lines failed, when maintenance the buildings housing the bits and pieces of the system were destroyed. So she worked as fast as possible, thinking of their long-term plans and trying to work out any logistical issues she could find ready solutions for, especially the ones their long term living conditions would cause and downloading any and all information she could find.

Living on an island was a good idea defensively, they had already seen that the zombies could not cross water, in point of fact they seemed to not understand it at all, and shied away from it in any sort of amounts. Why that was she didn't know, but she supposed that so long as there wasn't already a zombie aboard any given ship then that ship would be safe until it put into port. Of course they had already seen how quickly something like this could spread, but at least it hopefully meant that the submarines around the world would be all right for as long as their food lasted, not that it was something she needed to worry about, she had more than enough on her plate, thank you very much.

The problem is that my prediction is going to be spot on, I just know it: Society as a whole is going to crumble from this! There are just too few soldiers and policemen to far too many civilians for something like this to be contained. Maybe if it was just happening only in, say Japan, or Australia or maybe even the UK, it could be contained. Probably by nuking the hell out of every square inch of the islands, but it could be contained. But there were reports from America, China, hell, most of Russia had gone silent within the first few hours of this. There was probably a security response though, those paranoid idiots probably think this was some kind of biological attack on them but there's no telling when or if this will ever stop. No place near here is going to be safe, not in the long term, not without a lot more resources than we have access to right now.

So moving out to an island was a good idea defensively, but it came with its own problems. She looked up to a few sites that dealt with living on islands, especially small ones which didn't have a lot of industry, land for cultivation or housing. *Food won't be an issue for a while though, there aren't that many of us, we won't need that much arable land, and we can get a lot of our food from the sea. Obviously rice is going to be something we just won't be able to grow, it's too land and water intensive. But rice we can come up with on the way there and bring with us or go out and take.* "Saeko and Ranma together are a major resource in more ways than one," she muttered to herself and looked up as someone else interrupted her thoughts.

"What sort of resources do you think they are?" Said Kyoko, coming in from the kitchen where she had been cooking dinner. They were close to clearing out the kitchen of all its food, but in the long-term that didn't matter, since they would be moving on soon.

Saya motioned Kyoko over to sit next to her. In comparison to the other people in their group Kyoko seemed much like Saya in wanting to identify and solve problems before they actually turned up, making her valuable sounding board for Saya's ideas. "If society is crumbling what are we going to use for money?" said Saya looking at her

Kyoko paused thoughtfully and then nodded. "You're talking about a barter system aren't you? Trading goods for services rather than an exchange of currency? A assume that the concept of what riches are will be changing. After all why would jewelry money or anything of that nature be important when you have to fight day by day just to survive?"

"Exactly," said Saya, nodding. She was happy that the other woman had seen that so quickly. "That's it exactly. And in this kind of world people who can survive and move around easily are going to be few and far between."

"So you think we could barter Saeko and Ranma's skill set? As trainers or as what exactly? I don't think using them as trainers would work as that would take quite a long time for them to train someone else, and that would probably be time spent away from the group or force us to join said group long term, which would open us up to other issues."

Not mentioned outright was the fact that most of them would not survive without the two martial artists around. Takashi and Rei were good, and Kohta was excellent with any kind of firearm but in this kind of environment their skills wouldn't be enough to protect the others. Saya and Kyoko were both honest with them themselves enough to realize that in a fight they were a liability not a positive, and Yuuki, Alice and Shizuka were much the same. Yuuki could probably swing a mean wrench in a pinch, and Kyoko could shoot a crossbow alright, but that didn't really add to their martial ability much.

"No," the pink-haired girl said coldly, "Nothing like that. But eventually cities are going to be labeled no go zones, but

they are where most of the food is stored, hell most of the clothing and other goods are stored in cities. So eventually you'll need people to go in and transport stuff back out. Saeko and Ranma would be excellent for that, especially given that Ranma is so strong physically. I bet Saeko could lift quite a lot too."

Kyoko nodded thoughtfully. Saeko and Rei were at that moment out on the balcony on guard duty, while Yuuki was still busy doing what she could to silence the engine of the Hummer. "I can see that for after we get situated, but you realize that living on an island small enough for us to defend will have its own issues? Energy, drinkable water, the long-term effects of wind and rain, and food all come to mind."

Saya nodded motioning back to her screen. "The mall on the other side of the river has a hunting store that we're going to have to hit up before we do anything else, certainly before we leave the city. It'll have stuff for fishing and other stuff like that. And Ranma said he knows how to live off the land, which I assume means he can teach us, and I downloaded everything I could about farming, household maintenance, fishing... everything I could think of really. I've also downloaded as much information as I could about how to prevent issues like rust and other things to occur, and have lists of items we need to grab before we leave the city, but I hope we can grab most of that from the mall or the major grocery store nearby."

"We could also look into grabbing a generator if it's not too heavy, though transporting it would be another issue entirely though that would reinforce the fuel problem of course. Again something to consider once we're situated. Getting there will be maybe a third of the battle, preparing the island for long-term habitation will be another third, and living there the last bit. We'll have to figure out some way of using waterpower I suppose in the long term, which I also looked into." Her laptop had been very busy today.

"Have you thought of a target island yet, and what about a ship?"

"I have. It's not huge, but it's fast and spacious inside, and is more than enough for all of us plus whatever we can carry aboard. There's also something of a poetic feel to us appropriating it," She smirked at a hidden joke at those words, but did not elaborate further on that point. "We may have a problem with fuel in the short term, but not in the long term I don't think. In terms of the island I'm thinking of shooting for Hachijō-kojima or Gajajima. Both would have houses already there, though badly in need of repair and refurbishment obviously, and both islands are large enough for use to create a farm or something and are small enough for us to defend too. Maybe one of the islands the fishing fleets sometimes use if they aren't inhabited would be better, but those would be my first choices."

Kyoko nodded. "In all honesty there is no single perfect solution to this. Moving out to an island brings with it its own problems, but I agree they're easier problems than those we'll face staying on the main islands. I suppose we could meet up with a larger group and simply allow ourselves to be absorbed into them. That would give us a higher rate of survival I suppose, but only for the short term. In the long term any such group no matter how official they are at the beginning will be worn down by the circumstances they find themselves in."

Saya nodded. "I don't know about you but I'm not going to allow myself to be controlled by any other group. Most of them would simply see me and the others as children that needed to be protected, controlled or used, not even considering how much we've lived through."

Kyoko nodded again. "I can understand that obviously, still, dinner is almost ready, put it away for now while I go get the others."

Saya muttered a little but shut off the computer willingly, leaving it where it was on the sofa. She then checked the battery charge, and took out the battery seeing it was fully charged before unclipping the computer from the wall mount. That gave them four full batteries to use while on the move, and she put the computer in its case for now.

Kyoko found Yuuki and Kohta still working on the engine, or at least Yuuki was working on the engine. Kohta was simply standing there handing her things and she asked. The fact that this allowed him to stand behind her and stare at her rear as she was working on the engine was more than enough incentive, and Kyoko smiled a little at how Yuuki flirted with the boy. It was a very physical sort of thing that didn't seem to have much emotional attachment behind it, but it seemed to make the boy happy, which was all to the good at this point. Whether something long term and stable would occur she couldn't guess.

She called down to them softly, not wanting to make any noise even now with so few zombies around. "Hey you two, it's time for dinner."

Yuuki looked up nodding. "I'll be there in a few minutes, I'm almost done here. Well, done with what I can do without a machine shop anyway." She had fit sound dampening material around the casing of the engine, but she had to be careful not to let it touch any of the actual parts in case of overheating. After that she had raised the engine a little in

its case which had been extremely difficult even with Saeko and Kohta's help, but she had finished it, and had just finished installing more sound dampening material on the actual bonnet. It would still make a little noise, but would in no way sound like the deep dangerous thrum it had before. Of course it would still attract zombies but the sound wouldn't travel far, which meant less zombies in general would be attracted to them.

After a final check she closed the bonnet stepping back and making certain it fit snugly before nodding. "Good, looks like that'll work." That done, she looked up at Saeko who nodded and dropped a rope down to them. Without Ranma here getting up to the balcony was difficult, but none of them wanted to remove the barricade around the door just in case.

Yuuki scrambled up the rope easily enough, having stayed in shape most of her life via dancing and other exercises. Kohta had much more trouble, but Saeko simply told him to wrap the rope around himself and she pulled him up rather easily. Helping him over the guard rail was another issue, but Rei helped a little there by pushing him along.

By that time dinner was ready, and with the help of Alice Kyoko brought the watchers some food. It was simple fare, sandwiches and a bowl of oden, but it was filling and the two girls took it gratefully.

Saeko smiled as she took her plates from Alice, patting the little girl on the head. "Thank you Alice-chan," she said then moved over to sit back down on the balcony floor, leaning against the glass of the door frame so that Rei could have the chair. Alice smiled happily at her, then ran off downstairs to get her own meal along with the still-unnamed puppy who was always following her. Saeko smiled at the sight then turned back to look out over the city.

Rei did the same, and the two girls, who despite the fact that they were both martial artists (though nowhere near as seriously in Rei's case as Saeko's) didn't have much in common stayed silent, just keeping vigil and slowly eating their meal.

Kyoko rejoined the others in the kitchen, where Shizuka had just finished enveloping Alice in one of her patented breast engulfing hugs thanking the little girl for her part in bringing the watchers some food. Yuuki moved through the kitchen, intending to have a bath for anything else. Who knew when they would next have hot water after all, and she had both worked up a sweat working on the engine and was covered in grease.

The other sat down to eat, with Alice interrupting any conversation of a serious nature and making all of them talk about other things such as TV shows, toys and anything else she could think of.

Saya resented this a little, as her job wasn't even halfway done, but she knew she needed a break. Her eyes had been bothering her after all, and she leaned back wearily rubbing at them, her glasses on the table next to her plate.

"Are you okay onee-chan?" Asked Alice looking at her

Saya reached over and gave the little girl a noogie. "I told you brat that's -sama to you."

Shizuka giggled a little. "I don't know about that, weren't you always telling Takashi and your other friends you want to be known just as Saya rather than Takagi? Shouldn't that mean that it you don't get the sama if you're not a high-born girl?"

Saya opened her mouth to reply then paused and changed what she was going to say. "That's beside the point, I'm older than her I should get the respectful term."

"We're older than you," Kyoko said dryly reaching forward to grab another sandwich from the plate at the center of the small table. "Do we get called -san at the very least?"

Saya blustered a little but subsided quickly. She caught Kohta looking at her and said "what are you looking at fat man?"

Shizuka shook her head, pouting a little. "That's rude Saya-chan."

Saya smirked at her. "All I'm doing is calling him what he is, an awesome shooter who is also fat!"

Kohta pouted a little poking at the table. There had been a time when he had had a major crush on Saya, but her abrasive attitude and the looks she sent Ranma's way and some of the time had dissuaded him from doing anything about it.

Saya grinned a little. "I don't mean anything by Komuro," she said "I just like to insult people that's all."

"Oh," said Kyoko looking at her. "So what do you call Shizuka and I?"

"Evil megane and thunder tits," Saya responded promptly. Kyoko's name came from her habit of glaring through her glasses at anyone who displeased her back before all this began, and Shizuka's name was self-explanatory. The entire table looked at her silently for a moment then they all laughed.

At this point Yuuki came back from her quick shower, and came back in wearing another loose t-shirt and baggy cargo shorts. She grabbed a sandwich before sitting down across from Kohta leaning back in a chair away from the table since there wasn't enough room at the table for all of them to sit there.

She crossed her legs one leg over the other, and Kohta gulped. From where he was sitting he could see right up the inside of her short's leg and could tell that she was not wearing any underwear. He started to lean to one side thinking if he got just the right angle he could possibly see the Promised Land hidden between her thighs.

Saya however recognized what he was doing and reached out quickly slapping him upside the head making him sit up straight again. "What do you think you're doing pervert!" she muttered been turned away to glare at Yuuki who smirked back at her unrepentantly, enjoying Kohta's red face and wild stare. She truly enjoyed teasing him; his reactions were just too much fun. But alas his stare didn't set her pulse to race like the one Ranma occasionally gave her, and she longed to take the wild horse for a ride. She also could not quite get over the fact Kohta's body just did not do anything for her. She wasn't against overweight guys per se, they just weren't her type.

The conversation around the table continued until about ten minutes later the lights flickered and went out and they all looked at one another in surprise. "A power outage of some kind or a fuse blowing?" asked Kyoko.

Saya shook her head, grabbing her glasses from the table and putting them on her face before running out of the kitchen. "You lot stay here I'll go see what's happening outside."

She found Saeko and Rei now standing up and looking around the city with their binoculars, frowns on their faces. "What's the matter?"

Saeko looked at her and shook her head. "Keep your voices down," she said in a near whisper. "Without all the background noise our voices will carry a lot farther. And as for what's going on, your guess will probably be better than mine, but it looks like a lot of the power around the city just failed."

The nighttime sky, which had been lit up with noises and lights of the city not moments before had now blackened considerably. They could see portions were still alive, the more modern buildings still had power, a few hotels that were in sight, but the housing district around them, composed of apartment buildings and houses, had gone silent, as had a vast majority of the rest of the city.

"What could cause this?" asked Rei in her normal voice.

Saeko stared at her. "Did I not just say to keep your voice down Miyamoto-san?"

Rei glared at her, even knowing that it was good advice she didn't like being ordered around. Added to that irritation she was feeling off balance with this newest disaster added on everything else and without Takashi around to lean on. "Who died and put you in charge?"

"No one died," responded Saeko, still in a quiet voice and motioning Rei do the same, her gaze perceptively harder now. "Ranma left and I am in charge in his absence, simple."

"I don't remember agreeing to that!" said Rei now her voice rising.

She stopped speaking when Saeko reached out suddenly grabbing her around her mouth and silencing her. "You will be silent." said Saeko. "In this kind of environment voices will bring them down on us faster than anything."

Already in the distance they could see that one house had drawn several dozen zombies into its lawn because of the continued noise of the owners' voices now carrying outside the house. Ironically it was the same house whose inhabitants had killed Alice's father.

Saya nodded speaking softly herself. "Come inside," she said motioning the other girl into the apartment. "We should probably make sure everyone else is being quiet too. No lights or anything, just bunker down and wait for Ranma and Takashi to come back."

Rei growled a little looking over at Saeko fiercely as the swordswoman released her grip on the brunette's mouth.

"This isn't over," she whispered. "You and Ranma may be the toughest of us that but that doesn't make you our leaders."

"I rather think it does," replied Saeko smirking a little, "but if you wish to debate the point further we can always do so later. For now go inside Miyamoto-san, I will keep watch here." Rei growled a little, but went inside without further protest, leaving the purple haired woman to keep watch for her lover and Takashi alone.

OOOOOO

Takashi and Ranma had sped back to the apartment as fast as Ranma speed could carry them. Ranma was actually happy that whatever had happened to the lights and electricity had happened as it seemed to have knocked Takashi out of his grief stricken partial paralysis. Now he was looking around his eyes hard and grimmer then they had been, but given what had happened that was no real surprise.

Just as they were about to enter the housing district that held the apartment complex Ranma stopped on a small store's roof, motioning Takashi to get off his back and follow him to the center of the roof.

"What is it?" asked Takashi looking at him quizzically.

Ranma grabbed at his pigtail pulling at it. "Lock I'm just going to come out and say this, I ain't a psychologist, I'm not gonna head shrink you or anything, but if I was in your position I'd be incredibly angry and I'd want ta take my anger out on something." He motioned over the side of the roof. "There's about 10 zombies down there, and we can make you a makeshift weapon to use easily enough. Do you want to stay here and kill a few of them before we head back?"

Takashi thought about it for a minute then nodded. "That, that actually might make me feel better."

Ranma nodded and reached over to a piece of piping that was running along one edge of the roof. He ripped it off easily, though it came free with a bit of the brick still attached, but as a weapon that was more of a positive than a negative. He handed it over to Takashi who took a few practice swings with it and nodded, finding that it wasn't too heavy to move. Ranma grabbed him around the shoulders with one arm, and jumped down to the street about fifty paces from the clump of zombies. The thump of their landing brought the zombies head's up and they began to move towards the two men but Ranma and Takashi grinned at one another and then charged forward them.

Despite what had happened to his mother Takashi wasn't completely reckless as the two of them charged the zombies, which was something Ranma had feared. He didn't race forward by himself, he stayed by Ranma's side and never got himself into trouble overextending or lunging. But his face was a set in a grimace of rage and his eyes were red with grief.

Ranma simply killed the zombies as they came at him, watching Takashi's back for him and letting him get his anger out, there just weren't enough zombies here to really get his blood pumping. Soon enough the last zombie went down, a fat man that had apparently been bitten on his ear which was missing entirely.

"You feel better?" said Ranma looking over the other boy.

Takashi sighed, dropping his weapon with a clang, though there were thankfully no other zombies around to hear it, "A little, I guess."

"Good," said Ranma. He looked around then smiled at seeing they were in front of a small produce store. He motioned Takashi to follow him, and the boy did. Once inside the two teens grabbed two bags worth of mixed fruit. This act of larceny seemed to cheer Takashi up a bit more and the two left quickly, with Takashi once more taking up position on Ranma's back.

Five minutes later they had reached the apartment, where they saw Saeko waiting outside on the balcony. She raised her hand silently and Ranma swiftly landed beside her, letting Takashi off his back and putting the bags down before moving to give her a hug. Saeko returned the hug, smiling at hearing Ranma let out a purr as her hand gently rubbed his neck ,his eyes closing in pleasure before he shook himself and moved back, though not too far, their arms around one another's waist. "Any problems here?" he asked, keeping his voice down.

Saeko shook her head, "Nothing of consequence." Ranma looked at her knowing that the last time she had mentioned that phrase she had actually run into a few would-be rapists and killed them. Saeko smiled at his look and simply shook her head. "Really, nothing happened. Rei was simply being Rei for a moment. She waved her hands at the half dark, half still lit city. "I think we can assume nothing will happen for a while so let's all go inside. I think we need to talk about how this power outage will change our plans." Ranma was a little skeptical of not leaving a guard,

but nodded all the same and the three of them went inside and then down to the first level, where they found the others waiting for them.

The group had taken out two of the flashlights and was using them as lights in the sitting room. After picking up Alice from where she had tried to tackle his legs (his legs were rather hard after all, it wouldn't do to let the little girl hurt herself) Ranma nodded at the makeshift lights. "So whatever happened didn't affect those?"

Saya shook her head, blushing a little as Ranma sat next to her on the coach, bumping her shoulder with his while Saeko sat on his other side. He sat the two bags of fruit on the table, and everyone responded gleefully reaching in and picking out some tangerines and apples and even a bag of cherries, though Saya ordered them all to put the seeds in small baggy from the kitchen. For a few minutes everyone was busy eating the fruity delicacy, knowing it was going to be a while before they enjoyed anything as fresh again.

Kohta stared in shock as Yuuki took a cherry stem and all into her mouth then somehow twisted the stem into a knot, which she showed them all by sticking it out on the end of her tongue, wagging it around. Takashi and Kohta both looked at the sight blushing, Takashi's grief at his mother's death disappearing for a moment overridden by other emotions. The girls had a variety of reactions, ranging from rolling their eyes to chuckling to glaring (Rei), while Shizuka immediately grabbed a cherry stem and began to try the same thing, pouting outrageously every time she failed. Ranma didn't notice as he was talking to Alice who had tried to come up with new names for his meteor hammer, which he shot down one after another. Yuuki pouted at that but shrugged, thinking two out of three wasn't bad.

Eventually however, Saya swallowed the last bit of tangerine and addressed Ranma's initial question. "What happened was an electromagnetic pulse, probably caused by a nuke blowing up in low atmosphere to spread as far as it did. I don't know if it was meant to go off where it did or if it was aimed here or something, but it'll only effect unshielded things. For example if I had been working on my laptop at the time it might've fried it. Since it was turned off and is one of the most durable laptops out there, it'll be fine. Hell, if I remember right it's one of their slogans, 'so hard a nuke can't kill it'. At least I hope so, I'll check it out later. Simple things like flashlights that were turned off without batteries in them at the time aren't going to be effected."

While Shizuka grabbed up Alice in a hug, Kohta asked, "If it was from a nuke and deliberate what would've been the target? Tokonsou isn't that important, unless it was aimed at the International airport?"

"I bet it was a nuke, and it was aimed here too," said Ranma coldly, looking up at them. "It's actually a good plan after all," he went on as the others save Kohta and Saeko looked at him aghast. "Take out all the cities of the world and you take out the majority of the population that is going to be zombie-fied."

Kohta nodded agreement. "That way you save your military assets for areas that you might save."

Saya paused thinking that through then nodded. "Russia certainly would have done something that ruthless, and maybe America too if they panicked a little. Most of their military installations after all aren't in cities, and that would leave the military able to move out into the countryside and take control there like Kohta said."

"But why Japan?" Kyoko asked, looking a little green at the idea she might have been at ground zero of a nuke attack. "Why would any of the nuclear armed superpowers send nukes at us? Would they have that many to spare and still be able to... to use on their own cities?"

"America wouldn't be able to nuke itself, but they might have sent them at China or Russia and assume they'd be nuked back, that way their people couldn't blame them. So it probably wasn't aimed here," said Kohta thoughtfully. "There's some Aegis armed military ships on our coast, one of them probably shot it down but I bet it was originally aimed at China."

"Great," said Yuuki rubbing her forehead. "So not only do we have to worry about zombies, but we have to worry about nukes coming down out of nowhere to fry us and of course if it hits anywhere nearby the radiation will get us!"

"Don't be ridiculous," said Saya forcefully. "Japan's not a nuclear power, and we didn't have enough of a military to be more than an irritant to China. Even with our proximity to them, we're well down the list of targets for them or any other country in terms of a nuclear war. And even if we were a target there's nothing we can do about it! The best we could do for ourselves is to concentrate on the here and now and the problems we can do something about!"

Ranma looked at her admiringly nodding his head, and Saya blushed a little a little at the look in his eyes. She blushed further as she leaned back, causing her breasts to bounce a little as she saw his eyes track down to them before swiftly rising again to concentrate solely on her face. "T-the problem i-is that several areas around the city was

unshielded or protected in other ways and even shielded tech would have still had their breakers tripped."

"Which means that people would have to go out and solve the issue, people that are zombies now or are afraid of the zombies." said Kyoko slowly, shaking her head.

"So if any sound attract these assholes and without the sounds of the city around us we'll have to be extra careful right?" asked Rei.

"Pretty much," said Saya, shaking her head a little. "In fact given the silence of the city we may have to leave the Hummer. "If it can't be completely silenced then it's going to bring down a lot more zombies than we would if we were traveling on foot."

Saya frowned, going on even more seriously. "The places with lights and power will attract people, which in turn will attract zombies. On top of that any generator causes a lot of noise by itself when it activates and is working, so that will attract even more zombies."

Places like my parent's mansion, she thought to herself, a pang of fear going through her. Despite having tried again only a few hours before the power went off she hadn't been able to contact her parents.

"So essentially," Ranma said summarizing, "this thing hurried the death of the city, and means we need to get a move on sooner than we thought?"

"That's it in a nutshell," Kyoko nodded before changing the subject looking at the two boys, unable to contain her curiosity any longer. "But how did your little trip go? I notice you didn't bring anyone back."

Takashi flinched a bit then looked away and Ranma sighed, shaking his head. Saeko nodded sadly in understanding and Yuuki and Kyoko both winced in sympathy, looking at Takashi sadly.

Rei wasn't so good at picking up on subtle cues however, and just assumed that they hadn't found the trail and said "So no sign of her?"

Takashi glared a little at her. "No damnit she was already made into a zombie! Ranma went in and found she hadn't even made it out of her classroom because she was trying to do her job, protecting her students and one of the little fuckers had already turned and bit her! There, you happy?!" With that he turned and stalked off up the staircase, while Rei stared after him aghast.

Kyoko however swiftly stood up. "He shouldn't be alone; I'll go talk to him."

"Wait maybe I should," said Rei getting up from her chair alongside the coffee table.

Kyoko shook her head. "Wait until he's calmed down a bit, then go and console them. Since you're the one that set him off he might not want to talk to you right away."

Yuuki looked at Shizuka, her face unusually serious. "How do you think this is going to affect him?"

"What do you mean?" said Rei sharply looking at her. "He'll be just fine, he'll get over this." She couldn't afford for him not to. While the others looked to Ranma as their rock, Takashi was hers and hers alone. *You can't fall apart on me Takashi, not now, not when I need you.*

Saya looked back at her a little coldly. "Seeing his own mother zombie-fied, how could it not affect him? But I want to know is he going to be a problem? Is he going to run to the nearest group of zombies and throw himself at them, or will he be able to work with the group? Will we be able to rely on him?"

Ranma shrugged. "We stopped on the way here and I let him get some of his anger out, figured it'd work for me, don't know if it helped him in the long run or not. He seemed to keep control of himself pretty well, didn't go crazy or anything, didn't try to leave me behind or keep attacking 'em after they went down."

The two looked at Shizuka who shook her head sadly, her normal ditzzy nature in abeyance for the moment since this was a sort of a medical issue. "I've read a few psychology books, but I'm no expert. I can imagine that he'll be a little more prone to mistakes, a little more prone to lashing out, his anger will be just below the surface. We'll need to keep an eye on him, make him realize that he's got things to fight for, things to live for, even if he doesn't have his family with him."

Alice piped up nodding seriously as if she had followed most of the conversation. "We can be his new family right?"

They all looked at the little girl and then Shizuka giggled then picked her up and pulled her into another patented face first hug. "That's right, we'll be his new family." She agreed, ignoring the fact the little girl was now waving her hands frantically, her head having disappeared entirely into the voluptuous teacher's tits.

Saeko smirked a little looking over at Ranma. "Well I know what I fight for, maybe some of the same would be in order for him."

Ranma shivered a little and shook his head. "Don't look at me when you say that, he's not my type." The two of them laughed a little, while Yuuki blushed and lost herself in a yaoi fantasy for the second time that day.

She was brought back to earth however when Saya slapped the table far more gently than she felt doing at that moment, since even in here and she didn't want to make a lot of noise. "The problem is, what are we going to do from now on? I realize we wanted to stay here at least another night, but I think we should get the hell out of dodge now."

Ranma frowned a little. "Moving at night? I don't think that's such a good idea. Even on foot we'd make noise, and without the lights of the city even I'd have a hard time spotting zombies before they jumped us with all the shadows and everything."

Saya frowned but nodded agreement. *I really don't like the idea of staying here, but moving would be even worse at night I guess.* "All right but we have to keep watch throughout the night. And I mean a quiet watch, whoever's out there will need to keep quiet as quiet as possible. I'd recommend teams of two at least."

And when we move I'm afraid we'll have to leave the Hummer behind a mess want to run into a lot of zombies on the way.

"Hey wait," Yuuki said angrily, "I put a lot of work into quieting that thing's engine down. We can't just leave it here!"

"And on a scale of 1 to 10, how quiet is it?" asked Saya calmly looking back at her.

Yuuki frowned but answered honestly. "I'd say around four or five honestly."

Kohta held up a hand, anxious to help the girl who was constantly flirting with him. "Hold on a minute, the Hummer represents a lot of lifting capacity. We've gathered a lot of supplies here, foodstuffs, water bottles and everything else, in the assumption that we would be able to use the Hummer. If we leave it behind we won't have nearly as much supplies. You said once you wanted us to hit up the mall for some fishing and camping supplies? Well, we wouldn't be able to carry nearly as much without the Hummer."

Ranma nodded. "I could probably carry a lot, but I can't carry as much as the Hummer, and even if I did I wouldn't be free to fight."

"Fine then, **you** figure out a way we can take the Hummer without bringing every zombie within hearing range down on us!" said Saya irritably pushing her glasses back into position and glaring at them all.

Ranma's pulled at his pigtail thoughtfully looking up at the wall for a moment. "I suppose Saeko and I could head out someplace and start making noise somewhere else off our route, shouting and yelling and bringing them down on us, then meet up with you somewhere else?"

"no, responded Saya firmly not even letting the others protest first, though save Saeko they all nodded agreement with her. "You two represent most of our fighting strength, no offense Kohta, Rei, but the point about noise definitely goes for your guns too."

Kohta, pouted poking the table irritably muttering, "I never get to have any fun."

"What was that?" asked Saya sharply, looking over him.

He shook his head rapidly. "Nothing, I didn't say anything."

"That's what I thought."

Saeko however looked at Kohta questioningly then over at Yuuki. "Would a gun noise be louder than the Hummer you think?"

"It certainly would be quieter than a machine gun or something like that," said Yuuki, "but a single shot rifle, I don't know, the noise would be ongoing rather than sudden slaps of sound."

Ranma however jumped on the idea of using a decoy noise like that, and asked excitedly "did your friend have anything like a Walkman or anything like that here Shizuka-chan?"

"I think so," Shizuka brightening up a little "why, do you want to listen to music?" That sounded like a nice idea after a trying day.

Ranma shook his head quickly, "Not right now, but I think the zombies might like a concert."

The others all looked at him and then realized what he was thinking and grinned. "I'll go see if I can find it," Shizuka said standing up quickly, with Alice following her.

Ranma turned back to Saya and the others. "Kohta," he said looking at the shooter. "Pick out the one gun in your collection which makes the loudest noise, we might be forced to leave it behind. Saya-chan, you go through our electronic stuff that radio you grabbed, the walkie-talkies and everything else we grabbed yesterday. "If it doesn't work we leave it."

Saya frowned a little but nodded anyway. "If the computer doesn't work, we can probably fix it from parts from a electronics store at the mall on the other side of the river, and we might be able to replace everything else too if we have to, it'll just give us more stuff to pick up there."

Ranma nodded. "We'll think about that once we're on the other side and meet up with Rei's and my mothers. I hope that won't cost Takashi trouble."

Saya shrugged. "We'll just have to cross that bridge when we come to it."

"So are we going to leave tonight?" said Saeko looking at Ranma.

Ranma shook his head. "No, we'll definitely stay here tonight whatever happens. Moving at night is just too dangerous with the zombies out there like I said." He might not have a problem with it, and maybe Saeko, since she was learning how to roof-hop, but the others couldn't follow him if they went that route, and anything else at night was just asking to be attacked.

The others all nodded, and he went on. "The rest of you start packing stuff up, use those duffel bags Saeko-chan grabbed this, food that'll keep, clothing and water bottles. Tools too, though I bet this thing fried the power tools we grabbed."

Yuuki groaned aloud. "That's the second god damned tool set I've had to ditch."

"Worry about tools later," said Saya, "we can resupplied those at the mall too you know."

The others all nodded, and stood up to go about their various tasks.

OOOOOOOOOO

While the others were brainstorming, Kyoko had easily found Takashi out on the balcony, thankfully un-armed, since none of them trusted him to make rational decisions if given a gun at this point. He was just sitting there slumped in the chair they'd put out there for the person on guard duty. She gently sat down next to him on the balcony floor, reaching to take the hand resting along the armrest near her in both of her own.

Takashi jumped at the sudden contact, then looked down at her for a moment, blushing. From this angle he could see straight down her shirt, a good blouse she had taken from Rika's dresser that barely fit her chest, forcing her to have several buttons undone. The sight of her gently moving tits, barely held back by a lacy red bra made him completely forget anything else for a moment, before he shook himself and looked away.

Kyoko smiled faintly, it had always been an illicit thrill for her when one of the young boys-turning-into-men looked at her in such a fashion, especially someone like Takashi, who was a handsome, clean cut teen, who to her knowledge had never been in trouble before. *He's also very handsome*, she thought, *not as handsome as Ranma perhaps, but not too far off*. Suddenly a new way to make Takashi concentrate on the here and now came to her, and she fought down a smile.

She waited until he composed himself to speak frowning a little as his face grew melancholy once more. "I'm not even going to pretend I know what you're going through Takashi-san, just know that I'm here to listen if you ever need to talk."

Takashi frowned a little, looking away and banging his free hand on the armrest. He meant to bang both fists, but Kyoko had yet to relinquish her grip on his hand. "It's just, it's all so pointless! Why the fuck is this happening, why the fuck couldn't we get there in time, why her, my mom never did anything to anyone! Why'd she have to die! Wh-what the hell am I supposed to do now!?"

Kyoko frowned as she heard the despair in his voice, the grief and rage bubbling just below the surface. She spoke slowly, keeping her voice calm yet inviting. "This infection doesn't care about its victims, or whether or not they deserve it, it simply infects. And, I'm sorry to say this, but even if we could have made our way straight to the school she was working at, there was no guarantee we could have gotten there in time to save her. Sometimes, things happen that are beyond our control, and we have to live with them, even if we have lost someone we love. We have to go on, not just for ourselves, but because that is what our loved ones would want. Do you think that your mother would want you to follow her into death, or live with those that care for you?"

"I know all that damnit! It doesn't make it any easier!" Takashi growled angrily, his voice rising, but he subsided as Kyoko gave him her patented teacher's glare. He went on though, his words just as biting but his voice far quieter. "It doesn't make it any easier to know that I'll never see her smile in the mornings when I leave for school, to never see her laugh as she watches a comedy show on TV, never... never..." He began to cry, his tears falling down into his lap.

Kyoko frowned internally not liking the fact that Takashi missed her hints about living for those around him, but then she had another thought. Outside however she simply continued to smile, gently caressing his hand, which had a calming effect much like it would on a dog or cat. "Why don't you tell me about her? Only good memories, of course."

Takashi looked at her then began to talk. For the next hour or so he told her about his mother, some of the things they had done together, some family events she had particularly enjoyed.

Through it all Kyoko kept hold of his hand, nodding at appropriate points, simply letting him get it out, letting him remember the good points. When it was obvious he had finished, she leaned in to whisper into his ear. "Let your memories of her sustain you, but don't forget that the rest of us are in the here and now, and we depend on you. There are things to live for right in front of you, you know."

Takashi gulped, turning to stare at her from barely an inch away. "L-like what?"

Kyoko smiled and tilted her head slightly, leaning in to peck him on the lips, before standing up smoothly. "I'm sure you'll figure it out."

She moved inside, frowning as she saw Rei there, wondering how long she had been standing there.

Rei glowered at Kyoko, her eyes full of possessive fury. "Stay away from him, he's mine!"

"Oh, like he was before this all began? People are not things you can own, Miyamoto-san. So long as you treat him as an object that's only worth something when you require his help, why should he continue to care about you?" She sighed. "I'm not particularly interested in Takashi at the moment but you cannot keep treating him as you have and expect one of us not to move in on him, Rei-san. Not in times like this, when every moment is precious, and death could come at any time. We all need to take what joy we can."

Rei frowned looking away. "I, I know I treated him badly back at school, it's just, he, I, I don't know why, but at the time he wasn't what I wanted him to be." Well she knew why, at the time she wanted someone who could concentrate solely on her, change his life to make her the center of his world, and Takashi wasn't up to giving her that much attention. She of course wasn't going to share that with Kyoko. She turned, glaring angrily at the teacher. "Now though, he is, and I am getting better. I won't let any of you just sweep in and manipulate him."

Kyoko shrugged her shoulders. "How exactly did I manipulate him? I merely pointed out that there are things to live for. Given what I did, that could well be you, you know." Rei stiffened and looked away all her anger gone replaced by confusion. Kyoko sighed. "Rei-san, you will never solve the issues lying between you two if you keep them bottled up inside. Talk to him, offer him a shoulder to cry on now, and then at some point bring up your own issues. Trust me, he'll listen." With that Kyoko walked off, heading downstairs to join the packing efforts.

Rei stood there for a moment, her face scrunched up in worry, but after a few minutes her face firmed with decision and she walked out onto the balcony. "Hey, Takashi um, I'm sorry about what I said downstairs, if I had known, I would never have pressed you like that." Takashi made to speak, but Rei reached forward, placing a finger on his lips. "Wait, I, I've got other things to say, other things to apologize for. You see, something happened last year..."

OOOOOOOOO

Saeko and Ranma volunteered to keep watch that night while the rest continued their work on packing until that was finished then bedded down for the rest of the night. One of the purloined mattresses was moved upstairs, and Takashi bedded down there before taking his turn, while Alice and the two teachers again took the bed, though this time Alice carefully put Kyoko in the center between her and the grabby/restless Shizuka. Rei slept downstairs, though not until shooting another glare at Kyoko, who simply raised an eyebrow in response, but made no move to get out of the bed and join Takashi on the mattress. Despite what Rei might have thought she wasn't interested in Takashi, not to that extent anyway.

Saeko and Ranma sat in the chair out on the balcony together, with Saeko sitting on Ranma's lap, enjoying the feel of his arms around her. Of them all, Saeko and Ranma were the most quick to acclimate to the new reality around them, and in fact both found it quite fun, or would if not for the emotional angst that Alice and Takashi had gone through and the continuing worry about everyone else's family, so simply enjoyed the comfort they could have in moments like this without worrying about what could happen later. The two of them talked very quietly to one another, and occasionally kissing.

Saeko deliberately ground her rear against his rising excitement and Ranma felt the urge to take it further. In fact he wanted to bend Saeko over the railing and make her scream his name to the night sky, an image that he could only too well picture. Ranma fought the feeling down promising himself there would be time for that later. His newly awakened lustful side subsided after a few moments to controllable levels, but his tomcat aspect really didn't see the danger, but he controlled it. Not an easy task, especially with Saeko's warm, inviting body in his lap, especially not when she turned and pressed her breasts into his chest to give him a kiss complete with tongue, but he did it.

Ranma was still astonished at how quickly his desire for sex had grown so strong. Whenever he was around one of the girls his tomcat instincts began to yowl at him to claim the females in front of him. His control was still enough, but it was weakening slowly.

Saeko too was having issues controlling her libido, the two times she had been with Ranma so far, (or three if you counted their encounter in the kitchen that had been so abruptly interrupted) the feelings both physical and emotional had been beyond anything she had ever felt or even dreamed of before. She desperately wanted to feel it again, but knew this was neither the time nor the place.

Besides which, she had something she wanted to talk to him about. "Ranma, we need to talk about something, something important," she said, leaning back and reaching up behind her to trace his jaw.

Ranma shivered, his eyes nearly closing in delight at her touch but he responded quickly, his voice husky, sending a shiver down her back in turn. "Talk about what?"

"Saya and her attraction to you, as well as Shizuka's for certain, and possibly Yuuki as well."

Ranma blanched leaning back and his eyes going wide, almost panicky. "I, um I've never, I mean..."

Saeko giggled a little, covering her mouth with one hand to stifle the sound. "I know that koi, but it is something we need to talk about. But you are attracted to Saya at the very least aren't you?"

Ranma gulped, but nodded, knowing there was no point in lying about it even if he wanted to, which he didn't. Keeping secrets from his girlfriend was obviously a stupid thing to do, and he didn't want to even try. That didn't mean he was going to bring up his little momentary loss of control from the other night however.

However Saeko simply took this in stride. "I could tell that even before this all began my love. Back then I would not have been nearly as accommodating to it, but given the world we live in, well, all the old social mores are gone now, maybe permanently. So long as I can get along with them, I am not adverse to letting a few others join us. After all," she blushed a little, "there are certain benefits to having another girl joining us."

Ranma didn't even register the last bit, his head unable to grasp even the first part. Well his human side couldn't, his tomcat side simply saw it as the natural outcome of being an alpha male. "I, I don't... wouldn't that mean that I'd have less time to spend with you? I, I love ya, ya know, and I don't want to wreck what we have."

"Given your endurance I rather doubt you would have trouble making time for both of us," Saeko said saucily, grinding herself against him and thrilling at the sound of the purring rumble that went through him, the physical reaction she once more felt rising beneath her. "I love you koi, and that won't change. Just think about it alright?"

"Alright, I'll think about it," Ranma said looking away. He couldn't say that the idea didn't appeal to him, he was after a full blooded male and the idea of a harem or whatever would please any man, but he really didn't want to wreck what he already had to just grab something new.

"Do so," she said and reached up patting his cheek again then she leaned a little further up kissing him on the lips. She pulled back and went on. "I think everyone involved would enjoy it immensely."

The rest of their watch passed uneventfully, the two of them keeping watch and simply taking solace in one another. After three hours, they went inside and gently woke Takashi for his watch. Saeko went downstairs and quietly woke Rei to join him, which the girl did, blushing a little at the prospect of being alone with Takashi for so long, though nothing happened. Rei was too shy all of a sudden to press things, and Takashi wasn't in the right frame of mind to initiate anything.

Saeko joined Ranma in the mattress upstairs despite the chair downstairs being free now, shamelessly removing her shirt and her bra, thrilling at the look or desire this evoked in her beau. She swiftly joined him under the covers and squeaked a little when he pulled her swiftly against him, kissing her hard. Soon enough she was mewling into his mouth, their hands roaming over one another, with Saeko swiftly removing his shirt in turn, breaking the lip-lock for the minimal amount of time necessary to pull it over his head (it was one of his good Chinese shirts, and she knew he would be angry if it was torn). The two made out for several minutes and may have gone further if Shizuka hadn't chosen that moment to shift noisily in her bed, causing the two amorous teens to stop.

Even in the darkness they could see one another's faces, and the chagrin they each saw on one another's faces at once more being interrupted was almost enough to make them break out in laughter. Instead the two shared a rueful grin, and Saeko sighed then laid her head on his shoulder, nearly purring herself as one of his arms went around her. It was comforting yet at the same time possessive, and she reveled at it, closing her eyes.

OOOOOO

After that the two lovers soon fell asleep, only to be shaken awake gently to take their next watch three hours later at around five in the morning by Takashi, who blushed at the Saeko's state of undress, visible once the covers fell away when she sat up. "I-it, it's your watch," he muttered, unable to look away.

Saeko stretched, not noticing that she was putting on a bit of a show, and Ranma watched his tomcat instincts urging him to drag the girl down and rut a few hours away with her until he noticed that Takashi was also looking whereupon he growled a little warning sound. Takashi blushed and looked away but you could hardly blame him after all.

Saeko quickly got dressed in a short, tight black skirt with a slit on both sides and a blouse taken from Rika's dresser, clothing she could move in easily and that allowed her body full range of movements. She then grabbed her sword and moved outside as Ranma went downstairs to quietly grab them something to eat.

There his tomcat instincts were awoken once again, as Yuuki and Saya had between them kicked off the blanket over them, having once more had to share a mattress. Saya was asleep on her chest, her magnificent rear sticking up a little in the air. She was snuffling into her pillow, as if she was having a dream of some kind, but Ranma's tomcat instincts didn't care about that all they cared about was that the female in front of them had already taken the appropriate position, and that ass moving like that was just too much temptation.

Once again Ranma had to fight his instincts to reach out and grasp that magnificent rear and give it a squeeze, or do even more. But he was able to overcome it and moved into the kitchen, grabbing up a few of the rice balls left over from last night, the only thing that had kept through the night after the refrigerator lost power.

On the way back Yuuki had turned over, throwing off the last bit of the blanket to land on Saya which was good in a way, but exposed Yuuki's own body to Ranma's gaze and he shuddered again. Yuuki's shirt had rolled up on one side and one of her breasts was visible even in the dim light of the stars shining through one of the windows set high up alone one wall above the TV and the entertainment system.

This time he couldn't stop himself, and he reached forward with one hand hefting the visible breast and finding her not quite as big as Saya but quite a bit bigger than Saeko, more full and less toned than the other two. Ranma didn't know anything about bra sizes so didn't know that Saeko was a D cup while Saya was an F cup and Yuuki a high E.

Almost immediately Yuuki pushed up into his hand, feeling his ministrations on her breast even her sleep. Her nipple hardened, and Ranma began to play with it between two of his fingers but at this point he finally regained control of himself and backed away breathing heavily.

He raced up the stairs as silently as he could, barely even nodding at Rei, who he passed on the staircase or Takashi who just got into bed before moving outside to join Saeko.

She smiled at him waving at the chair and he sat down pulling her into his arms and kissing her fiercely.

Saeko didn't know what happened to make Ranma so randy, but didn't care either and ground herself against him happily. She was always a little horny in the morning, and that had been the normal time for her before this all began to rub one out, so she was happy to have a helping hand so to speak.

After a moment they parted lips, a thin trail of saliva connecting them which Ranma licked off her lips and then down to a sweet spot along her neck causing her to moan a little. The noise woke her up and she pulled back shaking her head. "Time and place Ranma," she muttered turning around in his arms, "time and place." She waved at the city around them and that brought Ranma out of his stupor as well, finally allowing him to regain full control of himself.

"Sorry," he muttered. "Don't know what came over me there." Well, he did but even with Saeko's surprising willingness to have other girls join them, he didn't want to bring it up, not now.

Saeko shrugged a little grinning as the action caused Ranma to look down at her chest to watch her breasts bounce, as she hadn't put on a bra just yet. Ranma groaned a little again then turned to watch as the sun rose, waiting for day to break over the ruined city. Saeko joined him, watching as the sun rose to bring light to a city now populated more by the dead than the living.

A few hours later the rest of the group began to wake up, which took a little while for most of them. Shizuka in particular was not a morning person, especially without coffee. A bit of chocolate taken from Rika's secret stash in her bedside table perked her up a bit though. She discreetly shared some with Alice, winking at the little girl who winked back seriously, grinning at the shared treat. To her side the still unnamed puppy jumped onto the bed next to her, pouncing on her hand while she waved it around, eager to play.

Around her the others got ready to move on from this safe haven, many of them with regret but with speed and efficiency all the same.

First Ranma grabbed the two heaviest bags, mostly filled with water and canned food then carried them out to the balcony and down to put them in the back of the Hummer. Then he waited there as other bags were thrown down to him and putting them away. These were filled with clothing, flashlights, un-powered tools, makeshift weapons, ammo for the guns, one of the guns, and the extra batteries for the laptop. The laptop did indeed still work, though alas it could no longer connect to the internet, the local wi-fi having gone down. Maybe eventually they would find a source that hadn't died, but for now the laptop still worked, which made Saya very happy, since she had downloaded everything she could think of when she had a chance, but hadn't been able to print it all out. The walkie-talkies and the portable radio worked when she tried them since Saya hadn't put batteries in them yet, but the cell phone she had grabbed back at school hadn't, nor had the battery chargers, which they had plugged in last evening. The loss of the cell phone would make meeting up with Rika much harder in the future, but that was the group's only real loss from the EMP. They had been very lucky in that respect.

The last bag stowed, not quite filling the back of the Hummer, he jumped up and grabbed first Takashi and then Yuuki and brought them down. Yuuki didn't flirt with Ranma this time, since Kohta could see them from where he had taken over the balcony to provide over-watch. But she knew she had felt something in the night, and knew that Kohta could never have gotten up the courage to feel her up in her sleep like that, and Takashi had slept on the second floor, never coming down. That left only Ranma and the knowledge he had finally given in to his desire for her, even if only a little, made her smile a smile saucy yet secretive smile.

Once on the ground Yuuki swiftly used a can of oil to grease the rails, an idea that had been her addition to the plan they had come up with last night. Once satisfied she had oiled the rails as much as she could Takashi and Ranma opened the gate opened slowly and almost silently, yet the little noise it gave off still roused a few nearby zombies.

Kohta shot them down with his nail gun as soon as they came within range. Thankfully there were only four of them that responded to that noise, and the rest of the group was ready to move quickly, with Ranma bringing them down one by one from the balcony. The noise of removing the barrier in front of the door would travel to far in the predawn silence of the city, much more so than the gate after Yuuki had oiled its rails.

This forced Ranma to bring them down in groups. Rei came down with Alice, while Saeko jumped down on her own and Saya carrying the laptop in its heavy duty carry case and the dog came down after. Shizuka came down third, and she made a point of sticking Ranma's head between her breasts again as he lifted her up, giggling a little at his muffled protests but Kyoko simply allowed him to grab her while she carried a bag of snack bars and the crossbow,

making no move to flirt with him.

While Kyoko knew she was still physically attracted to Ranma, she had gotten a glimpse of the darkness in both him and Saeko (and to a lesser extent Kohta) over the last few days and had decided that she wanted to keep her distance from it. While she still trusted and even liked them both it was enough to kill what little desire she had to make a move to join them. She wanted someone more stable, more peaceful and normal than Ranma alas.

When they were all down Ranma jumped up again and grabbed the guns Kohta indicated, leaving him with only one, the modified AR-10, which was the loudest by far, and the one which would be the hardest to make a silencer for.

Saeko jumped up from the balcony onto the rooftop, taking one of the binoculars with her. She would be the one to make the call to start up the hummer's engine and start to move out. "Where are you going to set up?" she asked looking over at Ranma and Kohta, who had joined her. the idea was to set up some noise in a little park about four blocks away on a diagonal from their current position and a route to the river, with Kohta set up somewhere else to shoot the zombies down as the responded to the noise.

Ranma looked at Kohta indicating he should respond.

Kohta grinned a little, liking the fact that Ranma trusted him enough in his specialty to make the call for this. He looked around too and then pointed at the tallest building they could see, a ten story apartment complex. "Think you can get me up on that roof over there?"

Ranma looked and scoffed a little. "Course I can, but isn't that too tall? You sure you'll be able to fire your shots and hit zombies in that park from all the way up there?" This showed his ignorance when it came to modern weaponry, as he had no idea about a normal gun's range.

Kohta however didn't take offence and merely grinned, patting his rifle affectionately. "You just get me up there and I'll do the rest."

Ranma nodded. "All right we'll do it that way then. I don't suppose I need to go over the 'guy carrying guy' rules with you?"

Kohta shook his head, and Yuuki did not lose herself and yaoi fantasies this time, instead she just looked a little sick before she shook that image out of her head. *It's official, I like flirting with Kohta, his reactions are really funny. But physically attractive he's not, at least not to me.* That thought saddened her a little, but she just could not get back past the fact that he was physically not her type.

Ranma nodded at Kohta's response then grabbed him around the waist and then grabbed a gun with the other hand while Kohta grabbed the walkman. That done Ranma jumped up out the next building and no way over the silent but now visible city.

OOOOOO

Once they reached the building Kohta had indicated Ranma jumped from one balcony to the other making his way up at around the sides of the building until he reached the top and from there jumped straight up onto the roof. He looked around, making sure that there were no zombies here, a task made much easier because this apartment complex didn't have a rooftop apartment.

That done he let Kohta down and waited while he set up his gun on its tripod with the four full clips placed on the concrete wall, placing his walkie-talkie on it. Once done he nodded to Ranma. "I'm all set, let me get off two shots to get my eye in, then I'll call the others to tell them we're going to start."

Ranma nodded and then thoughtfully went over to the maintenance door leading onto the roof. He ripped off a piece of a piece of the buildings cooling system and stuck it so that it jammed the door closed from this side, just in case. He turned as he heard two loud cracks.

Kohta grinned wildly at him, his glasses gleaming almost evilly on his face. "I've got the range Boss!" Ranma nodded and Kohta took his walkie-talkie, pressing the power button and speaking into it. "This is Gun master, to Lady Blade, Lady Blade can you hear me, over? Gun God to Megane Hime, do you read me", over?

Saeko's voice came in, not loud as even now the main group was trying to make as little noise as they could, though her amusement was obvious. "This is Lady Blade, I hear you, over."

"Gah this is Megane Hime, we hear you, and these nicknames are stupid you damn gun otaku! Why the hell are we

even using call signs, there's no one to hear us!" It was clear that Saya felt safe yelling having already boarded the Hummer, sitting next to the driver who was of course Shizuka.

"Tradition Megane Hime," Kohta said defensively. "You don't hear Lady Blade complaining do you?"

"That's because that combat junky likes the name you chose for her! If I'm going to have to use a damn call sign why can't I use it?"

Ranma grinned reaching into one pocket and using his walkie-talkie for the first time. "Heh, that's because Kohta was the one who thought them up."

"Oh shut up Ninja! Ugh, why did I get stuck with such an un-cool name? Whatever, you two ready?"

Ranma kept on grinning while Kohta answered the irate pinkette. "Roger that Gun God is in position, Ninja is ready to leave to set up his end of the party."

Saeko's voice cut in here before Saya could respond. "Roger that, we're ready to go here. Good luck ninja, and remember to stay safe while you're having fun hmm?"

"Roger that Lady blade." Ranma responded, letting his affection for her out in his voice before putting the walkie-talkie back into his pocket.

Ranma nodded at Kohta, who nodded in turn before turning back to his gun. Without another word Ranma jumped down, disdaining the first five levels of the balconies reaching out to grab one half way down the building to slow his descent only briefly before reaching the last and then jumping from there to a nearby rooftop on the way toward the designated park, ignoring the few zombies that had moved in the direction of the gun noise before it stopped.

Kohta gaped at his swift descent and shook his head. Only Ranma was that at home with moving that quickly but it just showed how easily he had adapted to their new suit circumstances.

Ranma soon touched down in the center of the park, noticing that there are about 15 zombies around him already, some of whom must have responded to the noise of the bullets impacted the tree he saw had two small chunks missing from its trunk.

He grinned a little manically. "I suppose I should clear this lot out before I start just in case," he murmured, and even that brought up a few of their heads to stare at his direction. He gently set the walkman down and un-wrapped his meteor hammer from around his waist and twirling it in the air above him in one hand and out along one of his side's in the other. With a roar he charged forward, not carrying about making noises now. His weapon sliced into two zombies with the scythe end of his hammer and then his other arm twirled, sending the metal ball of his other hand zooming forward crushing kicked out, crushing its head in.

The other zombies in the park turned to this noise and move toward him quickly, much more quickly than they normally did, again making Ranma realize the zombies moved much faster when food was on the table than normally. It almost reminded him of the way his old man could move sometimes.

Within minutes all the zombies were around him, and Ranma let loose, laughing happily and slaughtering them easily. With this few zombies and a lot of space to maneuver not even one of the zombies was able to touch him. He didn't have to use his meteor hammer's lengthening ability even once, which allowed him to remain fresh. As the last zombie he fell he turned away, reaching into his pocket and jumping onto the statue inside the central water fountain. He keyed his walkie-talkie for a minute. "I'm gonna start the music now, hope you're ready to rumble Gun God."

Kohta's voice came over the little speaker quickly, sounding a little awed. He had seen the performance Ranma had just put on, and was actually shaking his head, wondering if the martial artist even needed him along on this trip. "Roger that Ninja, I'm good to go."

Ranma nodded, put the walkie-talkie away, set the walkman down on little island under the statue, and turned on the music.

Unlike heavy metal or rock or anything that in Ranma's opinion would actually fit with this environment however the music they came out of the walkman was J-pop. "Why," he moaned aloud, while the sound of a song by the group Arashi began to boom out, "why of all the genres did Saya-chan pick J-pop?"

In the quiet of the city this went off like a sound bomb of bad taste. The noise soon drew even more zombies, showing Ranma that all their taste had died when they had been infected in the first place. He turned it up as high as

it could go. Soon enough hundreds of zombies were moving through the streets towards him, coming out of buildings coming out of ditches and alleyways and down the roads all towards Ranma's current position.

Ranma shook his head a little, while Kohta began his part of this scheme. He saw zombies go down headless, the speed of it impressing him just as much as the accuracy. Kohta was very professional, one shot to the head for each target and then moving on swiftly. The gunshots and their fellows going down seemed to help the music bring the zombies in even more, and soon over a hundred zombies were in the park moving toward Ranma and the walkman.

As they came closer Ranma took his shots too, using both ends of the meteor hammer to pound on the zombies, having retracted the blade just in case so it couldn't get caught or anything just in case. Any zombies that came within range of his meteor hammer died, though he again he didn't use the lengthening technique so as to conserve his strength. The ki drain was too much to use without good cause. And just now he didn't need it.

The end of his meteor hammer crushed yet another skull then he used the other end to crush the head of another zombie who had fallen into the water below the statue. It appeared as if the zombies just didn't know what to make of the water, and were simply milling around the edges of the fountain, reaching forward and trying to grab at him, but his perch on the statue was just out of reach.

Eventually however the sheer number of zombies became worrisome.

OOOOOOO

Back at the apartment, Saeko heard the shots in the distance, and even a bit of the music playing, wincing in sympathy when she heard snippets of the music blaring. She scanned the streets around them, and soon enough she saw the few zombies in sight moving toward the new sounds.

Soon all the zombies in the area that hadn't been killed by Kohta when the gate opened had been attracted by the noise going on. She turned to look in the direction they would be travelling toward the river, and saw their way was clear if they went now.

She looked over the edge of the roof down at the others and nodded "let's go," calmly.

Shizuka nodded worriedly, wondering how neko-kun was doing, but she started the engine of the Hummer, the noise a deep thrum in the air but not heavy or very loud. Yuuki grinned triumphantly and the others all nodded at her. Takashi even went so far as to give her a thumb up when she grinned at.

"Let's go," Shizuka said happily and the dog went to bark agreement, but thanks to Alice putting some tape over his mouth, merely made a muffled whine.

Saeko jumped down to the balcony and from there to the ground stumbling only slightly as she landed. She truly was becoming better all the time at this hopping thing. She then jumped onto the top of the Hummer, landing next to Rei who was sitting in the opening there with his gun ready and waiting. She flashed the other girl a little bit of her panty as she landed, but didn't care and simply nodded at her. Originally Takashi would have taken that position, but given his mental condition at the moment, the others didn't want him with a gun in his hand and zombies about when they were trying not to draw attention to themselves.

Once in position, Saeko turned on her walkie-talkie, smiling a little whimsically. "Gun God, this is Lady Blade, we're on the move now, over."

Kohta's voice came back after a moment, sounding a little manic and hurried, but still intelligible. "Roger that, I'll tell Ninja! We'll meet you down by the river, over."

"Roger." With that she dumped the walkie-talkie and grabbed the edge of the firing hatch to hang on to as the car started to move.

OOOOOOO

Kohta sighed, sad to have been called away from his gleeful shooting of the zombies. It'd been just like a turkey shoot for him, like he was back on the range in America shooting down the targets without a care in the world, just imagining they were all Shido or some of the bastards that had bullied him before.

However he knew his fun and games was at an end for now, and didn't want to put the group in danger by indulging himself any more. Picking up his gun he ran to another portion of the rooftop and sighted along the groups route, and saw a few zombies there still moving toward the noise, now moving toward the approaching Hummer.

It took him a moment because they were farther away, but within seconds he took his shots. His targets went down, not as cleanly as the ones in the park because they were so far away it took him a few shots more to make certain they all stayed down, but the way was clear for now.

He then glanced over the side of the building down toward the ground and noticed that the apartment building to had been surrounded by zombies. From where he was he couldn't see the front down but it was scarily easy to imagine the zombies had broken in and were even now making their way up towards him on the inside. "EEP! Oh well, not like we were going to be going out the normal way anyways."

He picked up his walkie-talkie and spoke into it, not even trying to keep his exuberance at the experience out of his voice. "Gun God to Ninja-man, the other party is on their way, recommend we get out of here soonest, over! Be advised I have company outside on ground level and probably making its way up!"

After that he went back to shooting the zombies figuring every little bit helps and it wasn't like he had run out of ammo just yet, he had a full clip to go through before Ranma came back.

OOOOOO

Ranma grinned wildly, almost unwilling to leave the fight, but he forced that thought out of his head. He once more wrapped his weapon about his waist and then jumped forward, using a random zombies head as a springboard before jumping for the nearest tree. Grabbing a tree limb he flipped himself up onto another one higher up with such ease even professional gymnasts would have been impressed, and then from there to other trees and out of the park to land on a rooftop, leaving behind the walkman, still blaring its damn J-pop out from the center pedestal in the fountain. His passage garnered some interest from the accumulated zombies, but he swiftly left them all behind.

He roof-hopped swiftly towards apartment complex and once he got there made it up the side easily, ignoring almost completely the number of zombies surrounding the building and pushing inside, nearly equaling the number that had been attracted to the park in the first place. He found Kohta there shooting almost straight down at the zombies around the apartment using up the last of his bullets.

The rifle clicked empty just as Ranma cleared the edge of the rooftop, and he looked up at Ranma happily, the manic glee in his face a rather frightening sight. "All gone!" he said cheerfully, "let's get out of here!" Ranma grinned and turned around and Kohta clambered onto his back while Ranma grabbed up the rifle.

Once he was situated Ranma jumped up away, moving as fast as he could down the apartment's exterior and away over the rooftops straight out towards the river.

They met up with the Hummer just as it was about to go down the little ravine towards the riverbed, and he jumped from the nearest rooftop landing on the road and then running after, moving around the few zombies still there easily. Saeko noticed him and waved at the two boys, shouting down into the Hummer, "They made it, Ranma's carrying Kohta and they're right behind us, slow down a little."

Shizuka complied swiftly, and the Hummer moved along for a moment driven only by its momentum.

Within seconds Ranma had caught up, and just as the Hummer was at going to enter the water jumped onto the back of it. Kohta scrambled off him onto the roof, and from there down the gun hatch to grab to switch out the modified AR-10 with the Springfield M1A1, which they had found a silencer for along with its scope in the locked cupboard. Once he did Takashi dropped down, taking a seat below the hatch between Kyoko and Rei while Kohta replaced Takashi in the hatch.

Ranma just flipped himself onto the roof and grinned as a splash of water hit him in the face when they entered the river. In most other dimensions with a Ranma in it this would've made his body go through a change either of gender or into something else entirely. This Ranma simply grinned and shook his hair free of the water then grabbed his girlfriend and pulled her into a hug. "Well that was fun, let's do that again!"

Saeko's laughter rang out over the river as the Hummer forged on towards the other side.

End chapter

Megane Hime means Glasses Princess, thought it suited her quite well. Want to give a shout out to N0mster and Narsil for looking over a tricky portion of this chapter for me. Next time a lot of things happens and Saya finds out what happened at her home while she wasn't there.

Hope everyone like this chapter and as always read and review.

***Chapter 6*: Your Sense of Propriety is trumped by**

I don't own High School of the Dead or Ranma 1/2

Some reviews I'd like to mention:

N0mster: Ranma's skills do change the equation for the team as has been shown all along, but in the future, as you will see in this chapter, it comes with it's own issues. The way I am using Kyoko is to be a sort of solidifying, calming element among the group. Takashi needed it in this past chapter, Saeko and Ranma will need it a few times, and Rei needs her as a role model among the group. Whether or not her and Takashi go anywhere is still up in the air, but on that note I will have a question at the end of the chapter for everyone. Yes, Yuuki has been flirting with Kohta more out of amusement and her understanding of the group dynamic than anything else, but the question is will Ranma act on something he sees as a purely physical attraction. And I hope you enjoy all the bits and pieces of this chapter.

Preier: Rei wasn't really questioning them because she felt they were wrong, she was simply lashing out. All of the others are happy with Ranma's leadership, as he has literally been the difference between life and death several times and has yet to steer them wrong. None of the others would back any discussion of leadership except maybe Takashi out of loyalty to Rei.

Kira09: I don't think they actually mentioned how old exactly Happosai was, they just assume he's as old as Cologne, but never confirmed it. And while he and Kasumi won't be seen for a while, they will turn up now and then.

Blackholelord: Ships full of zombies that crash may become a problem, but ships full of pirates? Not for a while, not near Japan, or at least not in a large enough group to threaten Ranma and company. Trade ships with the fishing fleets maybe but not pirates for a while. After that, Saeko and Ranma will use them for some fun. And why do you always start your reviews with well?

Narsil: No, Rei does have a major reason for why she's acting the way she is, and it will come out in bits and pieces. I didn't want her to go into detail with Takashi right away, especially since even Rei wouldn't want to put even more on him at what was obviously a weak moment. I generally tend to switch off how I treat people save the source of all evil named Genma. In Chaotic Space he was treated like a pest and nuisance, in Lion of Light pretty neutral, and in this other than his perverse nature (which you really can't separate from his character) he'll be one of the good guys. And yeah, the books would be a good idea, but not when they have so many other needs going forward and only the Hummer to carry it all in.

Shinzochi: Don't worry Kohta will find somebody(ies) for him, starting in this chapter...

there were others, but frankly I'm tired, and want to get this out now, so I'll mention them next chapter.

Oh, and here is a question for you all. Should I write out lemons for Takashi, Kohta and their ladies, or just hint at them? My first thought is to just imply they happened as they aren't the main characters of the story.

And with that lets us move on to why you're all here:

Chapter 6 Your Sense of Propriety is trumped by Reality

Ranma's tomcat instincts, awakened by the battle against the zombies in the park, were trying to convince him to either ravish Saeko or curl up and nap on the hot roof of the Hummer. His human mind was still very much in control however and he fought his instincts down easily. Not that the idea of taking Saeko someplace for some alone time didn't appeal to his human side, but he didn't really want to think about why having spent the last 40 minutes to an hour locked in combat had made him so horny. The other idea did sound interesting though, after all a nap was always nice, but that could wait.

So after kissing Saeko for a bit he leaned over into the opening on top of the Hummer looking around inside at the others, his upside down face, creased with a smirk with one eyebrow raised in query in the little space between Kohta and the edge of the hatch. "So, where are we going exactly?"

The group inside looked at one another, most of them having not thought that far ahead. They simply wanted to get across the river; a specific destination hadn't yet occurred to them. Saya however **had** thought ahead and swiftly pulled out a map of the city. She turned in her seat and spread it over Takashi and Rei's laps. There was some mutterings from the other girl about this, but Takashi merely grunted a little in irritation.

Kohta sat down on the small stand where the gunner stood to make use of the gun port on top of the Hummer and Saeko stuck her head over the opening to join Ranma in looking down at the map. At the front of the Hummer Shizuka kept driving with Alice curled up in the co-pilot's seat with the dog next to Saya.

When she saw she had everyone's attention Saya began, pointing down at the map and tapping the band of blue indicating the river in the center of the city. "We're about here between these two bridges. The police station where we plan to meet up with Ranma's mother and yours Rei," she said looking across at the brunette, "is over here."

She pointed out a spot on a rough diagonal quite a ways away from the river, almost at the outer edge of the city and near the freeway, where Nodoka and Kiriko had evidently been assigned to keep the entrance to the freeway clear of zombies. The thing that grabbed everyone's attention however was that there was no way to get there in a straight line, they'd have to make several turns along the roads to get there. "I have no idea what the conditions on the roads are going to be like on the other side of the river, but if even just a few of them are impassable that could take hours, regardless of any other dangers we meet on the way."

Shizuka looked behind her and began to take part in the discussion, not even noticing as the Hummer's wheel began to slowly turn and the Hummer began to move with the current rather than across the river. Behind her Alice reached forward quickly, and tried to pull it back huffing a little as she pushed at the wheel with all her might, but she was only able to slow the drift, not fight it.

Neither Saya nor the nurse noticed this, as the blonde began to trace out routes to the police station. "I think that would normally take about 45 min., up to an hour and a half if there was traffic. Takagi-chan's right, if a few of these roads are blocked it could take three or four hours, and well, this car is pretty huge. It might not fit down some of the back roads, and turning it will be trouble too."

Saya nodded and pointed another spot, a somewhat large L-shaped building on the map. "This is the mall I was talking about, it's got a hunting store, clothing stores, electronic stores, a lot of other stuff we could hit up for supplies. No guns at the hunting store, but maybe some crossbows." In Japan even hunting rifles were sold at specialty stores, and were rare besides. From their position at the moment, the mall was on another diagonal, but looked a little closer than the police precinct, though was in the other direction, up-river rather than vaguely down.

Shizuka, ignoring the squeaks of Alice who was still trying to wrestle the Hummer back into line for the far shore nodded. "There's a lot more routes to the mall, but even more of them might be blocked. I'd say about the same amount of time."

Saya nodded and went on a little hesitantly the back of her mind noting Alice was trying to get her attention but ignoring the young girl in favor of the conversation. "And here," she said pointing to a spot that was much closer to the river than the others, "is my home. We could probably get a lot of supplies there, though I don't," she stuttered a little, "I-I don't know w-what will find there. My parents are, well, they're survivors but I don't know what state they are in or our home."

"So the mall is up here, and the police station is sort of between it and Saya's place right? If we're going down towards the ocean I mean..." Ranma said, thinking of their options.

The others blinked in confusion for a moment, having forgotten their long-term goal for a moment and Saya nodded decisively. "That's true, that means we should probably go for the mall doesn't it?" Knockoff one, go to the other and so on and keep heading in the same direction so we don't have to retrace our steps. Needless to say, even with the Hummer we'll run into a lot of zombies, and there'll always be more behind us than before us as the ones further away react to the noise and move to where we were rather than where we're going. Well unless there are problems in front of us."

Ranma nodded. "We can take the river up to basically across from the mall here right?" he said pointing. It would mean moving up river, but the Hummer would be able to deal with it. It would be slow going, but as long as the Hummer could touch the bottom of the very shallow river it would be able to get enough traction to forge on. "From there it's a straight shot across the mall, and then down to meet up with mom and auntie then on to Saya-chan's place."

Rei shook her head, angry at everyone not seeing what she thought was the best plan. "Why the hell are we even thinking about this? We should get in touch with our parents first, if they're doing an evacuation we'll just join the evacuees and that'll be that!"

Ranma shook his head. "No, I don't know about you Rei, but the rest of us basically decided that we don't want to join up with any larger bands. None of us are really willing to follow orders from anyone else anymore. In this world it's

look after yourself and your closest friends, and we can do that better as a separate group."

Rei scowled even more angrily at that answer, then looked around and realized that all the others had agreed with Ranma. After a moment she sighed and nodded agreement, not really having much trust for most authority figures these days herself. "And when was this discussion exactly?"

"Two nights ago," Yuuki replied, shaking her head. "We all basically agreed with it. Besides," she said grimly looking at Rei with hard, experienced eyes, "if you haven't noticed all of us girls are pretty damn good looking, and any large group is going to have its own rules and hierarchy. Where exactly do you think we, young outsiders would place, how likely is it that we would be abused in some way?" Rei flinched at the very suggestion.

"I'm afraid Yuuki is correct Miyamoto-san," Kyoko agreed, shaking her head sadly and reaching across Takashi to pat the younger girl's hand. "While I applaud the idea of getting as many people out of the city as possible, it opens up the door for further infestation, and even if it is being organized by the government now, there's no certainty that it will continue to be in the future. Do we really want to take our chances with a local warlord or something like that?"

Rei sighed and nodded again. Takashi put his arm around her shoulder. It was a sign of her current distress that this didn't make her flinch angrily or shake his arm off. "They're right Rei, the larger the group the more internal disputes will occur, the more problems, the more noise. We don't want to have to protect ourselves from other people as well as the zombies after all."

Race scowled a little still, but nodded. "I understand, hell I even agree with your reasoning, it's just," she frowned and paused for a moment then went on almost plaintively. "I just want everything to go back to the way it was, you know?"

Saeko shook her head sadly but firmly. "Get that idea out of your head, it's not going to happen. Whatever else happens, the old ways of the world aren't going to be coming back. We're going to have to figure out a new way to live."

Ranma nodded decisively. "And that means getting this show on the road. Shizuka," he paused looking behind her, not at **all** noticing her cute derrière in the air or the fact that her leaning over the back of her seat had pushed her breasts against the back of her seat mashing them together in a most interesting manner. "I didn't know Alice-chan could drive?"

Shizuka turn and gaped then grabbed the wheel "Soooorry," she said turning the wheel around easily and making the Hummer turn back onto its original course. "So we're going upstream?"

Ranma nodded. "Head upstream to Ashikana bridge, and then we'll go across to the other side."

With that plan in place the meeting broke up. Takashi and Rei both decided to just take a nap, while Yuuki, Saya, Kyoko and Kohta began their own separate conversations. On the roof Ranma curled up next to Saeko, his head in her lap and purring quietly as the sun's rays did their magical work on him.

OOOOOOO

Genma ran. He had been in solitary confinement when the outbreak hit Hong Kong, which oddly enough saved him, the zombies unable to get to him past the heavy reinforced bars, and when he stayed silent they quickly lost interest when he didn't make a sound. He had stayed silent, fading into the Veil of the Quiet Thief while the zombies rampaged through the precinct, the plague brought in by several dozen bitten officers, and spreading from there. The sheer number of people in Hong Kong worked against even the well armed police, riot troops and military companies nearby. The Chinese mafia probably had an easier time of it, not that he cared at the moment.

Genma ran because behind him were over a dozen zombies chasing after him. He hadn't been able to stay under the Veil, too hungry to concentrate enough on keeping control of his emotions and ki, and the moment he made a sound, the zombies were all over him.

He idly wondered what had become of the ungrateful boy even as he slew two zombies that had just appeared round the bend in front of him Imagine, leaving his sensei and father to the not-at-all-tender mercies of the Hong Kong Mafia, who had in turn handed him over to the police. Who knew he had a international warrant for his arrest from some business deals of his over in South Korea?

So now he was running through the city, wondering where the hell he could find someplace safe to fort up. "I just know this is all that stupid boy's fault, oh the disgrace to have such a dishonorable son!" Of course this shout brought more zombies racing toward him, and he cruse his ill-luck again as he tried to get away.

But his dreams of a safe haven would never come to pass. As he passed what must have been a school nursery the tiny zombie boy, all of six years old, the same age his ungrateful son had been when he started to put him through the neko-ken, leaped toward him, biting his shin.

Genma kicked him almost as soon as the bite began, but it was enough to infect him. It wouldn't circulate through his body anywhere near as fast as a full bite, but Genma's fate was sealed the moment a single tooth broke skin, the saliva in the thing's mouth doing its deadly work. He just wouldn't know it for a few more hours.

OOOOOOO

It took them a while longer than they had expected to forge upstream, the current of the river being stronger than they had expected and the Hummer's footing not being the best. Going downstream of course would be much easier, but for now it was a bit of a pain.

About twenty minutes from their target point Ranma woke up, and asked how much longer they had.

Saeko looked down at him, the fingers of one hand gently running through his hair. "Saya estimates given our speed it should take another half hour so to reach the point across from the mall."

Ranma nodded and Saeko leaned down kissing him gently. Ranma growled a little, his earlier thoughts coming back with a vengeance and he pulled her down, the kiss deepening even as Kohta, who had been standing in the gun port to look out around at the rest of the city through his scope, stared at them.

Their hands were just starting to roam when Saya poked her head up and smacked both of them upside the head. "Stop that!" she shouted. "There's a young girl here, and I won't let you corrupt her like that!"

Ranma growled a little at the interruption, and Saeko glared but suddenly smirked. "Was that a bit of jealousy I heard Saya-chan?"

Saya blushed and fired back. "Baka, me jealous of you and the meathead, no way! Who'd want to be with the dumb jock anyway?" With that parting shot she disappeared back into the Hummer, ignoring the chuckles coming from Yuuki, Kyoko and Shizuka.

Ranma hadn't been the only one to drop off, Takashi and Rei had both nodded off, thankful for the rest after standing guard last night. Even Saeko had curled up with Ranma, using his back as a pillow as he did her lap, though she had woken up before he had.

Rei had curled up a bit against Takashi's shoulder. When she woke up at Saya's shouting and saw his face so near she flinched a little then when she realized who it was she smiled a little sadly and leaned back in. She didn't notice that Kyoko, sitting to the other side of Takashi had noticed her flinch, and now was staring at her with narrowed eyes. Takashi was woken up about fifteen minutes later by Kyoko gently shaking him and Rei awake as they were passing under a bridge.

"We're here. What's the plan from here on? Do we just go straight there?" asked Saya, looking up through the gun port at Ranma.

Ranma looked over at Kohta. "No, start across, but Kohta and I will go ahead and find someplace on a diagonal from the road where he can cover the route." Kohta grinned, moving back inside the Hummer and grabbing the AR 10 again. He handed the Springfield M1A1 over to Rei, who nodded grimly. Saeko frowned a little, unhappy that she was going to be left out of the action. Ranma somehow sensed this and looked back at her shrugging apologetically. "Sorry Saeko-chan, but you're not quite up to roof hopping yet, and I want us to move fast."

Saeko nodded morosely then reached inside the Hummer and pulled her katana out from the back behind Kyoko and Yuuki's heads. "Hopefully at some point we'll have some action of our own," she said tapping the sword's pommel thoughtfully.

Two minutes later they were close enough for Ranma to jump with Kohta to the other side of the bank. He put Kohta down swiftly, and the four zombies in the area died just as quickly, before Kohta could even get a shot off. Ranma glared at him, seeing Kohta having raised his rifle to shoot. "Don't use that until we're in position! We don't want to bring any zombies down on us here, just where we set up."

Kohta nodded, a little chagrined. Ranma and Saeko were both proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that guns were not the end-all be-all, and in point of fact their skills were much more applicable in the current crisis than his own until they found silencers for his guns. Those weren't things he could make himself unfortunately. Oh he knew his skills

were important for the group as a whole, it was just he wished he could use them more often.

Ranma nodded back and the two made their way up the incline of the riverbed, and then up onto the road. Strangely there weren't any zombies around, and the two looked at one another wondering why.

"Where'd you think they've gone?" asked Kohta looking around. Despite Ranma's injunction against using his rifle he had brought it up to his shoulder and was once more looking through the scope trying to spot anything moving.

"Use your head dude," Ranma said, shaking his head. "If there ain't any zombies around here that must mean all the nearby zombies've been drawn to someplace else." Kohta flinched a little uncomfortably at the idea but Ranma simply shrugged. "Better for us, man, less we have to put down."

Ranma left Kohta there for a moment, jumping back down the hill slide and then back out to the Hummer where he grabbed Saeko and carried her over. The three of them stood guard as the Hummer made its way over and then up the incline with a crash. Even that crashing sound as the tires came up off the ground and slammed back down didn't bring any zombies. "Whatever's drawn them must be something major," said Ranma shaking his head. "I hope it's not in our way."

Kyoko heard this and frowned at the lack of empathy Ranma was showing lately, but then she castigated herself. *Ranma's right, it's a good thing for us, I just wish he was showing some more empathy. Caring for other people who you don't even know or are responsible for would burden a person just too much, but not caring at all is a little too much.*

Once the group was reassembled Ranma took Kohta up to the nearest rooftop to let him look around. "Find the best place to set up, I'll be right back." When he got back down to the others he found Saya and Shizuka looking over the map with smiles on their faces. "Hey you lot, ready to go?"

Shizuka simply giggled and pulled him into a hug face first as usual. "See?" she said, pointing down at the map and ignoring the fact that he was slowly turning blue enveloped by her voluminous breasts. "If we go straight down this road will start to see signs for the mall and be able to follow it easy. It should be just off the road about 30-40 minutes normally." She frowned, as even from here they could cars left every which way along the road. Evidently the panic on this side of the river had been just as bad as on the other, and she was worried about what they would encounter on the road. "With the roads like this I'd say closer to forty."

"All right, I'll take Kohta off and figure out where to set him up, Saeko you're in charge here until we meet up at the mall, we'll both half our radios with us, so call if you run into trouble."

Rei interjected at this point, but unlike the other times she actually had a good point to share. "The mall has a huge parking lot around, it doesn't it? What if we get pinned in place there? I mean, it's bound to have a lot of zombies around it right?"

"It's got a back delivery area to it doesn't it?" said Saya questioningly. "I haven't actually been there that often so I don't know."

Rei had actually worked at the mall for a few weeks over the summer and she nodded. "It does, but it'll take us a few minutes to get there from where the boulevard enters the parking lot. And even if we do, we'll have to get inside too. How are we going to do that if the garage doors are down and with no power?"

Ranma frowned a little. If they could get inside they might well be pinned there by large numbers of the zombies. "When we get there, we'll have to see what it's like but if there're a lot of zombies we might have to abort. If there aren't many zombies by the loading area, Saeko and Rei, you two can go in and start to clear them out while me and Kohta meet up with the rest of you."

Saya shook her head. "We might need more than that, some kind of distraction..."

Alice raised a hand from the front seat of the Hummer, where she had remained since this trip began next to Saya. "What about fireworks? Couldn't you use those to grab their attention?"

Ranma nodded his head in agreement then reached over Saya and ruffled Alice's hair. "That's a good idea squirt, I'll see if I can find shops selling them along the way." With that decided the others all clambered back into the Hummer and Ranma jumped up to the roof where he had left Kohta. "You find a good spot?"

Kohta nodded and pointed ahead of them and to the left of the street the Hummer was going to follow at a fifteen story building surrounded by ten story business offices. "That building's the tallest that isn't too far away for me to

shoot down into the street." At Ranma's quizzical look Kohta went into his own version of a lecture mode, pushing his suddenly gleaming glasses back up his nose. "A gun is basically a straight line weapon, I mean over a distance you need to worry about the effect of wind and the loss of acceleration but generally speaking the bullets move in a straight line. Around here, there are taller buildings along the road, so the farther away the worse the angle to hit targets. We could set up a little further along but there gives me range to cover them for about half the journey."

Ranma grunted and nodded. He lifted Kohta up onto his back, cradling the gun nut's rifle under one arm and a box of ammo clips under the other and leaping forward easily.

When they reached the fifteen story building Kohta had pointed out, they found that it was an apartment complex with an apartment on the top that had a rather decent pool. Unfortunately it also seemed to have been the site of some kind of party going on, as there were several apparently college-age zombies moving around.

Ranma leaped from the edge of the roof onto the top of the apartment, and sat Kohta down. "Now," he said grinning at the gun nut, "**now**, you can go wild!" With that he jumped off the apartment's roof, crushing one zombie beneath his feet as his hands swept out his ki claws slicing into two more before he whipped out his meteor hammer, crushing the head of a fifth.

Kohta grinned and began to shoot down into the group of 10 or so zombies, and was able to kill six of them before Ranma could kill the remaining four, who had been in the doorway. Ranma swiftly moved inside of the apartment, clearing it two more zombies before he came to the door which led to a staircase leading down. There were no zombies inside the stairwell, and he shut the door swiftly before locking it and stacking a large sofa he grabbed from the apartment in front of it. That done, he went outside and asked Kohta if he had seen any trouble along the route.

Kohta nodded a little scowling angrily as he sighted down his gun-sight straight down the road towards the mall. About halfway between his current position and the mall were a group of 10 zombies, but it wasn't the zombies that caused his scowl, just one of them in particular. Even from here with his scope he could tell that the woman in the center had once been a policewoman, she was wearing the traditional policewoman outfit and was even dangling her Smith and Wesson M37 from one finger.

But her ear was gone, as well as a chunk from one leg, and he shook his head sadly. "She must've fought them off after their initial ambush just long enough to turn," he said morosely and then with a single shot put the woman out of her misery.

He swiftly changed targets to another zombie, and that zombie too died with a single headshot. He grinned fiercely over at Ranma. "I'm good to go here if you blocked that staircase."

Ranma nodded then did a walkabout of the roof just in case, and luckily found no other way up. "I'll leave you here then. I'm going to go see if I can find some firecrackers or something to set up another noise trap with. Call it in, and get the others moving!"

Kohta nodded and as Ranma leapt off the roof he tapped his radio. "This is Gun God, this is Gun God, calling Lady Blade and Megane Hime, I'm in position and am clearing the road now. You are cleared to start moving."

OOOOOOO

Back with the others the group had been getting a little anxious remaining one spot with the engine running, but Saeko, Takashi and Rei were keeping a good watch out for any zombies that might come along or any other threats. Takashi was now in the front seat, with Alice and Saya moving to join Kyoko and Yuuki in the back. Yuuki had grabbed one of the nail guns that Kohta had devised and Kyoko had the Barnett Wildcat crossbow, the quiver between her legs. Rei was up in the gun port with the modified Springfield, and Takashi held the Ithaca, the gun sticking out of the now open window. Saeko was still sitting on the roof, outwardly calm with her now bare katana across her crossed legs.

So it was with a certain amount of relief that Saeko replied to Kohta's message. "This is Sword Lady, roger Gun God, we're beginning to move now."

She nodded down into the main body of the Hummer and Shizuka put it into gear and the Hummer began to move again.

OOOOOOO

As the crack of rifle shots rang out across this portion of the city Ranma zoomed along the rooftops looking for a shop

that sold anything that could make noise, but mainly something like a firework that would be small, and very, very loud. Eventually he saw a place that advertised them and jumped down only to back away quickly and grab at his major hammer as six zombies piled out of the shop smashing through the windows toward him.

He swiftly killed them, ducking under the one that got closest and tried to grab at him, raising the meteor hammers blunt end straight up to smash its head off from below. He looked around and shook his head, realizing that the sound of gunfire must have aroused every zombie within hearing range into hunting mode. "So it isn't just that they react to sound, if they can't even find the sound it still makes the move faster and be more aggressive?"

Ranma shrugged off that minor mystery and headed inside, where he found one zombie that must've lost its leg at some point and another dead man with sawed off shotgun.

Without even a grunt of effort he crushed the head of the zombie under one heel before he clapped his hands briefly in prayer over the man with the shotgun. "At least you went down swinging dude. I hope I'm that lucky, well in the far future anyway."

Respects paid he quickly reached over to the shelf full of firecrackers and grabbed ten, stuffing nine of them into his pockets with difficulty. They were of the variety called repeater, which was a series of small tubes with one fuse connecting them. He assumed that this would be the loudest and most long lasting variety and he grinned evilly thinking of how many zombies these things would attract.

He promptly left the store, running into five more zombies who were roaming the streets now that the sound of Kohta's gunfire had aroused them. "Maybe we over thought this a little, maybe quiet and fast would've been the way to go." He said as he killed him, not even bothering to use his weapon, just his ki claws slicing them into pieces. That done he jumped up onto the roof of the shop and sped away, reaching into one pocket for the radio. "Gun God, this is Ninja, check the route along the Hummer's path, I'm running into a lot more zombies now that they're reacting to yer shooting."

Kohta replied swiftly, though it didn't seem to slow his guns fired down any, the shot still rang out calm and measured and very deadly. Ranma smirked a little at that, realizing that for whatever reason the collection of people he was a part of now were very good, and each of them brought a unique skill that was necessary for them all to live in this new world. "This is Gun God, the road seems pretty clear, they're all heading towards me."

Ranma paused for a moment on a rooftop and looked down and he noticed that the zombies did indeed seem to be making their way towards the sound of gunfire. It was almost as if they couldn't figure out where it was coming from at first, but they were definitely heading in that direction. Not quite as quickly as they would if they could hear that prey was nearby, but it was definitely attracting them.

"Excellent," said Ranma gleefully. "Keep an eye on them, I'm going to set off some fireworks right underneath you to see if we can attract them your way even more."

"Roger, be aware that in about...fifteen minutes given the speed their going I'll have to set up somewhere else along the route soon," Kohta replied.

"Affirmative, tell me when the Hummer gets near the edge of your range and I'll head back and grabbed you. Figure out where you want to go before then."

With that Ranma cut the line and headed on, looking for places to set up his new noise attack and get killing. He never noticed the wicked, almost feral smile that started to appear on his face as he began to feel the blood pounding through his veins, the eagerness, the lust for battle filling him.

OOOOOO

The Hummer was moving along at a brisk pace, not having met up with much in the way of trouble. They had to steer around countless stopped cars, which had either been abandoned or their owners had been killed, but there was no place on the road that had yet to really halt their progress towards the mall, though at one point they had to bodily push a car out of the way with the Hummer.

After about twenty minutes travel they noticed that Kohta's fire had trailed off, but about two minutes later it was back thought coming from a new direction. The group looked at one another and Takashi shrugged from the passenger's seat. "He must've had to change position I guess, means that they're still doing all right."

The trip continued uneventfully until they came towards the mall road on their right. Unfortunately here they ran into

problems, as Rei's concern about the large parking area proved to be well founded. There were several dozen zombies inside, and as they pulled in they all turned from trying to make their way towards where Kohta was still shooting and moved toward the car which was the closer noise, even though it wasn't as loud.

Saeko stuck her head down into the Hummer and shouted to Shizuka even as Rei began to fire her gun at the closest, her accuracy nothing to write home about but not bad for a beginning. "Speed up Shizuka-sensei, drive them down! Takashi, Kyoko and Yuuki guard the flanks, Rei shoot at the ones along our route! We'll need to kill a lot of these things to clear the way!"

"Even as she said that Shizuka had gunned the engine and ran into three zombies, pulping them and knocking them out of the way as the car went on. Saeko slid to the back of the Hummer's roof as Takashi, Kyoko and Yuuki added their own weapons to the mix. Saeko slew two zombies that tried to grab hold of the back of the truck, and then shouted "Kyoko, get in touch with Kohta and Ranma! If the delivery entrance is as packed as it is out here were going to need some help, or we might have to abort!"

Kyoko nodded and put down her crossbow, since she was on the outer edge of the parking lot as they circled it moving toward loading area it wasn't like she was particularly needed. As she did this Shizuka kept the Hummer moving and they soon reached the loading area. They saw to their relief that the garage doors were open and there only seemed to be a few zombies inside.

At that moment Kohta and Ranma came up, with Ranma running easily despite Kohta's weight on his back. He looked around, and jumped up onto the receiving deck and as the Hummer crossed into the loading area, he looked around and saw a manual pulley attached to the doors for if the mall lost power. "Takashi, get over here and get this working! Yuuki you come too!"

"Not without some foreplay!" Yuuki shouted back giggling manically on an adrenaline high even as she ran to join Takashi on the receiving deck. All the girls (bar Alice of course) groaned at her bad joke while Takashi and Kohta both blushed a little.

Ranma didn't react to her joking innuendo at all, though she saw his eyes flash in a way that nearly took her breath away as she inadvertently (and it really was inadvertent this time) flashed him some cleavage when he leaned down to pull her and Takashi up onto the receiving bay.

Rei, Kohta and Kyoko didn't need to be told what to do. They quickly took up position behind the Hummer shooting at any zombie that came close enough to try and enter the garage, while the petrol head and Takashi operated the winch, slowly closing the garage door. After a minute it passed the halfway point and became much easier to move, the door falling faster.

Behind them Saeko joined Ranma on the receiving deck, leaping up and landing lightly beside him before kissing him soundly on lips then spinning away and decapitating a zombie with one stroke of her sword. "Hello love!" she caroled happily. "How are you doing?"

Ranma twirled his meteor hammer crushing one zombies head, and slicing another zombies head in half from where it had been on the floor of the receiving area. "I'm fine, having a lot of fun I suppose, though I'm hoping that we don't have to fight our way through the entire place. That would get messy, and blood is just one of those difficult stains you know."

Saeko chuckled at his joke while performing complex series of slashes that slew three zombies the moment they stepped into her sword's reach. The two began to hunt their way through the receiving area and the storage area slaying any zombie they found. In the end they accounted for over twenty zombies while the others had shot down forty that had tried to get in before the garage door closed.

The group had a bit of a scare when one zombie's body fell headless to the ground right over the slot for the door in the floor of the delivery entrance but Rei swiftly ran forward and kicked it back outside then stepped back as the door slammed down.

After that, the group breathed a sigh of relief. Kyoko let the crossbow fall from her nerveless grasp, groaning as she looked at the fingers of her off hand, while Kohta and Rei simply leaned against the Hummer in relief, the brunette fingering her shoulder and wincing in pain.

Takashi and Yuuki both just sat where they were, grinning triumphantly at one another. Yuuki had a brief adrenaline fueled thought of leaning in and stealing a kiss from the boy, but decided not to get too wound up in the moment, not with the way Ranma had looked at her. *Although it might just spur Rei to start treating him like a boyfriend rather than*

a lonely soul in the 'just friends' category. Something to pass on to Kyoko later, the sex pot mused.

Shizuka cautiously turned the engine of the Hummer off, then quickly got her first aid kit out, rushing over to Kyoko. She sprayed her fellow teacher's fingers with some spray to deaden the pain and disinfect the cuts she saw on two of her fingers, then put bandages with little bear prints on them over the cuts.

That done she went over to Rei, pulling the young girl's blouse over her head and inadvertently giving Kohta and Takashi a free show as she looked at the feebly protesting girl's bruised shoulder. Thankfully it wasn't broken or dislocated from the constant impact of her rifle, but it would be sore for days from the kick of the thing. She spread some ointment over the bruised area, her fingers cool on Rei's skin, causing her to flinch a little. After that she let Rei pull her blouse back on. Rei promptly did so glaring all the while Takashi and Kohta, who had only turned away from the free show she was giving them after Kyoko gave them her patented Evil Megane Stare™.

"So, are we safe now?" the voluptuous blonde asked, helping Alice down from the Hummer. The puppy, who Alice and Kohta had decided to name Zeke, bounded down after his mistress.

Ranma grinned, the light of battlelust slowly leaving his eyes. He reached up, wiping some zombie puss off his face and frowning at the smell. "For a given value of safe Shizuka-sensei, that's the best you're going to find these days."

Saeko frowned, thoughtfully removing the blood and pus from her sword by using one of the downed zombies clothing, one that looked like a clerk of some kind. "There weren't nearly as many zombies in here as I'd feared. I hope that's a good sign."

Ranma shrugged eloquently. "Whatever is in there we'll handle it," he said fiercely. All the others took heart from his unchanging confidence, smiling at him and nodding. "Let's do this, Rei with me upfront, Kohta in the middle with Takashi and Saeko bringing up the rear." Ranma didn't have much in the way of social graces, but he did notice things, and he had noticed Rei shooting some rather nasty looks at Saeko last night and this morning. Alice-chan, Yuuki, Shizuka-sensei and Kyoko-sensei in the middle behind Kohta. Let's go!"

The group moved off, leaving the Hummer behind but with the keys very firmly in Saya's grasp.

They swiftly made their way through the doors leading into the mall's storage area, and from there into the public areas of the mall. There were no zombies around, and there were no people either. When they entered the public portion of the mall the story looked the same from where they were standing.

The mall was designed as most malls were, with an open area in the center and shops all around it on both floors. Elevators and stairs and escalators would normally lead up to the second floor at intervals, but of course the elevators were no longer a viable option, though Saya was surprised this place didn't have its own backup generator. The shape of the mall looked at from above was like a giant L with a food court at the turning point in the L and the main entrance at the far end of the larger line of the L with the receiving garage at the end of the short line.

The group had nearly reached the food court and there was still no sign of anyone. Saeko sheathed her sword, looking ahead at Ranma who nodded. "Spread out, keep in sight with one another, but there doesn't seem to be any zombies in here."

"Are we looking for people or looting?" Rei asked.

Ranma nodded approval of his cousin's question. "Let's make certain there aren't any surprises first, including other survivors. But let's stash the guns somewhere if there are survivors here I don't want them to know we've got guns like that."

Kyoko nodded. "It could give them a bad impression of us, guns like that are illegal outside the armed forces remember. Or they might try to take them for their own."

Saeko smirked a little, tapping her now sheathed katana at her side lightly. "But weapons like yours and mine koi, while deadly, will seem less threatening. At least until they irritate us."

Kohta frowned but nodded, and suddenly grinned a little. "Leave that to me and Takashi, I see just the place to stash 'em, someplace no one would ever think of looking."

That phrase and the certainty he said it with, drew some looks but Ranma shrugged. "They're yer babies Kohta, seems only fair man. But later when we get back to the Hummer I want ya ta see how we're doin' for ammo for those things."

Kohta nodded, and accepted Rei's rifle from her then he and Kohta moved back the way they had come as the others made their way forward, searching for signs of life as well as keeping a wary eye out for zombies even now.

The now reduced group passed through the food court, an open space surrounded by booths and filled with tables, most of which had been overturned. There were one or two dead bodies, trampled to death by the looks of them.

As they passed through a female voice suddenly rang out from the second floor walkway above them. "Who are you?! How did you get in?"

The group looked up to see a young policewoman with short orange colored hair and a thin, somewhat boyish but not quite body looking down at them.

Ranma looked at the others then back up and shouted, "We're just a group of survivors, and we got in by killing all the zombies in our way. What other way was there?"

Ranma led the way up to the second floor by the nearest frozen escalator. As soon as they were close enough to talk without shouting the policewoman introduced herself and then began to rapid fire questions at them. "I'm patrol officer Asami Nakaoka. You say you fought your way in, I thought there were hundreds of zombies in the parking area alone, how'd you do it? Are you sure that the door is closed behind you, that the zombies can't get in? Were supposed to wait here until senior officer Matsushima gets back, she was the one that closed the doors behind her."

Ron and Saeko looked at one another then Saeko replied. "We made certain the way was closed, in fact it is safer now than it was before with the outer garage door of the receiving bay closed, not just the inner door."

"Who's this 'we' you mention?" asked Ranma bluntly. Behind them Saya was pointing out the outdoor sports store, as well as two clothing stores and a shoes store, looking meaningfully at Shizuka, who was still wearing the high heels she had on back before all this began.

The nurse pouted a little as the policewoman replied. "Oh, I'll show you, we're all over here." She led the way down the hallway, and then off into a smaller hallway that led to what looked like a reception area for the office they saw on the other side of the room.

They were a rather mixed bunch to say the least. One man who looked like a sailor was standing gesticulating angrily while glaring at a woman who looked like some kind of secretary or retail worker who was sitting next to a youngish man wearing a decent shirt and tie on one side and a old balding man with scarily long hair around a completely bald pate. An old man sat smoking a cigarette like he had a grudge against it, one college aged man who was dressed like a punk complete with giant headphones was nodding along with the man's words, sending a scornful look at the police girl which stopped the moment he saw Ranma and the others walking in behind her. Two other men sat on chairs next to the chain smoker. One looked middle-aged, slightly overweight with blonde hair cut short next to a teen who seemed to be lost in his own world, simply sitting there rocking from side to side, his black hair covering his face.

All of them turned to look at the newcomers, looking rather askance at Saeko then Ranma, who once more were covered in blood from practically head to toe with their work in clearing the loading area of zombies. Their weapons also drew stares.

The punk rocker though simply grinned. "What are you two supposed to be, some kind of ninja cosplayers or something?"

"Martial artist," said Ranma grinning and pointing at himself.

Saeko did the same smiling faintly, "Swordswoman."

"What are kids like you doing with weapons like that anyway? That's a sign of the disintegration of society right there," said what one of the old man grumbling unhappily as he sucked on a cigarette.

Saeko and Ranma shared a look but didn't reply, not really caring one way or the other of the opinions of the geriatric chain-smoker.

By this time the others had piled in behind them, and the middle-aged man who looked like a sailor was staring at Kyoko and Shizuka hungrily. None of the others however noticed this, and the policewoman explained how the group had come to be.

"Senior officer Matsushima and Asami were assigned to patrol the mall today, and when everything happened, we grabbed the people nearest us and piled in here. The security office is down that hallway a bit and officer Matsushima

used it to close all the doors after a lot of the people left, which saved us because most of the zombies followed the people out. Then after we waited for the initial panic to die down, officer Matsushima left to head to the nearest police station to tell them three were survivors here, and we've been holding here ever since."

She paused. "Um, the, the lights going out have made us a bit anxious, but"

"Anxious hell!" Shimada, the beefy man Ranma thought looked like a sailor, interrupted the young policewoman angrily. "Why the hell are we still here?! The police are fucking incompetent, they should have gotten us out of here by now if they were doing their fucking jobs!"

The others all began to shout and yell at the police woman. This went on for a while, during which Kohta and Takashi came up behind the others.

Despite feeling rather sorry for her Ranma kept his voice level as he shouted over them. "Whatever you guys want to do is fine by us, just don't involve us." He couldn't keep the scorn out of his voice as he went on. "We got our own plans, and they don't include just sitting in place and hoping someone else is going to come along and save us."

"Don't speak to your elders like that boy!" said the old man, slapping his hand on the table in front of them.

Saeko chuckled, a deep throaty sound that made Ranma grin and all the other men looked at with interest but something in her eyes made them turn away abruptly, not willing to try and rise to the inherent challenge in that sound. "Your sense of propriety is trumped by reality. Really talking about elders or youngsters, how stupid."

Ranma nodded agreement, putting one arm around her waist and staring at the group of adults, shaking his head. "You may be older but you're also dumber. You think that you can just sit here and let someone else do all the work and saving you?" Even Rei looked scornful of this idea, and Shizuka and Kyoko both nodded as well. "If you want to survive, you have to be the ones to make it happen."

He looked down at his blood soaked body and shook his head, "Is there a fountain or something somewhere?"

The police girl, who had been a little shocked at Ranma's contempt, nodded. "At the far end of the L near the entrance."

Ranma nodded and looked at Saeko who nodded agreement. "The two of us are going to go get cleaned up. Saya you're in charge, get the others looking for the stuff from those lists of yours and anything else you find useful. Kohta, grab some binoculars, head up to the roof and keep an eye out. I'd like ta know what kind of numbers we're dealing with out there before we break out."

Kohta nodded. "Leave it to me boss." Before he turned away however, he looked at the police officer. "Oh, I think I found something that belongs to you officer-san." He pulled out the police gun Takashi and Rei had found after they had broken away from the group. "We found this during our travels, but I think you can make the best use of it."

Asami hefted the weapon, opening it up expertly to check the number of bullets inside then clicked it shut. "Hai, this is the police issue Smith and Wessen M37 air-weight!"

"Fuck yeah, with that thing you can mess those fuckers up out there!"

"But," Kohta, his face almost distorted, twisted and a little manic looking, "The noise of firing a gun will bring more of the zombies down on your heads, plus there are only so many bullets as there are people in your group. At any rate, I trust you will use it wisely." That sent a shot of fear up all of their spines and he turned away without another word, pulling his binoculars out of his backpack and looking for the stairs up to the roof.

Saya turned to the others. "Let's hit up the clothing store first, then the outdoor place. Pile everything together and start packing it all at once. Nothing perishable, it won't keep and won't be worth the space." The others nodded agreement, with Alice especially happy, wanting to get out of her dirty clothing.

"Hey," said the blonde middle-aged man, "you can't just steal stuff like that, what the hell, that's a crime!"

Ranma shook his head and ignored the man, turning and leaving with Saeko simply smiled blandly yet politely and made her own escape followed swiftly by the others. Behind them the mall occupants all gaped after them, before going back to their earlier discussion with Asami much more politely.

OOO Lemon Scene OOO

Saeko and Ranma quickly found the fountain where Asami had said it would be, just barely inside the main entrance to the mall. It sat in the middle of the thoroughfare, with a statues of several dolphins jumping out of the water. The air holes on their backs and their opens mouths were supposed to shoot the water up and back into the fountain's pool, but of course without power it wasn't working right now. Once they made certain the metal doors were closed the two of them split off. Saeko went and found something new to wear, deciding her former school blouse was a lost cause. Ranma did the same but also grabbed a pair of towels.

After that the two martial artists gleefully got into the water, washing off the blood and gore from their battle against the zombies. Saeko in particular was enjoying it, and took her blouse off, letting it drop into the pool of the fountain. Her skirt, a short number with a list up the side she had grabbed from Rika's apartment however she threw out of the water to land on the mall floor.

Ranma, who had just taken off his own shirt and had begun trying to wash the blood off (which was impossible unfortunately) but he stopped and stared at her pert derriere, barely covered by black silk panties, which were still soaked from her reaction to the earlier battle. He growled low, his desire coming out in force buoyed by his cat side, which saw his mate taking the proper position, turned away with her rear up.

He walked up, and Saeko smiled hearing him moving through the water behind her. A nice session with her boyfriend after a battle sounded just right to her. Then too the idea of doing it out in the open like this, in a public place but with no-one around to see, had her motor running just a bit more.

Ranma reached around her, pushing her bra up with one hand to begin to play with her large toned breast while his other arm pulled her upper body up against his, where he began to nibble and bite at the back of her neck.

Saeko reached behind her, one of her hands fumbling with Ranma's silk pants, pushing them just enough so that she could reach inside and play with his already stiffening cock, while the other reached up and got tangled in his hair as he worked his way around her neck. "Great minds think alike I see."

Ranma's voice was a deep rumbling purr that sent a shiver through her, her already wet pussy becoming even damper and her nipples hardening noticeably to his hand. "RRR....You smell good Saeko-chan, and no one's here to interrupt us."

"IndeEEEE!" Her voice went up an octave and her word disappeared into a moan as Ranma kissed a sweet spot on her neck while his free hand travelled into her panty, two fingers slipping into her hot depths easily. She moaned aloud, the used her grip on his hair to bring his head up, kissing him soundly on the lips, her tongue diving into his mouth.

The two of them fought for dominance, their tongues sliding around one another while their hands went to work. Saeko turned into the kiss, her two hands now working together on his now erect cock, stroking it up and down with one hand while the other played with his tip rubbing it. Ranma had one hand down her panties playing with her pussy adding another finger while the other alternated between her breasts, kneading her breasts and playing with her nipples.

Ranma won the battle such as it was five minutes later when his thumb began to play with her clit at the same time he curled the three fingers inside her to rub against a group of extra-sensitive nerves. The combination sent Saeko over the edge and she broke off their kiss to scream, "AHHHH! Oh yes right there RRAHHHnma!" She trembled her legs and muscles clenching and unclenching with the force of her orgasm for a moment.

She recovered quickly however and turned fully around pushing Ranma back for a moment. She sat down on the edge of the fountain and pulling her silk panties, already ruined by her juices and sticking to her like a second skin, to one side her other hand pulling Ranma toward her by his cock, lining him up with her pussy. Her smile widened slightly and she looked up at him through bedroom eyes as she murmured "I'm not in the mood for gentle right now, just give it to me, Love! Hard and FasSSS!"

Again Ranma interrupted her, thrusting in up to the hilt in one shot, her pussy, still a little unused to his size only able to resist for a moment before giving way under the invader's power.

Saeko threw back her head, an almost continuous moaning sound coming out of her mouth, while Ranma went at her like the incredibly fit martial artist he was, his hips moving swiftly slamming in and out of her, causing her entire body to shudder and move. He reached down, latching onto one nipple and sucking while his other reached underneath her as she bounced forward on the fountain's wall to play with her ass gripping it firmly. Saeko did her best to meet his thrusts, but after a few minutes began to peak again, and her attempts ended. Her hands fell to either side of her just keeping her body upright, her hands, with the strength training she had been doing, clenching against the stone,

cracking it.

Ranma had yet to build up his sexual endurance up yet, and it was only another thirty minutes or so before he broke off from kissing Saeko's neck. "Shit, Saeko-chan, I'm gonna cum soon!"

Saeko, just coming down from another orgasm, was struck by a suggestion coming from the primal part of her brain, the need to let her love cum inside her, feel his potent seed fill her and impregnate her filling her. The reality of the world around them however allowed the saner portions of her brain to push Ranma away.

He stumbled back through the battle and she slipped to her knee, her mouth opening as her hands went to his rear, pulling him in. The sensation of her mouth on his tip was enough to make Ranma lose control and he came with a loud groan, shooting his seed down her throat, his cock going off like a cannon.

After two massive spurts Saeko was forced to pull back, her mouth full of his cum. The next three shots, all equally viscous and large hit her heaving chest and face. After a moment they ended and she swallowed looking up at him tiredly, a little exhausted now, and unfortunately not feeling up to a second round.

To her dismay however Ranma's cock hadn't flagged at all, but he just sat down on the fountain's wall, pulling her into his lap, kissing her gently, his voice possessive. "Mine, Saeko-chan, so magnificent, so beautiful, so strong, my love, mine."

Saeko sighed happily, leaning kissing him back just as gently. "Yes, all yours, just as you are mine my love, even if I do end up sharing you." Ranma twitched a little, still not used to the idea of being shared like that, but Saeko's kisses completely disarmed him. Their cuddling time continued for a while as the two lovers simply basked in this moment of peace and the chance to be alone.

OOO Lemon End OOO

Nodoka gasped, her back going ramrod straight and her eyes widening dramatically. Her sister Kiriko looked up from where she had just killed a zombie in the single entrance to this precinct, the rest of the outer edge of its parking lot marked by a high wall separating it from the rest of the city. This wall, a throwback to when the city was far more lawless right after it had been built, was the entire reason it had been chosen as the point to use for the emergency evacuation.

Around them the police who had taken up truncheons and bill clubs also looked at the woman who had become the center of their defense against the zombies. "Nodoka, are you alright?"

"My, My son, I sense my son, has been... MANLY!" After that declaration Nodoka came back to the here and now, her blade, taken from the office of the chief of the precinct whipping forward faster than most of the police there could follow and slicing a zombie's head in half across the eyes so that the grey sludge where its brain had been could be seen. "Oh my, we'll have so much to talk about when we meet up!" Her free hand whipped out a victory fan from nowhere even as her sword came up in an economical backswing that slice another zombie's arms off before coming back and finishing the job, clearing the entrance to the precinct for the moment.

"Ah," Kiriko grimaced. This wasn't the first time her sister had suffered an odd fit, and Kiriko decided not to dwell on them. First was wondering what the hell her sister meant by manly, the first time she had asked about that had been enough. Then was the entire idea of somehow being able to tell when your child had been having... private time. That was beyond disturbing. "I don't suppose I could convince you to focus for a moment could I? More than enough time for that kind of thing later."

"Oh of course, no rest for the wicked as they say." With that Nodoka was fully back in the here and now, her blows flashing out even faster. She did take a moment however to reflect that practicing with Ranma had returned her skills to her far faster than she had expected.

Kiriko rolled her eyes, spearing another zombie through the head then using the butt end of her naginata to crush another's knee and then head in that order. "I refuse to be drawn on how wicked you are precisely."

"Moh Kiriko-nee, such a harsh accusation to throw at an innocent widow like me!"

"Hah, widow yes, innocent no, or need I remind you that your first gift to me when you heard I was getting married was a copy of the Kama Sutra, with **handwritten footnotes** about which positions were better for conception!?"

The two continued to trade barbs like that, and while the other policemen and women grinned at their banter, the two sisters continued their grisly work, keeping the zombies out of the parking lot. Above them the whirl of arriving

helicopters began to fill the air.

OOOOOO

After washing up yet again the two now much calmer martial artists wound their way back up to the second floor where the others were. They found Saya, Takashi Rei and Alice in the outdoors sports store right by its entrance.

The girls had all taken the time however to search for a few new outfits each. Alice now was in a pair of jeans rather than the skirt she had been wearing since they picked her up, along with a touch plaid over-shirt and a T-shirt with some kind of Pokémon on a black background. She had grabbed several other articles of clothing her side as well. When she began to grow they'd have issues, but for now this was enough.

Rei had been forced into several different outfits by Kyoko, Yuuki, Shizuka and Saya, but in the end had decided on a short multicolored skirt and a light green blouse with frills going down the front and around the sleeves. Kyoko had gotten new bras and panties, and tennis shoes. Yuuki had to be talked out of trying on everything and just taking it all, but had eventually been talked into just getting several sets of underwear since she could use the clothing they had already taken from Rika's apartment much like Rei though even more so since Rika's sense of fashion was closer to Yuuki's than Rei's. Well, that and one pair of white crotchless panties and some other sexy lingerie which she was eagerly looking forward to showing Ranma sometime in the future.

However it was Saya's change of clothing that drew Ranma's eyes, causing a deep, basso rumble to well up from deep in his body, his eyes almost burning in their intensity. Saya was dressed in very short jean shorts, held up by a pair of black suspenders that passed over a pink shirt that barely contained her breasts, the letters HQ etched out in white on it. The suspenders couldn't actually reach across her breasts however and had been forced to either side of her chest, pushing her breasts forward even more than normal.

Saya blushed hotly under Ranma's gaze, the heat of it causing her to blush, but somehow also empowering her, and she met his look with her own for several seconds before they looked away at the same time.

Ranma looked down at the large pile of stuff that they had built in front of the door, along with two more large duffel bags and nodded approvingly. They did after all have a finite amount of space in the Hummer, and even as it was it would be quite a bit of budging up to get all this in. Saeko and Ranma and possibly Rei could stay on the roof even when the Hummer was moving, and Alice could double up with any of the adults, well except for Shizuka, since her tits would probably suffocate the poor girl.

He noted two collapsible fishing poles that were still in their boxes thus saving a bit of space, as well as several metal cases of engine oil, various anti-mold sprays, and other things he didn't recognize.

Suddenly he realized someone was missing, pulling him from his perusal of the pile of stuff. He frowned suddenly looking around. "Where's Shizuka-chan and Rei?"

The others all looked at one another then shrugged and suddenly they paused as shouting could be heard down the hallway toward a mattress store.

Ranma led the way toward the sound of the shouts, which turned out to be coming from Asami and Rei. Rei had apparently gone in search of Shizuka a little earlier and found Shimada who was holding Shizuka with one arm over her chest, pawing at her breast over her ripped blouse with one hand while the other held a large cleaver to her throat. Shimada had lured Shizuka off to show her the mattress store, but rather than letting her rest as had been her reason to look for it, had jumped on her.

Her shouts for help had brought Rei running, and Asami had answered her shouts, adding her own voice and pulling her gun out to threaten the man, which had brought the rest of the mall occupants to the scene.

Ranma noticed out of the corner of his eye a dead body covered by a shroud, as well as the body of an old man beside it, one hand underneath the shroud holding the hand of the man underneath it. He wondered what had happened there, but shrugged it off as unimportant for now.

"Come on!" Shimada was shouting as the group entered the store. "The world's like this so why can't I have some fun with these nice titties! Hah, if you want me to stop you're gonna have to use that puny gun, or is miss high and mighty policewoman scared?!"

Asami flinched a little, but kept her gun aimed at the man.

Takashi raised a bat he had armed himself with earlier but Ranma shook his head and moved forward, removing his

meteor hammer from around his waist and beginning to twirl one end of it.

When he spoke, his voice was deadly calm, slow and measured despite his inner tomcat urging him to immediate action, his deep blue eyes as hard and as pitiless as the ocean. "Ya may doubt she has the will to shoot you, but don't doubt that I won't hesitate to kill you. Let Shizuka and maybe I'll let you live, but if that knife even so much as pricks her skin I'm going to crush your skull like a watermelon." The other mall dwellers all gaped at him, then shivered in the look in his eyes while Saeko and the others simply nodded grimly.

The man shuddered, quailing a little then laughed. "Please like you can shoot that thing faster than I can slit her throat! Just go away and let me have some fun, I promise I won't hurt her too bad!"

He was interrupted by a wire falling on around his neck and suddenly being pulled tight. Kohta had heard the disturbance at the same time Asami had and snuck up behind him with a bit of makeshift garrote wire. Now he was kneeling on the bed behind the man, his knees up against Shimada's back providing leverage as he pulled back, forcing the man to arch his back painfully and releasing Shizuka to claw at his throat.

Ranma shot forward dropping his meteor hammer, his hand grabbing the man's knife hand and squeezing. Everyone else there could hear the sound of bone being crushed under his grip and the man screamed the knife dropping from his now ruined hand.

"Nice work Kohta," said Ranma slapping the other teen on the shoulder

Kohta grinned not letting up on the pressure. "Thanks, now what do we do with this scumbag."

"Nail his balls to the floor," Rei replied from behind them, reaching forward and pulling Shizuka into a hug, which the buxom woman returned gratefully. Takashi gaped for a moment at that suggestion, but Kyoko simply looked at Rei for a moment before looking away, having another clue to a puzzle and not liking the answer she was coming to.

"Heh, tempting," Ranma replied but then he shook his head. "Never mind, let him go Kohta."

Kohta complied, scowling until he noticed the look that Asami was giving him for his bit of heroics. Yuuki and the others were also looking at him approvingly.

As soon as the garrote was removed the man tried to gasp, "you bastard, you crushed my hand, I'll fucking kigrrk!"

Ranma's hand had come up grabbing the man's throat in a vise of steel. Still holding the man like that he reached down and picked up his meteor hammer from where it had fallen, the blade snapping out at a touch from one finger.

He was about to bring it up to stab the man with when he remembered they weren't alone. He looked back at the others, particularly Alice, and then ever so slowly let his meteor hammer fall back out of his grasp onto the mattress. While he knew this man had to pay, he wasn't about to kill him right in front of the others, especially Alice. None of them needed to see that kind of thing, Alice least of all given the fact she had already seen her daddy stabbed to death.

"I'm not going to kill you asshole, even though you deserve it. But I won't let you get away with it either." With his free hand he grabbed Shimada's one working hand where it had been thumping ineffectually at Ranma's grip on his throat. As the others watched he squeezed again, and the man screamed as his left hand was crippled to match his right.

The sight gave the women there a sense of satisfaction and brought a grim smile to Kohta and Takashi even as Takashi made Alice turn away and had his hands over the girl's ears. Three of the men among the mall dwellers however looked sick and angry. The last was sidling his way over to where the cleaver had skittered across the floor. The out of shape blond man scowled his anger and fear overcoming his earlier concern about Asami having a gun. "Hey police girl, are you just going to let him get away with that? He's taking the law into his own hands!"

Asami looked at him, and for once her normally upbeat, happy face was firm and hard as she replied, "Would you be saying the same thing if you were a woman?"

The blonde man growled at that and he and the others left, leaving only Asami there for now except for the black haired teen, who was now almost to the cleaver, but Takashi had noticed and was making his way up behind him.

Ranma finished crushing the man's hand and let him fall back onto the mattress, where he curled up around his hand, whimpering in agony.

Shizuka moved forward, her nurse's instincts awoken at the man's plight. Rei and Ranma were about to stop her but backed away when they saw her serious face. Ranma realized then that helping people in pain was as much a part of Shizuka as the need to fight was part of him. It was a strange moment of insight and it passed quickly but it left him understanding the often ditzy nurse better than he had before. With that thought Ranma raced off to the Hummer, returning in under two minutes with the nurse's bag.

Shizuka looked up from where she had been examining the man's hands, astonished that all the bones in them hadn't been just crushed, most of them had been pulverized, there was no chance he would ever have use of them again. She stared hard at Ranma then smiled widely and took the bag from him. She forced some pain killers between the man's lips, then used some gauze to tie Shimada's hands so tightly so that he couldn't move them, since that would only aggravate the pain.

Ranma held the man still, keeping his eyes on Shizuka's face as she worked, smiling faintly at the look of concern and concentration there, the woman's compassion something to see even for a man who had tried to rape her.

While this was going on Takashi stepped forward calmly stepping on the black haired teen's hand as it reached for the cleaver on the ground. The teen surprised him reaching inside his coat and pulling out a small kitchen knife and trying to stab him but Takashi quickly brought his bat down the man's head knocking him out.

The sound of the blow brought the attention of all of the others, who had been watching Shizuka at work, some with disconcerted faces, other's with much more understanding expressions.

Under their stares Takashi nudged the knife away from the teen and shrugged. "I didn't like the look in his face, and then he tried to knife me so..."

Most of the others nodded understanding even Asami, but Shizuka pouted rather adorably as she got up, making her way over to the teen's comatose body. "Mou Kumoro-kun, don't make more work for me that fast."

Something in her voice made Takashi back away, mumbling "Sorry," as he did so.

Ranma shrugged unconcerned and nodded over at Kohta. "Kohta, head back up to the roof, but concentrate on the streets leading in the direction we're heading, as well as you know. It worked so well on the way here, we'll keep going with the same strategy."

"Oh," Saya drawled, "Do you even know what that word means?"

Ranma mock pouted at her but Kohta merely grinned. "You got it, man," with that he turned away, and after a second Asami followed after him.

Shizuka ignored this, concentrating on the teen Takashi had laid out. Luckily he wasn't nearly as badly hurt as Shimada. His hand was bruised a bit, but nothing that wouldn't go away quickly, and he would have a bump on his head the size of his fist, but nothing major, maybe a slight concussion but there was no way to know with what she had on hand, nor did she want to stay here long enough to find out.

Now that she was finished with her duty as a nurse the adrenaline was leaving her and the reality of what had almost happened to her began to set in and she stumbled as she tried to stand back up, her whole body shaking and her arms coming up to try to cover her exposed breasts, trying to pull ineffectually at her ripped blouse.

She flinched slightly as strong arms went around her shoulders, but then collapsed against Saeko's chest, trembling and sobbing quietly. Ranma and the others, all moved to comfort her, their hands rubbing her back gently save for Alice who simply patted her thigh. She could have reached higher, but from where she was in the group hug she could only have reached her rear, which seemed a silly place for her to pat the woman.

Only Kyoko didn't join in, merely turning with the stated purpose of going to see if she could find something Shizuka could wear.

Ranma heard this and motioned over to Takashi, who frowned for a moment then nodded and turned to follow the history teacher out of the store.

He caught up with her easily and she turned to look at him questioningly. "Ranma doesn't want any of us going off on our own." He replied simply as he began to walk beside her.

"And what do you think?" Kyoko asked as the two of them reached the women's clothing store. She sighed a little. She hated shopping with Shizuka, it truly wasn't good for her ego to know that her own large bust size didn't compare

to the fun bags Shizuka was equipped with. It was a good thing in a way that Shizuka was so darn likeable, since that killed most of her jealousy, else the two of them would never have gotten along.

Takashi's words however were very good for her ego, and put a smile on her face despite her current task. "I think that you are extremely attractive and I don't trust any of the people here to not try anything despite Ranma's little example of what could happen to them."

Kyoko actually blushed a little, and pointedly did not notice that Takashi was taking the opportunity to check her out while the two of them walked through the aisles of clothing. She could feel his gaze on her, and despite what had just happened to her friend it made her feel good to know that a handsome young man would look at her like that. She deliberately bent over in such a way that her skirt rode up her legs, showing more of her toned legs and thighs, toned by her work with the PE clubs as well as her own exercise regimen.

His indrawn breath and little gasp was music to her ears and it was with some reluctance that she straightened up, having found a shirt that Shizuka could wear.

The two of them swiftly went back and found Shizuka having recovered much of her composure, though she still clung to her neko-chan. She disengaged from him however when Kyoko came back with a new blouse with gram color zigzags on the arms on a green background.

Saya took the opportunity to get everyone's attention back to what they were doing. "Let's head back to the sports store and finish gathering stuff. The sooner we're done, the sooner we can get out of here."

That was something no-one there disagreed with and they all left the mattress store, leaving behind the now unconscious Shimada and the knocked out teen still on the floor.

OOOOOO

Kohta had grabbed a map and a marker so that he could make notes about anything he saw that they might need to know about. From the vantage point of the mall's roof he could see a bit more of their planned route, as well as several places he could set up to cover the Hummer's approach. He marked those points down on the map with a circle, and any large concentrations of zombies, such as one around a building with a sign proclaiming it a doctors office, was marked down by an X. "Damn it, their numbers are staggering, this thing spread so quickly! Takagi-san's right, we need to get out of the city as soon as possible. There isn't a single place here that we could fort up enough to withstand numbers like this."

He also saw what looked like a band of fifteen armed people moving in the distance. Though he couldn't make out many details, he could see they weren't wearing any uniforms, and the way they moved wasn't something that looked very organized to his eyes. The fact they seemed to be looting some kind of store, he couldn't tell what kind from here, was another sign, that and their openness and the number of guns argued they were yakuza. Soldiers and police might well loot under these circumstances of course, but not the entire group like that, and of course the lack of uniforms was telling. A group of regular survivors would be much more circumspect about moving around, unused to violence especially on this level.

Kohta looked up suddenly when a voice behind him startled him. "What are you doing?"

He looked up to see Asami standing behind him, just a little too far away for him to look up her skirt but close enough to check out her legs easily enough. "Oh, um, I'm just trying to map out our route. Ranma, well you probably noticed he's pretty much our leader, he trusts me to pick out the best way to go."

"Wow that's impressive. He, well he's kind of scary isn't he?" Asami said, looking away as she sat down next to him. The way Ranma had threatened Shimada and then crushed his hands had scared her a bit even if she agreed with the reason behind it.

"He can be, but he's also really cool." Kohta smiled faintly. "We're an odd group, but we're all necessary to the survival of everyone else. We just keep on going."

"Wow, that's an amazing way of thinking, and your skills are soooo amazing." Asami sighed sadly. "Asami doesn't think, well she doesn't think so much of her own skills. If it weren't for your help earlier Asami wouldn't have been able to keep control."

She suddenly launched herself at him in a hug that made Kohta realize that, despite first impressions and her apparent boyish figure, she really was a girl. Kohta began to blush heavily as her chest rubbed up against his face.

"Really, thank you so much!"

The two continued to talk, with Asami leading the conversation and Kohta simply responding for a time until they got to her training as a police officer, where Kohta began to talk more enthusiastically. They didn't even notice that Yuuki, who had left the group to go to the bathroom and decided to check on the gun maniac, had seen them and turned around smiling faintly as she went back downstairs.

After a little while however their conversation steered back to their present circumstances, and Asami lamented the fact that her senior partner hadn't gotten back yet with the promised help. This sparked a memory from earlier that day for Kohta and he gulped. If what he was thinking was correct... "Th-that policewoman you mentioned, did she have black hair down to her neck, about medium height, with a sash on her arm and a single bang in front of her eyes?"

Asami blinked in surprise. "Oh, have you met my senpai before?"

"Um, no, not exactly, um, you see, on the way here, I was set up on a roof off to the side of our main groups advance to clear the way and draw any zombies my way." Kohta answered, trying to come to the point as slowly as possible.

"Oh, you must have been very brave to do that! And a tremendous shot too! But, wait, you don't have any guns now do you?"

"Um, we'll come back to that. Listen, um, when I was clearing the route, I saw a pack of ten zombies. O-one of them, she was the woman you just described." Asami paled dramatically and Kohta hesitantly reached out to take her hand. "She um, she looked like she took several of them out before she got bit, but, um, one bite is all it takes, and she must have gotten away and then..."

Asami began to cry, not deep wracking sobs, but a constant flow of tears that didn't seem to be stopping anytime soon, and in a rare moment of courage towards the opposite sex Kohta reached out and pulled her into a hug, which the distraught policewoman returned by gripping his jacket tightly, as if she would never let go.

After about ten minutes, the crying subsided, but she didn't relinquish her grip on his shirt and Kohta didn't let her out of his grasp. "Listen, why don't you come with us?" He felt her stiffen a little, and he went on hurriedly. "The group you've got here can't sustain itself for long, you've already seen signs of it and it's only going to get worse. None of those guys are willing to see the world's changed, that they need to change their ways to survive, they just want other people to save them. That's not going to happen anytime soon, and, and I know you think it's your duty and all, but don't you have a duty to look after yourself too?"

Asami leaned back a little looking up at him, her eyes still glistening with tears, but there was a small smile on her face. She reached up with one hand to wipe her faces clear of tears then leaned back even further. "Let me think about it okay?"

Kohta nodded, looking a little depressed, but that vanished when Asami leaned back in and kissed him gently on the lips.

It was the first kiss Kohta had ever had, well unless you counted Shizuka kissing his cheek, but he didn't think that counted. It was sweet, and soft and nice and Kohta's brain stopped functioning for a moment until Asami pulled back, then left him there, a blush on his cheek s and a stunned look on his face.

OOOOOO

Saya stood up, pushing up her glasses as she thought looking over their barely organized pile of stuff. "We'll have to rework the packing in the Hummer you know, we want the weapons and food packs on top and easily accessible, so we can get at them for an emergency but we need to be careful with the latop too."

That idea brought a frown to her face. So far they had been very lucky, the mobility Ranma brought to their group as well as his and Saeko's abilities and Kohta's skill had protected them from getting bogged down and overwhelmed, but she knew that wasn't going to help getting out of here and she wondered what Ranma had planned.

"We might have another problem," Yuuki murmured, a bit of a grin on her face as she looked out the store and in the direction of the stairwell up to the roof. "I think Kohta's might try to convince that police girl, Asami, to go with us, that means one more person to fit in the Hummer."

Yuuki shrugged from where she was stuffing a duffel bag full of camp gear, mostly cooking equipment, heavy woolen socks. They had already pulled out sleeping bags for all of them Save Ranma who said he wouldn't need one. Alice

had tried to convince them to get a anime pattern sleeping bag for her, but they had decided she could sleep with one of the girls. Alice had pouted at that, but had gone off with Rei to the pet store for food and a toy for Zeke, the little puppy who she and Kohta had named during their trip across the river. The two had yet to return but with Rei with her armed with another makeshift spear none of them were worried.

"On the other hand think I saw some bungee cords here somewhere, we can use them and pile up the back of the hummer with three duffel bags if we pack them carefully. And Alice-chan can always sit on someone's lap, and that goes for Rei and Takashi too." Yuuki smirked a little evilly at that and Saya surprised herself by returning it.

Kyoko on the other hand fought back a frown. No one else may have noticed how the temperamental brunette had flinched when she was unexpectedly touched by Takashi or the other men, but she had, and she wondered about the reasons behind it. She had also seen the horrible look of rage and a bit of fear that had crossed her face when she found Shizuka and Shimada. *Still, the girl should be able to handle sitting on Takashi's lap, that's not exactly an unexpected touch after all... but crap, if **that** was her reason for hating Shido, why didn't she say anything?* "That works for now, though I'm glad you'll be busy driving Shizu-chan."

Shizuka looked up at her questioningly and Kyoko smiled impishly at her friend. ""If you were I don't doubt you'd insist that Alice-chan sit on your lap, and those impossibly huge tits of yours would suffocate the poor girl." Shizuka pouted but Kyoko went on. "You nearly did that the night she showed up you know. It was only my waking up just then that saved her from a pillowy death."

The other girls chuckled, even Saeko who was standing guard by the entrance to the sports shop. Ranma had left earlier to make certain the loading area was still clear, and to guard the hummer until they were ready to go. The mall residents weren't really strong enough or resourceful enough to try and steal from them, but it was better safe than sorry.

Yuuki kept her mind on the conversation though and continued. "So if we rig up a tarp and some bungee cords we can put three of the duffel bags on the back of the hummer, but you won't be able to see out the back window Shizuka-sensei. A pity the gun port on top and the slope on the back won't let us mount any of the roof racks. Any preferences for what stays inside and what doesn't?"

"Short term food supplies, clothing and the extra fuel, go outside" Saya replied promptly. "The extra ammo and weapons too, they should be where we can get at them. That'll leave the sleeping bags, much easier to stuff in odd corners, the long term food supplies, the computer, the two boxes and the camping and fishing gear, as well as the stuff we'll need in the long term."

This included a sewing kit, fishing net, seeds for carrots, daikon radishes, and other plants that would, along with the things they could glean from the ocean, make up their diet once they reached their island destination, though not rice since it was too land and water intensive.

Non-food items included an Ultra UV water purifier, a crank operated radio, an all purpose adapter, three fully stocked first aid kits, several bottles of sun screen, several books on roughing it and makeshift medicine, fishing and other things as well as bottles of bug spray. Next to them were two Zero Boulder 30 solar kits in their boxes, which would be the first thing put in the trunk of the car. With them they might be able to rig up enough power to power a decent sized cabin for a while.

Saya had been the driving force behind most of this, not just because it was her idea and lists in the first place, but because she refused to think in terms of if, she **knew** they were going to make it, it was that simple. Even a month ago she wouldn't think that optimistically, but there was something about hanging out with Ranma that made her believe that anything was possible, and that had simply been heightened to a new level when the epidemic began.

Yuuki finished rooting around their pile-o'-stuff and held up five long bungee cords triumphantly. "Since Ranma's already there, I'll head back to the truck now, and get all the stuff out and start organizing it again." *Meaning I'll stand around and watch Ranma do the work.* The others all nodded and Yuuki turned, looking around the store. "Now, where did I see that tarp?"

After a moment Shizuka and Takashi left carrying two large duffel bags, though they would wait to load the car. Behind them Saya and Kyoko kept stuffing the last bag. This bag consisted of a lot of odds and ends that Saya had personally grabbed.

Two of the mall dwellers walked into the store at that point, the old man that had bitched so much about seeing Ranma and Saeko holding weapons, and the office lady. The old man sneered a little. "For all your high and mighty talk about looking after yourselves, you're just simple looters! When everything gets back to normal you'll..."

Saeko cut him off, not angrily but contemptuously. "It will never get back to normal, and the sooner you get that into your head, the longer you may live, not that it matters to us. As for us taking these items, it was meant to be used, what should we do, just leave it? We will not be told what to be responsible for by you, nor will we cripple ourselves trying to conform to laws that no longer matter. Now, unless you have something else you want to say, I suggest you leave us alone. None of us want to have anything to do with any of you."

The old man grumbled and turned away but the office lady took a far more conciliatory line. "Listen, why don't you all stay here? I mean, it's obvious you've got skills that can help all of us survive until help arrives."

Saya shook her head. "No chance. This place is too large of us to defend, it can't support us long terms, it's practically in the center of the city and we've our own long term plans. I'll trust the plans I helped make over any kind of half-assed someone else thought up."

She shook her head, this time much more emphatically. The idea of air lifting people out of the city like Asami had mentioned or like Kiriko had passed on through Ranma was nice and all, but what it meant was you had a lot of mouths to feed in a small area. If even one infected person went undiscovered that would turn it into a death trap. And unless you started screening people (which was a whole other problem) you couldn't be certain enough of them had any skills to add to the long term survival of the group as a whole. For instance the mall group had yet to show any skills she thought were useful in the current situation.

That's probably why they are so eager to talk us into staying and helping, not a one of them looks like they could fight well, they don't skill or weapons despite the number of shops that sell stuff they could use or anything really, she thought. "No, if you want to stay here and fort up until help miraculously arrives, that's up to you. My suggestion would be to retreat to the roof with as much food as you can manage and barricade every door between it and the second floor. But as for us, we're moving on, just like Ranma said at the beginning."

The two adults scowled at her response and Kyoko stood up, stretching a little and thrusting her chest out accidentally, which made the office lady glare angrily and the older man stare. "That's it, we're done here, let's get this back to the Hummer and then meet up with the others."

Saya nodded and the two walked off carrying one of the portable sola panel boxes each, while Saeko easily hefted the duffel bag in one hand. Neither of the others could have carried it far, but to her it was almost light.

The old man tried to get in their way but Saeko reached out with her sheathed blade and moved him to one side, the look in her eyes making him back away without further protest.

OOOOOO

Yuuki grinned as she watched Ranma bend over again to lift something out of the back of the Hummer, not even grunting under the weight of the two duffel bags. That cleared out the back of the Hummer for the new stuff, including the two boxes for the solar cells.

With that done they had to wait for the last of the stuff, and Yuuki decided to try to make small talk. Despite her attraction to Ranma, they really hadn't had many conversations, not serious ones anyway, and she was wondering what else there was to him beyond the obvious. "So, from here we go to meet up with your mom and Rei's right? You think they're still holding out?"

Ranma nodded, leaning against the side of the Hummer and looking back at her, and she preened a little as his gaze raked over body, taking in the blouse she had unbuttoned to show more cleavage, the tight jeans that left little to the imagination. "Yep, if there's one thing I know, my mom won't have gone down just yet. Not with aunt Kiriko to watch her back."

"Huh must be nice to actually get along with even one of your parents. I used to get along with my old man when he was sober anyway, but then he just left one day and never returned. He just walked out, nothing happened, no cops no note, and we never saw him again. My mom was always a more distant sort, she never was really there for me, and it got worse when she started to work as a flight attendant. I honestly can't say I miss either of them." Yuuki scowled a little, though on her face it actually looked good.

"Heh, I'll match your walk-out drunkard and distant mom and raise you my abusive, thieving and dishonorable pop. Let me tell ya, some of the things he did..." Ranma went on from there, and the two traded stories of their parents behaving badly, though Ranma was right, just the neko-ken training blew every complaint Yuuki had out of the water. From there it was an easy leap to childhood adventures, again dominated by Ranma, as well as how Yuuki got into working on cars.

It turned out the friend who often checked up on her was an owner of a repair shop, and she was over there more often than she was home when she was younger, and absorbed everything the man told her about cars. It was marred in the last few years by the way he had begun to hit on her, but she hadn't really minded much.

Ranma was somewhat amused by the way Yuuki was so... free with her sexuality. She used her body and her sexuality like a tool that she could pull out and use whenever she wanted to. When she wanted something she turned it on, when she wanted attention she turned it on, when she didn't need it she simply buttoned a few buttons on her top, rearranged her hair, and suddenly her sexuality was toned down dramatically, not gone, it could never be gone given her looks, but subdued.

He looked at her now, seeing her with her sexuality on full, trying to tempt him. It wasn't something he would have noticed if Saeko hadn't pointed her attraction to him out along with his interest in Saya and vice versa, but once it had been pointed out it was kind of obvious. But he was still leery about acting on Saeko's suggestion of sharing, regardless of what his tomcat side wanted, so he kept trying to keep his eye on her face rather than the rest of the package. Idly he wondered if a woman could make a martial art out of her sexuality like that, using it to distract her opponents and open them up to defeat

He was talking about some of the places he had seen when Shizuka and Takashi came by dropping off their bags and the nurse gleefully began to fire questions at him about places in China and Asia he had been, then began to describe places she wanted to go see if she had the chance, and Ranma replied with some more tales about his training trip and Yuuki supplied a few stories her mother had told her on the few times she was home about her own travels as a flight attendant.

Their conversation was interrupted when the others came through the door from the mall into the loading area, and Ranma hurried over to Kyoko and Saya, relieving them of their burdens and easily hefting one box of solar cells in each hand. "So this stuff goes on the bottom right?"

Saya nodded, and then directed Ranma and the others in repacking the back of the Hummer. The solar cells went on the bottom, with two duffels full of seeds, fishing gear and other long term goods on top then the electronics gear on top of that including the laptop, stuffed in with the sleeping bags. Then Yuuki took over, ordering Saeko and Ranma around in put on the bungee cords and the three remaining duffel bags on the sloped back of the Hummer.

Yuuki nodded approvingly. "That's it, we're good to go. The guns themselves will have to be up in our laps or in the gun port, though I don't think Kohta'll be complaining about that."

The others laughed and Ranma shook his head. Let's go get the others. I don't want us to be around here for much longer." With Saya once more carefully locking the car behind them walked back into the mall proper.

OOOOOOO

Takashi had gone to find Rei and Alice after dropping off his load and found Alice sitting in the Food court as Rei served her a fountain soda. Rei had worked at the mall over the summer, so knew where everything in the food court was. Takashi smiled at this little bit of normality, and sat down next to the young girl. "Mmm, that looks good Alice-chan, what kind of smoothie is it?"

Alice grinned. "Cherry Chocolate soda with lots of syrup too!" The girl paused for a minute then went on hesitantly. "Nee, oni-chan, should I learn how to use a gun?"

Takashi froze for a moment then answered heartily, "No, you don't need to do anything like that! We're all here to protect you, in fact if you think about it we're like, we're like knights protecting their princess!" He got out of his chair and went to his knees before the little girl, bowing his head. "Command me my lady!"

Alice giggled, all thoughts of fighting leaving her and she declaimed grandly "I order you to find my fellow princess Rei-nee-chan and bring her back here!"

Rei's voice came from behind the kneeling girl, accompanied by the little puppy running over and trying to hop into the chair next to her. "Wow princess, way better than a tavern wench, which is what I normally felt like working here."

Rei sat down next to the young girl, who hugged her in thanks for the drink while Rei sat down another few drinks she had made. Since the place no longer had power it would only be a matter of time before the ingredients went bad, so she figured it was better to use them up now, though she wasn't going to trust any of the meat or poultry here or even in the little market down the hall. "So did you have fun with that bike of yours Alice-chan?"

The girl had dragged her away from their looting of the various stores to get Zeke some food and a chew toy then forced her to watch her bike around the mall on a small bike. Watching Alice bike around and perform several tricks with the bike had been a real eye-opener. It was a pity they wouldn't be able to take it with them.

Alice beamed happily as she finished her bite of her smoothie and held up her clean spoon. "It was a lot of fun nee-chan! I wish we could take it with us?" She half asked, half stated.

Kohta came in then, looking a little out of it, followed by the others coming from the other direction. Ranma looked up and decided the second story was high enough for him to continue training Saeko on roof hopping. The two of them moved off to the other end of the food court where Saeko began to jump up to the second story, easily reaching that height, where she grabbed the rail for a moment before jumping back down, her knees flexing easily. This exercise drew Alice and Zeke, and the little girl raced over to watch.

Saya, Kyoko and Shizuka sat at one table while Takashi and Kohta sat at another, talking about something that the girls noticed employed a lot of hand waving for some reason. Yuuki and Rei disappeared back into the kitchen areas of the Food Court in search of something better than a smoothie to drink, hopefully with caffeine in it.

"So," Kyoko murmured to Shizuka while she sipped at one of the smoothies Rei had made, "as a nurse, what do you think of the health of our little group?"

Shizuka leaned back slightly, her face losing its normal look of affable air-headedness once again. "I never made a study of psychology, let alone the effect disasters like our present circumstances might do to people. The best I can do is give you my best guess."

"I know that, I just want to see if your opinions match with mine."

"And mine," Saya muttered, looking over to where Kohta was either describing one of his shots from when he was covering their approach to the mall, or was simply gesticulating angrily, Saya couldn't tell from here. "I know that some of us are a little too at home in this environment and I've seen some flashes of, well..."

"Busujima-san and Ranma-kun are the worst in that respect." Shizuka replied, using a slightly more formal mode of speech for neko-kun than she normally would, but not by much. "I've met a few like them before, though most admittedly were policemen and soldiers." Rika had introduced her to a lot of her friends both in the SAT and in the army, and there were a few there who had issues. "They're both combat junkies, and this is a dream come true to them. There's, there's a darkness in such people, and in their case it's like calling to like. But that's offset by the fact that what's good in them is also reinforcing one another."

Kyoko rubbed at the bridge of her nose briefly right above her glasses, but nodded. "I can't say I'm happy about it, but you're right, as long as they're around to support one another they won't lose themselves, at least I hope not. I think I've got a handle on Takashi, he's grief stricken for now, which is offsetting any enjoyment he was getting because of the lawless nature of the world at the moment, making him realize how bad this all is. Alice has helped him too, taking care of her and Rei keeps him from wallowing in his grief. I've been watching him, and I think I can keep him centered."

"Yuuki too is enjoying herself a little, but like Takashi that's mostly because of the chance to do things she couldn't get away with before, not because of violence, though I could wish she was a bit less..."

"Slutty?" Saya supplied dryly. "Of course she was like that before all this shit began. Now she just seems to be using it for a purpose, though if Kohta convinces that police ditz to come with us she won't have to anymore. Of course if they try and get lovey-dovey in front of me, I'll probably puke but whatever." Kyoko chuckled while Shizuka pouted muttering about what a meanie Takagi-san was, but the pink-haired genius went on blithely. "Anyway, that brings me to the two with the most issues, Rei and Kohta, two very different cases. Kohta's a guy who suddenly has found his one real skill is in very high demand in this new world, and can let out his own dangerous side without anyone calling him on it. He's already proved that his first instinct is to go for hid guns, even when the situation calls for something else."

"That's why I'm hoping Asami-kun does join us," Shizuka said firmly, her eyes drawn from their discussion to where Ranma had picked Alice up princess style and leaped up joining Saeko on the second floor. Beyond them she could see the slightly overweight blond man and the guy dressed like a punk looking on in shock at the sight. She giggled quietly, wondering what the two would make of it before turning back to the conversation. "Asami-kun can hopefully keep him under control, or at least give him a real reason to stay in control, much more than Yuuki-chan's blatant flirtation, since she flirted with all of the boys."

"And Rei?" Saya asked.

"Rei's problems are her own," Kyoko said firmly. "Their root cause may lie well before our current circumstances, though it obviously has exacerbated them. When she decides to share the root of them we will support her, until then we will make certain she isn't a danger to herself or others because of her acting out or independent attitude. Clear?" Kyoko glared at Saya and Shizuka with all the power of a senior teacher behind her glasses, reminding even Shizuka, who had never seen the look before, that there was a reason students called her 'evil megane'.

Both the other girls responded in the affirmative, and Kyoko got up, waving her arms over to where Yuuki and Rei had just come back from the kitchen, slurping down cappuccinos like they were the last one they'd ever have, which might well be the case. The three girls moved over to join the two caffeine addicts and then on to pick up Ranma and the two girls with him before moving over to the two boys.

Kohta looked around anxiously, noticing that the groups seemed to be getting ready to go but Asami had yet to appear. "Um, look, can't we wait a bit longer, I mean, um, I sort, uh, invited Asami along?" He winced a little looking up at Ranma and the others thinking they'd shoot the idea down given the little amount of space they had in the Hummer.

Ranma blinked then shrugged unconcerned. "Well if she wants to come, that's okay I guess. She can make herself useful after all; I assume she can shoot right?"

Kohta nodded quickly, even though he didn't actually know that. In fact most policewomen and men in Japan weren't really trained as well as he, a civilian had been trained to in America to actually shoot. After all, armed crimes (in terms of crimes where guns were used) were extremely rare in Japan given the societal anathema toward them. And for those times when that wasn't the case the SAT and the local SWAT teams were used.

Ranma nodded but went on grimly. "But it's pushing three now, I want us moving out within thirty minutes or so, I want us at Saya's house before nightfall. Even if yer parents have moved on Saya-chan," He said, looking at the pink haired genius, "yer house will make a good place to fort up before moving on."

Saya nodded firmly at that, not showing how worried she was about her parents though she was still pissed at them for not trying to contact her or check up on her. She knew her parents could handle themselves, and her father had what amounted to a personal company of bodyguards that could give an equal number of soldiers a run for their money. So the fact they hadn't tried to check up on her bothered the hell out of her.

"If we're going to meet up with your aunt and mom before that, we should leave now, no telling how bad the streets are between here and there." She said, her voice showing her warring emotions at the idea of finding her parents.

Ranma nodded in agreement and turned back to Kohta. "You've got ten minutes to get her back here, after that we're out of here."

Kohta clenched his teeth angrily, but nodded all the same. Ranma was looking out for the good of the team as a whole, and he was right about them needing to leave soon.

As this discussion was going on, Asami and the other mall residents came down to the first level. Most of them were staring at Ranma and Saeko having seen the two of them jumping up to the second floor easily. Most of them were looking as if they felt the two were monsters as dangerous as the zombies, though the punk was looking more encouraged by it, as was Asami.

Asami had been holding onto her courage under the current crisis by using her duty to keep the others of her group alive, but it had been getting harder and harder with them all chaffing under the need to remain inside the mall, and unable to contact anyone since all the lights went out last night. All of them were so selfish, so self-centered and so blind it really pissed her off, even if she had never shown it.

It had occurred to her that none of them really were able to survive in this new world, and in her darker moments she had maybe thought that ditching them would be the way to go, but she had been afraid to set out on her own. The mall wasn't a good place to hold up long term, but it was safe for now.

She had held out hope that her superior would get through and a helicopter would be sent to evacuate them. That hope had been dashed when Kohta told her about her superior's zombie-fication. Now however she saw Kohta and his skills with the gun, as well as Saeko and Ranma's superhuman abilities, and they had given her hope that maybe they could get out of here successfully.

"Are you all still thinking of getting out of here? Bunch of delinquents," the old man scowled at them.

Ranma simply grinned. "Better a delinquent who can look after himself in this new world than you assholes who are nothing but a burden." He turned to Asami. "You coming or not? Cause we need to get going."

Asami hesitated and the other mall residents gaped, but it was the man with the bald pate who spoke up. "Wh-what the hell are you talking about? The policewoman has to stay here right, I mean that's the plan, her superior went to tell..."

Saya scoffed loudly, interrupting him. "Tell who? We haven't seen any sign of anything to suggest the police have enough power left to do anything but fort up in a few precincts. No way will they divert anything here to save a few random people."

"Gah all of you talking like that! How do you know that! This whole thing is going to just blow over! If we survive until it does..." the older blonde man said.

He was interrupted in turn by Kyoko, and when she spoke they all listened more than they had to the teens simply because she was an adult like them, and her words were reasoned and clear. "The world will never be the same again. Even if you discount the fact this plague or whatever sprang up everywhere at once and that most governments are gone or collapsing as we speak, you forget that cities like this take a hell of a lot of manpower to run, and since the power hasn't returned, it shows that there aren't enough people left to keep it running, so the idea of this blowing over is specious at best. Waiting here might seem safe in the short term, but in the long term you are leaving your lives up to the vagaries of fate."

She could have mentioned the air lift that Kiriko had mentioned to Ranma, but like Saya she had instinctively decided she didn't want these people to try and come with them or even try to break out at the same time on their own. It might be callous of her, but she knew their team couldn't survive if this group tried to go with them, drawing monsters with their insipid noise and arguing and spreading their fighters thinner. "That may be alright for you all, but not for us."

Asami straightened up and nodded. "I, I'm going with you. A police officers job is to protect and you'll all be in much more danger than the people who stay here!" She turned to the younger man in the suit who had mostly kept his mouth shut and watched what was going on silently. "Just keep all the doors closed and you've got enough food and drinks and, and other stuff to survive until help comes. You, you all thought you could do a better job organizing this place or leading you all, well now you've got your chance." And with that Asami turned her back on the obnoxious, demanding and irritating group and ran over to join Kohta.

"You, you can't be serious!" the old man stuttered, but the punk and the young man in the suit looked at one another then nodded. The two of them had been the most easygoing of the mall dwellers, and had talked before together, but they had simply followed the majority up to now, and were just realizing it had been the wrong thing to do. The man in the suit smiled. "Good luck you guys, I wish, well I wish I was brave enough to go out there, but I know I'd be more of a liability than anything else."

The punk scratched his head irritably but nodded. "Hey yo, I just want to say you guys be ballin', I'm sorry I gave you such a hard time police chick, I was just goin' with the flow you know. But you get out of here, you've done enough for us."

The rest of the mall dwellers looked at them but the two men refused to look at them instead turning to Kohta and Ranma. "Any suggestions before ya go?"

Ranma smiled, seeing that the fact they'd really have to rely only on themselves had stiffened their spines a little. "Hammers and blunt weapons are better against the damn zombies if they get in, but watch that rapist asshole and the guy with the emo haircut. If either of 'em give ya trouble tie 'em up somewhere. Barricades inside too, at the stairs and the escalators, that's about it."

The two looked back at one another and then nodded and moved off without another word, followed quickly by the office lady, who was looking at them both in a new light.

Ranma chuckled as the others retreated now outnumbered badly by his group. "Huh, well, sometimes a spine can grow at the oddest times." That said he turned back to the others. "Kohta, how many zombies are out there in the parking lot."

This question Kohta broke out of his happy stupor and staring at Asami with a blush on his face mirrored by one on

her face. "Um, what, oh right the zombies, I saw about two hundred or so, maybe more scattered across the parking lot. A group of fifty or so were around the entrance we used, but they were dispersing, heading out into the rest of the city, though I don't know why, I couldn't hear anything. There were a few fires in the distance though."

Ranma nodded, thinking hard. "Alright, here's the plan. I've got some firecrackers left, then I'll head up to the roof now, head out over the side and set them up to lead the zombies away from the delivery entrance. I'll take one of the walky-talkies with me and when the groups of zombies closest to the mall starts reactin' I'll call ya to start heading out."

"Do you want me to come with you?" Saeko asked.

Ranma looked at the others. "Takashi, you think you and the others can get the door open without Saeko."

Takashi frowned. "Raising the door manually will be a lot harder than lowering it. Sorry, but I'd feel more comfortable with Busujima-san there to help." She was easily the most physically powerful of them after Ranma himself, and they might need her.

Rei frowned. "Someone needs to go with you though." She steeled herself and nodded. "I'll go with you."

Ranma cocked an eyebrow at her while Takashi looked aghast at the very idea, but subsided when Ranma nodded. "Alright cousin, that sounds like a plan."

The group made their way out to the Hummer pausing only to retrieve the guns from where Kohta and Takashi had hidden them. Saya took one look at their chosen hiding place and shook her head. "You guys are fucking perverts, you know that right?"

The place the two teens had chosen was a bargain bin of extra large bras, the size the only Shizuka could wear. Rei however was simply chuckling. "Actually this was a pretty good idea, after all only someone with titanic tits would have any reason to look here." Her words said one thing the glare she sent Takashi's way said another, and he flinched a little under her glare.

Asami was frowning in confusion, but her frown went away when Kohta and Takashi reached in and pulled out their rifles, handing one over to Rei while Takashi once more took the shotgun. "Wh-where did you get those!? These types of guns are highly illegal!"

Shizuka waved that off. "Oh Rika-chan is a police officer like you, she just likes guns a lot. Like, a lot a lot."

With the group now armed they went on to the Hummer, which again made Asami's eyes widen. But it also made her grin in hope, now knowing they were going to get out of here alright. Kohta frowned a little though. "We only have about 250 rounds for the Springfield, if we can't come up with some way to make bullets we'll eventually run out."

Takashi nodded. "I've got about forty-five shells for the shotgun."

"The Knights SR has something like 325." Rei supplied.

"Can't be helped. Let's concentrate on the here and now. Remember don't shoot unless you have to." Ranma said philosophically. He had thought that might be the case, which was why he had come up with the plan he had rather than having Kohta do an over-watch of their escape.

Kohta nodded and fit his rifle with a bayonet then handed it over to Rei since it was the only gun that could be fixed with one. "Remember I want that back," he said, half-jokingly, half-seriously.

Rei nodded, looking a little apprehensive now but Ranma merely nodded at them all. "Alright, we're off."

The others wished the two of them well, Saeko kissing Ranma gently on the lips, quietly amuse by the looks of envy from Yuuki and Saya, and surprisingly Shizuka as she did so while Takashi and Rei just looked at one another awkwardly until she turned to follow Ranma back out into the mall proper.

The two of them raced through the mall, not even noticing that the man with the bald head was watching them as they raced past, gaping at the sight of the gun. Within minutes they were up on the roof and looking over the edge at the zombies down below. "So what are you going to do?"

"I'll jump down with you, and then you can cover me in close while I set the fireworks to lead the zombies away from the door. I'll lay 'em in a row, so that the ones nearest the door react first and move off before the others, lead 'em

away from the bottom of the L to the side."

Rei nodded gulping, then squeaked a little as Ranma lifted her into his arms, ignoring her weight and the weight of the gun in her arms. Surprisingly she didn't flinch as Ranma picked her up. She had come to the realization over the last few days that her cousin, despite his freaky catlike ways and his arrogance and lack of tact or manners was a rock in this changing world, and someone who would never willingly hurt her. Saeko she still had a problem with, the bossy little bitch.

She blushed as her head pressed against his chest, and she wondered idly if Takashi felt as strong and solid, though a part of her knew that wasn't possible.

That was her last fault because a second later Ranma dropped off the edge of the roof heading down toward a clear zone. Rei barely had time to gasp, muffling the sounds with her hands before they landed. The position they were in was right around the corner by the doors to the delivery area.

Ranma set Rei on her feet and she quickly got into battle mode, holding the rifle like a staff. There were a few zombies nearby, but Ranma, grunting slightly focused his ki into his Meteor hammer, enlarging the chain and killing them all before they could notice the two living humans were there that done

The two of them peered around the corner at the zombies congregating by the door and then backed away slightly. Ranma leaned in to Rei, whispering in her ear, the feel of his breath causing a tingle down her spine, "Move back a bit and watch out all around, I'm going to start now."

Rei backed away rapidly before kneeling down with her back to the wall of the mall building, her gun up and scanning around.

Ranma nodded at that then he pulled out a firework from his pocket and lit it with a lighter he had taken from Rika's apartment (to light fires later, but it was coming in handy now). He then threw them about ten feet in front of him right a ways out from the corner.

The popping, hissing sound of the fireworks grabbed the zombie's attention like a treat, and the group of fifty or so by the delivery doors turned as one and shambled in its direction.

Ranma grinned fiercely, having to fight with himself and not race forward to engage them, the open terrain of the parking lot ideal for him to take on large numbers of zombies. But that wasn't the plan and even if he killed them all, he couldn't fight all the zombies in the parking lot, which a fight with these fifty would certainly attract.

So he back away towards Rei, nodding silently in the direction he wanted them to go.

So it went for a few tense minutes as Ranma lead the zombies around the corner of the bottom of the L and away from the garage door. After two more fireworks he nodded to Rei while the last one was still making its popping, hissing noises.

Rei reached for the walky-talky, keeping a wary eye out on a group of zombies coming toward them from the other direction. "This is Doe Eyed Damsel, we're good to go, get the door up and move it out!"

Saya's voice answered immediately, a mix of amused drawl and tense readiness. "Doe Eyed Damsel, really, come on. Whatever, we're on the move."

Ranma immediately tossed two more fireworks at once, nodding to Rei. "Get to shooting, make some noise for now!"

Rei didn't need to be told twice and immediately aimed and fired at the nearest zombie's head. The shot actually passed her target, but that was alright since it hit the head of the zombie behind it, splattering its brains everywhere. "I meant to do that," she muttered, turning and firing again at the first one she had targeted.

"Uh-huh, sure you did, whatever helps you sleep at night cuz." As he spoke Ranma's right arm twitched, sending the scythe of his Meteor Hammer out to slice into two zombies, cutting them in twain.

While they couldn't hear the sound of the garage door opening or the Hummer starting, it was about two minutes later, as they were backing away from the zombies toward the elbow of the L, that Saya's voice came through the walky-talky again. "Alright we're clear and heading toward the exit, Kohta and no damnit fatso I refuse to call you Gun God! Anyway Kohta is handling the zombies in front of us. Get out of there you two!"

"Roger, Rei shouted, then whopped a little as Ranma dropped his last two fireworks, twirled his meteor hammer

around his waist, then picked her up and jumped straight up, clearing the edge of the roof with barely an inch to spare. From there he raced along still carrying her to the point of the building that faced the road that led into the mall. There he jumped forward, putting as much distance as he could between them and the building. He landed easily, then raced on still carrying her, and Rei was caught between shrieking in fear and laughing at the sheer exhilaration of the death defying escape.

Ahead of them they could see zombies coming out from between parked cars, But Ranma didn't slow instead simply jumping onto one of the cars and racing along.

They had one heart stopping moment when a zombie appeared in the sunroof of a car directly ahead of them, but a single shot rang out and Ranma zoomed past the now headless zombie while Rei waved thanks at Kohta, who naturally enough was in the top gun mount looking over at them.

Within another minute the two teams met up at the entrance to the parking lot and Saeko moved aside allowing Ranma to once more jump aboard the Hummer's top. Rei dropped out of his arms, grabbing onto the hatch opening behind Kohta as he gave them both a big grin and a thumbs up. "Breakout successful skipper!"

Ranma laughed and sat down alongside Saeko, leaning his head against her shoulder briefly. "Looks like it man." Below them Shizuka gunned the engine even more as they pulled away from the mall out onto the street and Ranma turned to look down at Rei. "Next stop, our moms."

Rei nodded back grinning happily and the Hummer continued on its course barreling through the dead city.

End chapter

My next chapter of my little guilty pleasure. As you can see I changed several things in this area of the story. For one thing, because they arrived so late, the old woman with the blood problem had died by the time they got there. Her husband still joined her though instead this time he overdosed himself rather than jumping. And the would-be-rapist actually paid for it this time around. A few spines were forged and the idiot who opened the door is out with a concussion, so maybe the others will survive, though I won't be wasting any time on them going forward. Oh Rei really isn't that attracted to Ranma (they are cousins after all) but it will make for some amusing moments down the line. Quick question, do any of you think it is time for tragedy to strike again, or should that wait a bit longer or just not happen at all?

Hope you all liked it and as always please review.

***Chapter 7*: A Most Satisfactory Get-Together**

I don't own High School of the Dead or Ranma 1/2. Can't think of anything funny right now to add, sorry.

Some reviews I'd like to mention:

Rey'kan: Actually it wasn't the guys wrists that Ranma broke, he crushed every bone in his hands.

Narsil: thank you for the great review: Yes, that portion with Nodoka is meant to come off as creepy. It would however take someone really trying to convince me to have Rei get with Takashi. Maybe some humorous moments in the future, but that will more than likely be all. I think I know what crossover you mention there (Harry/Star Wars, with him, Leia and three others?), and your points about a bit of variety being good are well founded.

Holy Sasami: love that name dude, and you'll find you and I had similar thoughts about tragedy in this chapter.

NOMster: Thanks for the great review! I agree, tragedy isn't normally my thing. In this chapter I hope to show the seriousness of the current crisis, as well as the human element. I also hope you like the various interactions in this chapter, though I will say I didn't devote as much time to that portion of the story this time around because of what else was going on. Don't worry about Rei, nothing that horrible happened, though what did happen will come out in the next chapter.

Libri Ignis: You should really like this chapter I think as the other problem with a crisis like this other than the zombies makes themselves known.

Alemmis: This story is a snack in comparison to my other stories, that is sort of the point. The original HOTD is pretty much a snack in comparison to Macross, Ikkitousen, and Gold Digger too, not because it is less serious, though that is true in a way, but because of the number of characters. A small group lets you really bring out your characters more, but the story itself isn't as compelling. This is my guilty pleasure, I admit that, and am happy that other people enjoy it as well.

The response on tragedy was mixed, but I hope everyone is happy with what I came up with. And in regards to me writing this beyond where the original went, I will say I have plans to keep writing this story going forward at least until they have gotten to the island and fortified up.

Chapter 7 A Most Satisfactory Little Get-Together

Kohta moved out of the hatch sitting down and pulling a blushing Asami into his lap next to Kyoko in the back, letting Rei take his place for now in the gun hatch. Ranma stuck his head in, accidentally bumping his head against his cousin's full breasts, causing her to blush slightly but Ranma didn't notice, too busy staring down at Saya. "Where we off to now?"

"The police station where we're supposed to meet up with your mom and aunt like we said, but the route isn't as straight or easy as it was from the river to the mall." Saya replied. She had begun to plan out the route before they even left the parking lot. She wasn't a fighter, if she had to have a weapon in her hand than you knew the shit had hit the fan. Her mind was what she brought to the group, and she used it as well as she could.

Now Saya pointed out the route as she began to talk looking up at where Ranma had stuck his head down his hair falling down further and his little pigtail looking like some kind of piñata tail or something that she just wanted to smack. "There's no straight line route there, but we can get there using a few of the main roads unless they're blocked entirely. I don't think this car could you know, do that monster truck thing from those American commercials? Where they go and crash over other cars?"

That was directed towards Shizuka, who was driving once more, and Yuuki, sitting beside her. They both giggled and shook their heads, though Yuuki looked almost wistful at the very idea of working on one of those monster trucks.

Saya shrugged and went on. "The problem is we haven't really run into any real resistance yet, we haven't seen the numbers of zombies I'd expect to see on the side of the river, even when you add the number of zombies around the mall." She ignored the fact that they were in fact zooming past several small clumps of zombies, since it didn't really matter in terms of the numbers she was talking about. "That could mean that the evacuation on this side of the river actually worked pretty well, or it could be that most of what we're seeing are stragglers and the rest are heading towards some noise or other elsewhere, possibly the police station. I can't believe the evacuation would be a silent

affair after all."

Ranma frowned thoughtfully, pulling his head up and looking around the streets. He saw a lot of parked cars still, though whether or not they had just been parked or had been abandoned he couldn't tell for most of them. One of them he could see had been abandoned in the center of the road as Shizuka moved around it, but for the most part despite the clumps of zombies it was pretty peaceful here. He started looking at those clumps of zombies for a moment, then nodded when he noticed something. "Most of the zombies we're seeing are coming out of buildings or clumped around entrances. They could've been inside and are now reacting to our noise but could have heard whatever was going on earlier, that might have gotten them out of the buildings in the first place. Are there any chokepoints we should look out for? And should we rely on speed or should I take Kohta somewhere and set him up to clear the route?"

All the occupants of the Hummer nodded thoughtfully at his first phrase and then Saya looked around and ahead of them. "That might be a good idea, but wait a bit until we turn on to what was the name of it," she looked down map and nodded "15th street. We'll be on that road for at least 20 minutes maybe more if it has a lot of debris we'll have to go around, and it's the straightest part of our route. If we can take it down as far as we can then won't have to have to take more than three other roads before we get to the police station."

"I've got a question," said Asami raising one hand from where she was sitting on Kohta's lap to save room. "Where are we going after we go to the police station? You guys said you weren't going to be evacuated, and Asami's willing to stay with you, but what's our long term plan?"

Saya shrugged. "After we hit up the police station we're going to go to my parents house and see if we can find any sign of them there, then we're going to move on down out of the city proper towards the docks and out onto the ocean. We want to find an island out there and fortify it, then just wait out the worst of this." Eventually once they were fully situated they could think of sending Ranma and a few of the others out on scavenging trips, but getting to an island would do as an objective for now.

The young policewoman nodded thoughtfully. "Well, if there aren't any police people at the police station when we get there we might want to loot it down to the ground if we can, though we don't have a lot of room admittedly." They all looked at her in surprise and she shrugged. "If the police aren't there there's a lot of weapons we could use, him and they wouldn't be of any use just sitting there."

Saya nodded approvingly at her. "That's a good idea Asami," she said reaching over and slapping her on the shoulder, though she had to reach over Yuuki to do it. The others all nodded, and Kohta looked as if he was falling in love with her all over again. The idea of getting his hands on all those lovely, lovely guns had sent him into seventh heaven.

Ranma scratched his chin, still leaning down upside down, not even noticing the fact his cousin's eyebrow was now twitching behind his head, which had once again bumped against her chest. "It would depend on whether or not we could stay there for long, but Saya-chan's that might not be a bad idea." He also didn't notice Saya's blush at the affectionate form of her name, though this was because he was drawn to the bounce of her and Yuuki's breasts as the Hummer hit a pothole. He wasn't any closer to agreeing with the whole multiple girls thing than he had been, but damn if Yuuki and Saya weren't making it hard to resist.

The discussion paused as a helicopter zoomed by all overhead, pulling Ranma's head once more out of the gun hatch. For a moment a few of them were tempted to wave and try to get the helicopter pilots attention, but the helicopter zoomed past so quickly they couldn't. Kohta, sticking his head outside of the window next to him frowned thoughtfully. It could have been his eyes playing tricks on him, but he could have sworn that helicopter had a few people hanging on to the outside of it...

A moment later they heard a boom in the distance, and they all looked at one another. "There're still a lot of other people moving around" said Yuuki thoughtfully more thankful than ever they had taken the time to silence the Hummer's engine as much as they could.

Saeko and Ranma shared a glance nodding at one another. The more people that were moving around the more zombies would be attracted to the noise, and the more likely they would run into other groups that wouldn't be so friendly to them. Ranma was remembering the group of yakuza that he had seen moving down the street a few days ago, and Saeko was remembering the group of looters that she had killed when they attempted to take her captive. Both knew that their group, with the number of gorgeous girls and few boys, might look like a soft target to such groups.

Surprisingly the two of them weren't the only two that were thinking along those lines. Saya was thinking of it as an

intellectual exercise, but Shizuka was shivering a little as she continued to drive, remembering how close to being raped she had come back at the mall. It was a fact of life that disasters like this brought out both the best and the worst in people, and she had so far seen examples of both. She remembered the look of cold fury on Ranma's face, the look of possessiveness he sent her way, and she felt better for it, but wished she could pull over and get a hug from her neko-chan and pouted a little as she continued to drive.

Ranma looked back down at Kohta. "In that case I think we should gear up and prepare for trouble. Get Asami a gun, I want you, her, Rei and Takashi all armed from now on at all times."

Kohta nodded and looked over at Takashi. "You want a rifle, a nail gun or the crossbow?"

Takashi frowned a little, but shrugged. "Give me the nail gun, I don't know if I'm as good a shot with that rifle as you and Rei or Asami maybe, and I can't turn it into as good a weapon in close with a bayonet as Rei can." He poked her legs with one finger and she looked down at him, grinning a little weakly at his praise as he went on. Alice, once more sitting in his lap, also poked Rei's legs giggling a little, and Rei gently reached down and caught her hand in her own. "A nail gun will also let me carry something else in my off hand." He reached down underneath and pulled out a large cleaver he had taken from a store in the mall. "If we get stopped I'll jump out and provide close support for the Hummer so we don't get bogged down."

Ranma nodded approvingly, "Good thinking Takashi."

With that he pulled his head back out from the hatchway, and Kohta turned around in his chair, rummaging in the back for the guns and ammunition. Luckily thanks to Saya's reorganization the guns and ammunition were both on the top of the pile in back and easy to access, and he started to pass the ammunition around, as well as passing over the nail gun to Takashi. He also got out the crossbow and handed it to Kyoko, who grimaced but slid a bolt home then leaned it against the center console in front of her between her legs. Kohta absently noted how crowded it already was in the Hummer with all of them in it, and wondered where the heck they were going to put the two mothers if they were able to successfully link up with them.

He turned back to show Asami how to use the shotgun, but it turned out she ready knew how to use it. He grinned at that, as well as the fact that she had already opened up the window and was pointing it out at the nearby zombies in an effort to get a feel for the powerful weapon. On the other side Takashi was doing the same and he nodded approvingly.

What followed was a bit of a gymnastics exercise as Rei was lifted out of the hatch by Ranma, standing there on the top of the truck followed swiftly by Kohta. Rei then dropped back down and took up a position at one of the windows, grumbling at how crowded it was now with four girls abreast in the back seat, and Kohta took her place in the gun sight.

The drive passed silently from that point on, except for Alice once more trying to convince Ranma that he needed to name his meteor hammer, a task she had taken to with a will but had yet to see any results of. Yuuki talked about fashion with Shizuka, inwardly irritated that Kohta's body was blocking any chance of flirting either verbally or physically with Ranma. Kyoko and Saya continued to talk about the route, specifically how they would get from the police station to her home, which would require a lot of twists and turns if they tried to go straight there, while Asami and Kohta began to talk about guns back and forth.

Asami turned out to be strangely knowledgeable on the subject, but she cleared that up by confessing it was the only aspect of her training that she had done well in. She hadn't been able to memorize any of the rules or forms or anything, but on the gun range she had been able to shine. That just made Kohta even happier she was with them, and he said so, which earned him a kiss that had him practically swooning, and set Saya gagging theatrically to Rei who shook her head at her friend's attitude.

Soon however they turned onto the main street that Saya had mentioned and Ranma stretched for a moment, standing easily on the moving roof of the Hummer before reaching down and pulling Kohta out of the gun port with one hand. "Time to go Gun God." He looked over at Saeko, and shook his head sadly. "I'd love to take you with us Saeko-chan, but I think you'll probably be needed here."

Saeko scowled a little. "It seems to me as if you are always leaving me to go have fun elsewhere." She reached out and gently tapped the flat edge of her unsheathed katana against one of his shoulders. "I do hope this isn't indicative of a pattern."

Ranma shook his head back-paddling verbally "No, no, no, no, it's just the way it's been going so far, I promise we'll be able to go off by ourselves and have some violent fun at some point."

The others in the Hummer chuckled at that, thinking that he was joking but Kyoko and Saya shared a glance frowning thoughtfully. Both of them recognized that their survival depended on Saeko and Ranma to a greater degree than any of the others, but their battlelust continued to worry them both.

Saeko gave Ranma quick kiss on the mouth (which made both Yuuki and Say who were able to see it twitch in irritation) and nodded. "Come back safe you two." She said formally, and Ranma grinned while Kohta just gave her a thumb up.

With one arm around Kohta and the other holding onto his gun Ranma jumped up to the nearest roof, and set Kohta down for a moment to let him scan around for a good spot to set up somewhere away from their route. Behind them Rei stood up to take her place in the gun hatch again.

This section of the city was half small commercial buildings and half middle class houses, which made most of the buildings around only about two or three stories tall. The only exception to this was a four story building in the distance about eight blocks off of their present route that had a restaurant on its roof. Kohta thought he recognized it as a place where the girls at school had loved to go because of their sweets and teas, but obviously he had never been there personally. The rooftop was set up to be an outdoor dining area with tables and large umbrellas, and a metal fence stuck into a low wall around the edge of it.

Kohta pointed it out to Ranma. "That's probably the best place, but..." He shrugged and gestured for Ranma to look through the sight on his rifle. Ranma did so, and frowned a little. "There looks to be about a dozen zombies on the roof, most of them girls."

After a moment Ranma shrugged. "If ya think that's the best place to go, let's go, I ain't gonna overturn ya in your area of expertise man. And the more noise you make the better for our friends."

Kohta frowned, but nodded all the same. He wasn't exactly happy about getting that close to the zombies, but with Ranma there to protect him it would probably be okay. A moment later the two of them had arrived on the roof in question. Surprising Kohta Ranma had been able to jump up from a nearby roof and actually clear the fence around the eatery's rooftop, the two of them landing in a small clear area.

Ranma set Kohta down and immediately charged at the nearest zombie, a teenage girl with a bleached blond hair and tan skin, lashing out with a punch to the head that caved in its entire skull. The zombie next to it blinked and moved towards him feeling the splatter of brain and bone on it, but a kick to its chest sent it skidding away to slam into to others. Ranma swiftly pulled out his meteor hammer from around his waist, and began to slaughter the zombies nearby while Kohta shot out single shots from his rifle killing the zombies closer to the doorway leading up from below. The elevator next to the stairwell was shut, and looked to be safe enough without power to bring the elevator up.

Between the two of them they cleared the whole roof swiftly, but two more zombies appeared in the stairwell coming up toward the noise. Kohta put them both down with single shots, and Ranma grabbed up a table ripping it up bolts and all before tossing it into the doorway clearing out another zombie behind the first two as the table crashed into the far end of the stairwell. After that he ripped out two more and did the same with them, making a barrier in the stairwell against more zombies. He grabbed all the nearby chairs that he could and tossed them in as well, but it still wasn't as good a defense as he could have wished.

He could hear the zombies on the other side starting to pile up already and he shook his head. "I don't think I'm going anywhere this time Kohta, I'll stay right here in case the zombies break through. Get to shooting and start clearing the road for them, and tell them to get a move on, this ain't exactly a good place to be."

Kohta nodded and ran over to the side of the roof that would give him a view of the route their friends were following. Once there he stuck his rifle through between two of the fence's bars, propping it there with one hand. Once that was done he reached to his belt with his free hand and pulled out the walkie-talkie. They had taken the opportunity at the mall to replace the Kiddy style walkie-talkies with more survivalist versions from the outdoor sports store, and they worked far better. "This is Gun God to Lady Blade and Megane Hime, we're good to go over here. Be advised that this position isn't the best, and we would recommend that you get a move on, over?"

He scanned the route they were going to take with his gun sight, and only saw a few pairs of zombies moving around. "It looks like you're good to go, clearing the route will be relatively simple but again get a move on." Behind him he could hear the zombies pounding on the rubble that Ranma had stacked around the door. Ranma added more and more to the pile, but it sounded as if the zombie's numbers were increasing as they stood there.

He forced himself to breathe out slowly, calming himself down to that icy focus a sniper needed, ignoring the sounds

behind him as he gently rested his cheek against his rifle closing one eye and sighting through the Springfield's scope with the other. Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, fire! One zombie down.

OOOOOOO

Saeko tapped the top of the Hummer. "Go, go quickly. It sounds as if their position is in considerable danger, and we don't want them stuck out there alone."

Shizuka nodded and the Hummer thrummed as the engine revved higher, moving forward faster, dodging around and through abandoned and overturned cars. "What about stop signs and lights and other stuff?" Even as she asked that Shizuka shook her head, realizing it was a truly foolish question.

"If it's human and still breathing don't run it over" said Saya dryly. "Anything else either Dodge it or go through it. I really don't think we need to worry about the safety each and traffic laws right now do we?" That was a gentle dig at Asami who shook her head wildly. She was more than a little worried at the moment. Without Kohta around she had lost a bit of the courage she had gained, and was feeling very much the odd girl out in this group.

Kyoko however noticed how worried she was, and put one arm around her gently. "Don't worry, this isn't the first time Ranma and Kohta have done this little flanking operation of theirs, they'll both be back."

Asami nodded and went back to watching the road outside of her window her gun aiming at shadows in the alleyways as they passed. They saw a few more zombies coming out of buildings at the noise of their passage, but not nearly as many as they might have seen without Yuuki having silenced the engine is much as she could. And the few zombies that they saw on the road were already gunned down before they got to them.

Asami gaped a little seeing seven zombies in one section of the road all dead with single shots to the head. She had thought Kohta might be pretty good, he sounded knowledgeable at least, but she hadn't actually seen him shoot during the escape from the mall. This was the first time she had seen his handiwork, and it was better than most snipers in the police that she knew of could do, maybe as good as the SAT snipers.

The trip passed uneventfully on the two lane two way road and they covered the straight line distance quickly along it. Soon they reached the first point where they had to turn off of the straight line road and begin to make the series of winding turns toward the police station.

Saeko took up her walkie-talkie as they reached the turn. "This is Lady Blade to Gun God, we're about to turn off 15th street, good work on covering us, but you can leave it now."

OOOOOOO

Kohta breathe a sigh of relief before replying quickly. "This is Gun God, roger. We'll meet up with you soon, over and out." He pulled out his gun quickly from between the bars again. He'd had to change positions several times since the bars of the fence made him unable to turn his gun enough to cover the entire route from one position. Once he did, he turned to Ranma. "We're done Ranma let's get the fuck out of here!"

Ranma had been tossing everything he could grab to block the doorway, but the zombies had been slowly but surely pushing it all out of the way. He estimated there were at least 25 to 30 zombies pushing at the stuff, and he was more than willing to get out of here. While he didn't think that number would be able to bring him down, they would probably be able to move around him to attack Kohta, and despite his skill with a gun Kohta was a liability in close combat, which this roof pretty much was.

He swiftly picked up his meteor hammer from where he had dropped it tying it around his waist again then raced over to Kohta and picked him up, jumping first up onto the top of the fence along the roof, balancing there for a moment then jumping out into the air to the next roof over. Behind them they heard the zombies pushing the last of the junk out of the way by sheer weight of numbers.

Ranma ignored their close shave, looking around worriedly. "You'll have ta direct me, I didn't notice where we were supposed to go." Kohta nodded and pointed the direction they needed to go and both of them frowned when the sounds of gunfire started up in that direction.

OOOOOOO

Almost the moment the Hummer had turned off of 15th street onto the first one-lane, one way road along their route they had run into a barricade just out of sight until you made the turn. It was a very professional looking barricade, with several cars piled on top of one another to block the road and things torn from houses or shops to block the

sidewalks. But it wasn't the barricade alone that caused them to pull up short. It was the fact that as soon as they stopped in front of it they came under fire from both the barricade and both sides of the street.

Almost immediately Saeko dropped behind the Hummer out of sight, dodging a few shots that would have hit her legs and the four who were armed began to fire back. Luckily for the others and for her the Hummer was pretty much bulletproof. Shizuka was particularly thankful for that shuddering as a bullet skipped off the Hummer's windshield. The fact that someone over there cursed at the shooters, shouting "Damn it you fool, can't you see how hot she is, we want her alive with the others!" did not bring her any comfort.

Rei only fired one shot from the Knights SR before ducking down inside the hatch with a yelp, her position at the top a little too dangerous to stay there. This move saved her life from several bullets which went straight through the position she had just been occupying, and she shook her head. Whatever that one voice had yelled out, they obviously were willing to kill a few of them at the very least. She and Kyoko switched positions, and she stuck her rifle out of the top of the bulletproof window, firing at the house alongside the right side of the car.

Asami hammered out a single shot from the shotgun at a shooter on the first floor of a building alongside them, forcing him to duck back with a cry. She didn't know if she had hit him, but right now just taking him out of the equation was a good idea. That, and the recoil from the shotgun had knocked her back onto Yuuki's lap, and the police girl winced as she felt around her shoulder, wincing. "Asami thinks she should stick to a rifle from now on, that shotgun hurts!"

Yuuki handed her the police pistol from where it had fallen shaking her head. "Kyoko thinks that Asami should stop talking in the third person and get to shooting!" Asami blushed at being called out on her habit, and grabbed the pistol, sending a shot through the upper window of the building alongside them. Yuuki reached back and tried to find the second nail gun while Kyoko readied her crossbow just in case.

Rei and Takashi were concentrating on the front of the barricade, and Takashi put a nail right through one man's hand as he stuck a gun over the top of it to fire at them. He fell back with a scream, but that was nothing in comparison to Rei's shot. She had hit a man in a window above the Hummer as he stuck his head and arm out the window to fire from a rifle, taking him cleanly in the head. The brunette stared for a moment appalled that she had just killed a person.

Just then a voice from one of the buildings on the left side shouted, "Give us the women and we'll let you go! If you don't we'll just kill you all and take them!"

That line pretty much killed all of Rei's concern over the man she had just killed. None of the people in the Hummer answered, and the trio of shooters continued to belt out shots with their various weapons.

Behind the hummer several other men had run out, pushing another car into position skidding it along one side. Saeko closed with them using the bulk of the Hummer as cover from the barricade, and before they knew what was happening slaughtered them all, her blade lashing out faster than their eyes could follow.

Before this the gunmen who could see her from the barricade didn't shoot at her, probably because she was so good looking and was one of the women they wanted to take alive. This would prove their undoing, as before they could range on her but now before they could she threw herself into the doorway of one of the buildings on the right side of the road.

One leg lifted, pushing her skirt up rather obscenely if she had a moment to consider such things, and one kick shattered the door. She leaped in over its remains then had to roll to twist aside from a swing from a man wielding a bat. Her sword swung backwards slicing open his stomach, spilling his intestine out onto the ground. The man fell back with a gasp and she turned taking another man who had just turned away from a window to bring his gun around in the neck. His head flew off like a shuttlecock, and she raced on grinning wildly, feeling herself getting wet from the excitement of battle.

This looked like the front entrance of an apartment complex, and after a second to make certain there was no one else on this floor she raced up the stairs to the second story, killing two more men in the hallway and bursting into the apartment where the shots had been coming from this side. Before the shooter there could think she had kicked him so hard as to send out the window behind him to the ground below. He landed awkwardly on his neck, killing him instantly despite having only fallen a single story.

The shooters on the barricade turned and gaped seeing their friend dealt with like this but before they could do anything Saeko jumped out landing behind the barricade among a few men standing there with hand to hand weapons, ready to charge around the barricade after her friends had been softened up. Her blade lashed out and

soon she was covered with the blood of her kills, but she had to jump into one of the cars that made up the lower section of the barricade as two shooters from the building on the other side of the street began to fire at her rather than the Hummer.

By this point Kohta and Ranma had arrived on the scene, and Kohta immediately set up himself up on the nearby roof. From there he began to fire at the shooters still trying to fire at Saeko, and Ranma jumped from there over the road, landing on the roof of one of the buildings that held shooters who were firing at those in the Hummer.

Below Takashi had ducked out and underneath the Hummer, allowing Kyoko to take his place at the front of the Hummer. With her and Rei concentrating on that side to give him cover he stood up racing for the nearest doorway smashing into the door there with his shoulder at full speed. He and Ranma actually entered at the same time. Almost as soon as the door fell Takashi ducked a blow from a man with a wrench stabbing him in the leg with his machete. The man went down screaming and holding his thigh, but Takashi pulled out the machete and rammed it into the man's neck.

He didn't have time to think about the fact that he had just killed someone as another man turned quickly raising a gun to his shoulder. Takashi stared down the barrel of the man's rifle but before he could fire he spasmed in place, then fell forward, three bullets having smashed into his back from Asami's pistol.

Takashi paused just a second to think of his near-death experience but then raced on, nothing was on his mind now but clearing out the shooters so they could get out of here. The noise they were making was sure to bring the zombies down on top of them, and they needed to be gone before they that happened.

Indeed Saeko could see from where she was still hidden among the cars of the barricade spread eagled out on the back seat of one of the cars that there were over three dozen zombies shuffling their way swiftly down the road from behind the barricade toward them. It was evident they had identified the sound is prey sound rather than random sound, because their movements were more certain, much quicker than normal. Their mouths were open and their teeth gnashing, hands outstretched and ready.

She shimmied her way across the car kicking open the door aiming towards the Hummer and poked her sword out first to tell the two girls still firing from the Hummer that it was her. Kohta had by this point switched to taking out those on the barricade, and all five of them were down now.

By this time Takashi and Ranma had also met up having cleared out the shooters on their side of the street. Ranma looked out the window down the street then nodded at Takashi. "We've gotta get out of here."

Takashi scowled angrily, the adrenaline of the sudden battle still flowing through him. "Tell me something I don't know dumbass!"

Ranma and laughed and grabbed him around the center, not even noticing that Takashi had almost skewered him with the machete on reflex for just a second there, and jumped down from where they had killed the last of the shooters. Takashi scrambled back into the Hummer while Ranma jumped up to the roof and grabbed Kohta taking him down again. Kohta too scrambled in taking his position at the gun port on top while Saeko jumped on top.

Ranma grabbed the back of the car that the four men Saeko had killed had pushed onto the road. It had taken four men to push it along on its side, but Ranma merely grunted a little as he pushed it even further along the road, the sound of metal squealing on the road grating in his ears until he had moved it enough for the Hummer to get by. That done he jumped up to land next to Saeko on the front most portion of the top of the Hummer. "Get us out of here Shizuka-sensei!"

Shizuka didn't need to be told twice, since a dozen more zombies had appeared, from all directions moving toward the noise of the gun fight. Swiftly the top heavy nurse backed the Hummer up, slamming into and over two zombies before turning the car around and racing back down 15th street.

Ranma grinned widely at Saeko, leaning over to kiss her hard on the lips. The tomcat portion of his personality was hammering at the wall of his psyche, it had just been in a fight and it had won. Now was the time to show his dominance by coupling with his strong mate, letting their noises tell all nearby challengers who was the alpha around here. Yet Ranma easily beat it back, simply enjoying kissing his girlfriend now that danger had passed for the moment.

Saeko responded ardently, grabbing the back of his head as the tow of them made out for a few seconds before pulling back, ignoring the blushing Kohta, who had swiftly turned away from this display. She smirked a little, feeling at least two pairs of eyes glaring up at her. *the next time we stop somewhere safe, I think I will bring up my idea of*

sharing, it certainly seems as if they are primed for it heheh.

Ranma cocked his head, nibbling at her throat for a moment before pulling back again. "I hope that excitement made up for me not taking ya with me and Kohta?"

"Indeed, a most satisfactory little get-together." Saeko smiled back at him.

But the two of them and Kohta were the only ones who were handling the battle with any aplomb. Now that the immediate danger was over Asami dropped the pistol as she began to hyperventilate a little, her shoulder bothering her from her earlier attempt with the shotgun. Kyoko put an arm around her comfortingly, rubbing her back gently, glaring up past Kohta at the two combat junkies.

Takashi too looked down at his hands which were starting to shake a bit but Alice's concerned face and a hug from her around his middle as she clambered up into his lap again, and the thought of what might have happened to the young girl, were enough for the shivers to subside. After they did though his shoulder that he had used to ram open the door began to throb, as well as one of his ankles and his lower back for some reason. He reached for a water bottle below his chair as well as a packet of painkillers from the glove compartment, then sat back waiting for them to start working as he smiled wanly at Alice.

Rei had dropped her rifle, her eyes closed as she started to worry at her lips, her hands wrapped around herself.

Ranma motioned at Kohta and he moved aside just enough so that Ranma could stick his head in to look at the others. "I know that wasn't easy for you guys," he said his voice grimmer than they had ever heard it before. "But it was necessary, if they're going to shoot at anyone that comes by then it was a case of us or them."

Saeko nodded agreement. "They wanted us, I mean the women among us, including myself. I don't have to paint a picture as to what would've happened to us do I?"

That made it easier for Rei and the others, and Kohta simply shrugged. He hadn't had as bad a reaction to having killed an actual human being as the others.

Kyoko noticed the lack of reaction in him, Ranma and Saeko out of the corner of her eye, while the rest of her was busy comforting Asami. Next to her Yuuki had begun to do the same for Rei. A friendly arm around her shoulders seemed to cheer Rei up, but she looked almost longingly up at the front seat, where Takashi was being pulled out of his own funk by Alice and the puppy, both of whom had been pushed down into the leg area of the front seat and told to stay there during the fight before he had jumped out of the Hummer.

Kyoko noticed all this but concentrated on the trio with the least reaction to what had happened. It was a little worrisome, but overall the fact that they knew they didn't have a choice and hadn't gone overboard or enjoyed overmuch was a good sign in her opinion. She was still concerned for the future, but for now they all seemed to have their darker natures under control. She shrugged off her worries for now and looked over at Saya, who already had the map out. "So where do we go from here?"

Saya frowned thoughtfully. "I don't know if we should trust any of the smaller roads now, but we're making a detour here." She pointed to where they were now. The route they would have taken should have started to have them wend their way towards the police station, but right now they were almost straight across from the police station, but there were no roads they could take to get there just yet. They would have to continue on past it and then double back. "If we can't trust the single lane roads not to be blocked around here like that we'll have to go at least 20 minutes out of our way to take some of the wider roads."

Ranma nodded a little grimly. "Step on it Shizuka-sensei, I think we're past the time where careful is necessary right now, speed the thing." He was getting more and more worried about what might be going on at the police station, worried that it was this evacuation attempt his aunt mentioned that had drawn off the zombies in the area.

Saya nodded firmly. "Right now we need to meet up with the parents and get out of here. The enclosed streets around here are too dangerous, and if there are other groups of looters around there's too many places where they could hold us up. And this section of the city would attract them pretty naturally."

Saeko nodded grimly as she cleaned her sword, the blood all over her clothing would have to wait and she noted absently that Ranma had several splotches on his body as well. She was also dealing with her own reaction to the battle, but she was able to push her arousal down easily enough. There'd been no challenge in that combat once she got in close and that limited the pleasure she had gotten from killing those men, though the fact they had wanted 'the women' as they put it let Saeko take some pleasure from the act.

Kohta looked over at Ranma "You think we should head off again?"

Ranma shook his head. "No, I think we need to stay with the group for now, besides ya see a place around here that would be any good?"

"Not once we make another turn..." Kohta said, looking around and shaking his head. "I'd have to stay too close to shoot down at the street for any of our noise to draw off any of the zombies from the Hummer itself, so yeah that makes sense."

Ranma nodded and turned, putting an arm around Saeko's waste and pulling her into his lap where he sat on the top of the Hummer. The group continued for a while, seeing small zombie groups here and there but none with large numbers enough to actually bog them down as they drove on. Shizuka and Asami both flinched occasionally when they saw zombies that had formerly been children and kids, even a toddler at one point, crawling out of a overturned baby carriage. The sight of that particular zombie almost made Shizuka pull over and get out to pick the baby up, but then she noticed the eyes and the fact that one ear was missing. She shuddered and the Hummer continued.

Takashi reached out and patted her shoulder, knowing it wasn't enough, but also knowing nothing could be under the circumstances.

As they went on they started to see more and more dead bodies, people that had been torn apart before they could turn, people that had been shot down before they could turn, as well as several zombie bodies..

Saya nodded over to the left side away from their route. "If we go that way we'd hit one of the entrances to the highway out of the city, I can't imagine what it's like or what the highway itself looks like at this point. With the EMP having taken out most of the cars everyone up there would've been stranded and forced to run away under their own power. In that kind of situation the zombies would've caught up and bandit groups would have formed pretty quickly to defend themselves and take advantage of the chaos."

Ranma and the others nodded grimly and the group continued on seeing more signs of combat and more signs of atrocities, making most of them flinch while Ranma's eyes simply hardened noticeably as time went on.

Soon however they came to the point where they would have to turn again to head towards the police station. "We'll want to turn up there," Saya said pointing ahead with a frown on her face. She wasn't looking forward to trying to use another side road after what had just happened.

Ranma gently lifted Saeko out of his lap and stood up pulling her to her feet as well. "Saeko-chan and me'll go ahead to scout the route, Shizuka-sensei go slow and we'll be back by the time yer ready to turn."

Shizuka nodded, slowing the Hummer to a crawl, which made the noise of the engine die down as well. This made the few zombies that were around stop reacting except for the closest few but since the car kept on moving and the others were all armed well enough Ranma and Saeko felt safe to leave the group. They raced over to a nearby building, where Saeko readied herself for a moment then crouched and leapt upward. She almost made it, and one hand grabbed the side of the roof and she flipped herself up onto it easily. Ranma simply jumped from a standing start landing next to her easily. "Not bad, three stories that time. I told ya we'd get ya roof hopping soon enough."

Saeko smirked then grabbed him by the back of his head pulling him into a kiss, which was more hungry and sexual than a simple peck. Their tongues dueled for a moment, and again Saeko could feel at least two sets of eyes glaring at her before they reluctantly parted. "Time enough for that later love," Ranma said his blue eyes dark with desire. The one time back at the mall hadn't really put much of a damper on this newly awakened libido alas, and his girlfriend obviously knew it if her wicked grin was any indication.

The two of them turned and with Ranma watching Saeko made her first leap from one roof to another. She faltered a little when she landed, but recovered swiftly enough, and Ranma nodded approval. That had been a tilted roof, which were always a little tougher than flat roofs anyway. He leaped over and landed next to her and the two of them moved on swiftly. Soon they came up to the road that Saya had indicated would be their first turning point, and the two of them looked down. It looked clear, but Saeko pulled out a pair of binoculars from a small backpack she had taken from the mall and looked into the windows of the buildings on the far side of the street. After a moment she nodded. "I don't see any movement, this stretch looks clear."

Ranma nodded and led the way to the next toward turning point, consulting the map that Saya had thrust into his hands as he left the Hummer smirking at the little notes she had made over time on it. 'Here there be idiots' was marked on the mall building and the river had 'a possible route down to the sea, remember to come back to it'. Her house on the other hand was simply marked as 'the bastard's place'. Several other places were marked as points of

interest to the 'grease slut' and 'gun baka' though one mark on the other side of the river drew his eye. It was marked 'the baka's house' and Ranma noticed that it was close to his house and wondered if she met Rei, him or Takashi. He wasn't about to ask since he knew that she would reply with something like all three of them or something even more cutting. Ranma liked Saya's sharp tongue well enough when it was directed at other people, but not when it was directed at him.

By this point in his ruminations the duo had come to the next turning point and they paused on the corner of a roof looking around. "So far so good," he muttered.

Saeko nodded as well and pulled out a walkie-talkie. "This is Lady Blade, the first two turns look good, come on up."

The two waited there for the Hummer to pull in about 5 minutes later and then continued on. The two of them stayed ahead of the Hummer by two turns, not finding any danger right up until the last turning that would take the Hummer onto the street that could take them to the police station.

There they noticed dozens of zombies moving towards the police station. They couldn't hear any sounds of gunfire in the distance, but there were still some sounds that indicated a fight was going on. They went ahead to wear they could see the rest of the street and up toward the police station then looked at one another before turning and running back the way they had come.

The two dropped down onto the top of the Hummer, making Kohta jump a little and the Hummer to rock for just a second. "There's trouble up ahead, zombie kind not human." Saeko reported, dropping the sheath of the Saotome blade into the hatch

Saya cursed a little. "There goes the idea of staying at the police station and looting the place. How many zombies do you think?"

Saeko and Ranma looked at one another than Saeko answered "A little over a hundred I think."

Kohta whistled and the others looked worried that number but Ranma merely shrugged. "Full speed ahead sensei, run them down if you can, we'll clear the way on the sides."

Shizuka gulped but nodded.

As it turned out however they didn't have to reach the police station. They blew through several groups of zombies moving along the street and making other zombies turn in their direction but almost immediately they could tell the fight was closer than the police station. Because over the sound of their gunfire they heard two voices haranguing one another.

"Oh yes and you were sooo innocent as a child!" one voice was saying then was interrupted by a funk as if someone had sliced into something heavy. "Who exactly was it who was found making out with her seventh grade teacher? It certainly wasn't me."

"It's just like you to bring up the ancient past when we're talking about indiscretions." Said another, less amused voice with an odd tremulous note to it. "At least I wasn't kicked out of middle school for assaulting a fellow student."

"He had it coming! How dare he feel me up and then say I was flat! I've never been flat!"

"Well that is true," said the drawling voice, more humor evident in it now. "You definitely developed earlier than most. That might be why your name appeared on the wall of practically every bathroom stall in the school."

"Simply a sign of pettiness among our fellow girls, they were just jealous that I actually had hips and a bust whereas they could barely dream of it."

Despite the somewhat disturbing back and forth Rei and Ranma looked at one another through the Hatch and grinned happily. Both of them recognized those voices.

Saeko and Ranma and leaped off the bus heading straight ahead, cutting down any of the zombies in their way while behind them those with the guns began to blaze away on either side as well as in front.

"Someone's moving towards us!" said one of the voices, the one that Ranma now recognized as his mom. "A last second group that wanted to be evacuated? Or other police I hear a lot of gunfire."

"Mom!" Ranma shouted, "It's us!"

Nodoka began to break out into laughter as she cut her way towards her son. "I told you they'd find us didn't I tell you! My oh so manly son wouldn't let us down!"

"Yes, you said that dozens of times, along with how he was probably being manly somewhere with dozens of girls," said his aunt Kiriko dryly coming forward and guarding his mother's back with her naginata.

Moments later they had sliced through the zombie horde all around them, and Ranma began to twirl his meteor hammer above his head, focusing his ki into it. "Head towards the Hummer back there!" He shouted while Saeko pointed back the way they had come. The numbers of zombies weren't a hundred, they were more like three or four-hundred, with the majority of them coming from the police station behind the two adult women and some others boiling around it from the sides. The group was in danger of getting overrun here, and that called for desperate measures. "And get ready to duck when I tell you!"

"Kohta!" he shouted, not looking away from the zombies all around him to look at the sniper who was taking single shots killing the zombies as they closed on the Hummer "Get ready to go to automatic fire and plow the road!"

Kohta blinked in shock then grinned wildly. "You got it boss!" The two women raced past the sword wielding Saeko and Ranma, entering the cleared area between them and the Hummer but all around them the zombies closed in despite his fire and that from everyone else. Even Yuuki had joined in, firing one of the nail guns from over Shizuka's body. At any other time the sight to the two amazing looking women pressed that tightly together would have knocked Takashi out, but he had other things on his mind now. He was again shooting out the window from his seat in the front, Alice once more pushed down into the leg area, but this time he was wielding the shotgun, blasting away at the closest zombies on that side.

Rei had exited the car on the other side, blasting away with the Knights SR while Kohta wielded the Springfield from up above. While her shooting was nowhere near his, a blown off leg or a shot to the gut still slowed the zombies down at least. Asami was with her on that side, blasting away with the second nail gun, the ammunition for the police pistol having run out before this. Her aim wasn't very good however because of her already bruised shoulder. On Takashi's side Kyoko was using the last of the crossbow bolts, taking out a few zombies who were reaching for the two approaching women.

Ranma focused his energy into his weapon, and above his head the wire began to glow blue. With a flick of his wrist tiny barbs appeared all along the chain, and he nodded, "Duck!"

The two women dove down onto the ground as did Saeko, kneeling down right behind Ranma and he whirled the weapon around, the chain elongating to around 50 feet, slicing into the zombies all around them. It also cleared the way back to the Hummer entirely, nearly nicking its front bumper with the pole end, which he hadn't bothered opening. After a single turn he faltered, the chain returning to its normal size and he pulled it back in shaking his head tiredly. "God, that really takes a lot out of me."

Saeko stood up swiftly grabbing his arm and pulling him back towards the Hummer, shoing the two adult women onto the top of the vehicle and motioning Rei to get back in. She easily jumped up to the top of the Hummer herself, pulling Ranma with her even as she shouted instructions. "Now Kohta, Shizuka! Get us out of here!"

Yuuki pulled back swiftly as Shizuka gunned the engine and the Hummer shot forward, smashing into the remnants of the horde in front of them which had already been weakened by Kohta going to rapid-fire on the Springfield, belting out rounds as fast as he could rather than single shots. Asami and Rei had done the same sticking their heads out the back windows to fire straight ahead, and between the three of them they cleared enough of the zombies for the Hummer to smashed through the far end of the horde. Moments later they left the horde behind, and continued their way through the streets of the city.

Ranma tiredly sat up leaning against the junk at the back of the Hummer's roof, reaching in and trying to pull out some energy bars for himself. He pulled out a whole box of them, but only decided to eat three of them now before putting the rest back. He then wearily rewound the chain of his meteor hammer around his waist then leaned back again, closing his eyes even as his hands automatically unwrapped the energy bar and forced it into his mouth.

Now that they were safe Kohta scrambled up and out of the way as her sister dove into the Hummer, grabbing her daughter and pulling her into a hug despite the awkward angle "You're safe!" she exclaimed tears in her eyes. "I knew you were safe when Ranma called us, but you went off alone..." she pulled back and stared angrily at her daughter. "What the hell happened, why did you do something like that!?"

Rei was in tears too and pulled her mother into another hug "I'll tell you why later, it was just something stupid, I'm sorry! I'm sorry I worried you! I'm just so happy that you're alive and we're together!"

Above them, Nodoka had gone to her knees next to her son and pulled him into a hug of her own. "I never doubted," she breathed, "I never doubted that you could get through to us."

Ranma smiled weakly at her then bit into one of energy bars before speaking. "You know me mom, it's gonna take more than zombies to put me down."

"My manly son," said his mother ruffling his hair and looking up to where Saeko had remained at the front of the Hummer kneeling down and looking in the direction they were heading. She noticed that the young woman was wielding her family blade and she gasped a little. "Does Busujima-san's wielding our family blade mean what I think it is my son?"

Saeko looked back at her and smiled gently. "I hope you treat me well, haha-ue."* that phrasing made both Saya and Yuuki scowl, and both of them resisted the urge to head up there and slap the sword-user silly.

Ranma's mother grinned at the young woman and moved forward to give her a hug too. "Welcome to the family my dear," she whispered. "I hope you know what you're in for."

Saeko smiled a little wickedly. "I've had several good examples of what I'm in for over the past few days yes."

"Oh," said his mother leaning even closer. "Do tell. Was he all you expected him to be?"

She was interrupted by a slap on her leg from Kiriko, who had just stuck her upper body out of the gun hatch. "Stop that, no mentally scarring the children."

"Mama," said Rei, looking at her "Wh-where's dad? What happened?"

The two adult women shared a glance and shook their heads. "Your father was wounded. Not by a zombie," she hastened to add as Rei's eyes widened with a look of horror. "He was shot in the chest, and the bullet lodged there. There was nothing we could do for him here so he was airlifted out to the rendezvous point. We stayed to help with the defense of the police station."

"And how was that defense broken?" said Saya pushing up her glasses and looking at the two women seriously, alternating between looking at the woman who was now sitting down next to her with Ray in her lap and the woman who was sticking her head over the side of the gun hatch, her auburn hair falling like a cascade down into the interior of the Hummer.

"That's where it becomes very strange" replied Kiriko, shaking her head angrily. "That police station was designed with an exterior wall around its parking lot, and the back of it to an alleyway behind but there's no doorway there, so it was a decent defensive position, that's why it was chosen as an evacuation point. Unfortunately, there are groups out there that apparently have decided to take the law into their own hands."

Nodoka took up the tale. "The two of us were holding the parking lots entrance. The last few groups to come in had been rather noisy and pulled even more zombies, adding to those that had been attracted to the noise of the helicopters landing. We were about, I would say five or six more loads before we were going to pull out when we heard a large explosion from behind us."

"An explosion?" said Saya questioningly. Kohta too was listening avidly as was Asami. Ranma concentrated more on putting food in his face than anything else, and Takashi and Saeko kept an eye out all around them. Yuuki, Kyoko and Shizuka were listening while Alice was looking at the two adult women with interest, the puppy once more in her arms as she looked over the back to Takashi's seat at them.

Rei's mother took up the story again. "A few of the policemen from inside the station came out shouting about how someone had blown a hole in the back wall, but by that point the explosion had attracted even more zombies, and while it wasn't exactly a clean break or anything from what I understand, the zombies simply came in waves from both that direction and the front. It was decided to pull out immediately with as many people as we could load onto the last few helicopters, but your mother and I decided to stay behind to meet up with you."

That was actually only half the reason why they had decided to stay behind. The other half was the fact that Kiriko had seen her husband's wound, and knew he was dying. There was very little even with modern medicine that a doctor could do for a gunshot wound of that caliber, and that supposed that they would have enough resources to waste on the attempt, which wasn't certain in the current crisis. It was only because of his record and his respected position among the ranks of the police (including the chopper pilots) and the fact it happened well before the assault on the back of the precinct that they had even bothered wasting space on his dying body. She had said her goodbyes

to him before they had loaded him onto the helicopter, but had no wish to explain that to her daughter right now. Maybe once they got somewhere safe so they could both have a cry, but not before.

Kiriko shook her head. "As soon as the helicopters began to lift off the group that had blown up the interior made their appearance, they began to open fire on us from the surrounding buildings, it's evident they wanted to keep us from heading back into the police station, and they killed several of my fellow policeman who tried. I'm honestly surprised they didn't take shots at us once we broke out of the parking lot, but they seemed to have a plan and were sticking to it."

Kohta groaned and shared a look with Asami. "They were after the guns weren't they?"

"Probably," Asami said despondently poking her two fingers together worriedly. "But I think they're under some kind of lock encoder system or something, I don't know if they could get at them."

"The guns the police themselves were using were under lock and key," said Kiriko authoritatively, shaking her head resignedly. "But most of them had already been pulled out and assigned to officers. Looting the bodies of those they shot down would give them a few I have no doubt."

"But I doubt the police raided your evidence locker room said Kohta grimly. "I don't doubt there were a lot of guns in there for them to use either."

The two Miyamoto sisters nodded grimly. "That's probably true, and something we should've done. I think we had plans to do that before pulling out but because of the second wave coming at us from behind and the sheer number of zombies I don't think anyone got around to doing it."

She shook her head. Those last few moments with the helicopters lifting off and the zombies closing in from all around them had been perilous beyond belief. The two women had quickly realized they couldn't get back to the helicopters even if they wanted to. Besides the zombies coming in from the hole in the back of the precinct the zombies had actually begun climbing over one another to get over the small wall around the parking lot, and there were shots coming in from everywhere. The sounds of helicopters and the screams of the civilians as they were escorted on to the helicopters under fire were just too much for them to listen to without reacting and it had drawn hundreds of zombies from all around in on the precinct.

She shook her head from the memories of seeing two policeman pulled back into the horde, zombie mouths gaping wide and biting down silencing their screams as the helicopter's lifted off. Two of them had even crashed, dragged down by zombies as they lifted off the ground but the other two had gotten away.

"So, she said briskly, slapping her hands together and then moving them back to rest around Rei's waist in a loose hug. "Where are we going? And what have you all been up to? What's all the stuff at the back?" Implied in that statement was the question as to why all of it was there blocking the lot of them having more room. Having her daughter back in her lap at her age was very weird, but it was the only way for them all to have room, and that was with four of them up on the roof.

Nodoka nodded, sending her hair rippling in the air of the Hummer's interior, turning to look down at Alice with a warm smile. "And who is this little cutie? How are you dear?"

"I'm fine miss," said the little girl smiling up at her. "The onii-chans and onee-sans have been looking after me really well!" She held up the dog. "And this is Zeke," she said happily, glad that she and Kohta had finally come up with a name for the little white puppy. Knowing its cue, the newly christened Zeke barked lightly, wagging his tail furiously.

"I see said Nodoka pulling her head up to look over at her son who shook his head mouthing the word 'father' and shaking it again. Nodoka nodded and didn't make any comment simply reaching down and patting Alice on the head. "Well I'm glad you're along dear, it would get so boring without someone like you along to liven things up. And you can call me auntie."

Alice nodded seriously. "The onee-chans take things a little too seriously sometimes, but I try to keep them in line."

Everyone in the Hummer laughed at that but Ranma was too tired to join in, leaning back against the pact duffel bags on the slope of the back of the Hummer even as he popped a second energy bar into his mouth. While it wasn't working yet, he hoped it would kick in before their next battle, or else he was going to be about as useful as a wet noodle. *I need to figure out some way did heightened my ki reservoir, that should not have taken that much out of me. I know was necessary at the time, but if we hadn't been able ta break through in that first rush I wouldn't have been in any condition to help.*

Saeko sat down beside him leaning against the same duffel and nuzzling one of his shoulders. "Well done my heart," she muttered kissing the side of his neck for a moment.

Saya poked her head up, nearly smacking her forehead into Nodoka's, who had leaned down again to talk with Kyoko and Shizuka, wanting to thank the two women for looking after the teens. Of course they all knew it was more the other way around, but certain proprieties had to be maintained. Saya didn't care about that, having her mind on more long term problems. "So, on to my place?"

Ranma nodded. "That's the plan. Should we head back to the river and take that down to your parents place, or follow the roads and take our chances?" He looked up, estimating it was near five o'clock by this point, meaning they had about three hours or so of daylight left.

Saya took out the map from Saeko's backpack, which the swordswoman had dropped into the hatch before they hit the zombies around the two sisters. She spread it out over the top of the Hummer then moved to one side as Kyoko stood up, sticking your own head out to look at the map, making the hatch a little crowded, but thankfully both of them were much thinner than Kohta, though their busts did make it rather uncomfortable. Luckily the others had better sense than to try and join them, though judging by Kohta's blush the tow of them alone were already enough stimulation for him.

Saya ignored the pervert for now, concentrating on the map. "Well we're heading towards the river now, but this street's going to dead end soon and we'll need to turn to the right to continue on towards my parent's place. After that we'll hit a main road, and we can take that back to the river if we want. I think that is really the best plan, we won't run into any problems on the river itself after all unless people have already begun to build boats to try and get away, but I doubt that's an issue just yet. The roads leading to my parents place though pass all the way through this commercial district before hitting the housing district, and I don't think we should trust the roads around here anymore than we have to."

Kohta frowned a little from where he was holding on to one side of the Hummer as it sped along, both hands gripping the roof's edge so hard his knuckles were white. He really didn't like being on the roof of the Hummer when it was moving like this without him in the protection of the Hatch. He'd even had to hand his rifle down so he had both hands to grab on with. "D-do you think we can get some ammunition for the guns from your house? I mean your dad is the one that leads that whole ultra-nationalist party right?"

Saya shrugged not showing any surprise that Kohta knew that. "I'm pretty we could, I mean I've seen guns like that around a time or two. My father runs his party more like it his own private army anyway." She said that part bitterly.

Saya had long hated the fact that her father was so involved in politics at the expense of being with his family, and hated the fact that the people around her used their relationship to put her on a pedestal and treat her like a princess. To Saya's mind if she was on a pedestal she damn well wanted to have earned that position on her own merits. She had also begun to resent the fact that neither of her parents had tried to check up for her or come to get her when this crisis began. To her mind that showed their priorities in as unambiguous a fashion as possible.

Ranma nodded grimly. They had just gone through quite a lot of their ammunition supply in the past two battles, so Kohta's point was a definite consideration. "Good job thinking ahead Kota, but if we can get re-arm there you're in charge of clearing the road for us. Single shots, and only if they seem to be making their way towards us." Kohta nodded his eyes gleaming again with anticipation despite the fact they had just exited a pretty hot battle, and Ranma nodded firmly.

Nodoka, Saeko and Ranma began to look out while Kohta took up his position in the gun hatch again. The three of them were looking at the side of the roads, the concern of whether or not they would be attacked by other groups rather than zombies paramount in their minds while Kohta studied the road ahead of them making sure that there were no zombie clumps in front of them that could impede their progress.

Thankfully they made the transition from this one lane road to one of the main roads back towards the river in another twenty minutes without further incident, and were belting along it when they noticed what looked like stakes along the side of the road in front of one of the alleyways. The women turned away in shock and horror, and Takashi made a point of covering Alice's eyes to stop her seeing what was there.

Ranma and Saeko exchanged a glance of grim rage. Someone had created what looked like stakes in the entrance to the alleyway and had stuck what looked to have been a still living person there. His mouth was open in a silent scream, and several zombies were still chewing on him, his intestines having already been ripped out and eaten. The Hummer sped past, and Nodoka shook her head. "What kind of person could do something like that?"

"Especially since whoever it was could get the zombies attention with fireworks or something else," Saya barely holding her stomach from throwing up.

"I don't know," said Rama thoughtfully, tapping the chain of his meteor hammer around his waist gently, but there was nothing gentle about his eyes as he looked back at the gruesome scene now behind them. "I don't know, but if I ever meet the person behind it I'm going to make certain they go the same exact way."

No one, not even Kyoko concerned as she was about his inner darkness and love of violence, spoke up against that idea and they all sat silently lost in their own thoughts as the Hummer continued on its way.

OOOOOOO

Only at one point during their trek to the river did the group run into further problems. This was in the shape of over three dozen zombies milling about around what looked like a small enclosed park along their route. Ranma noted absently that the park had seemingly been set up for some kind of small concert or something, and grimaced as he noticed the fence around most of it. *That must've blocked everyone in, and if the zombies were coming in from the one entrance I can see everyone inside must've been trapped there.*

There were several zombies around the fence as well, and he could see where some had been bitten on their legs as they were climbing over the fence and grimaced when he saw some kind of mascot character, his head missing and a bite taken out of the side of his jaw surrounded by several zombies that had once been kids. That was probably one of the more disturbing things he'd seen since this all began, right up there with the impaled individual they had passed a few minutes ago.

"Just don't look at it," he muttered looking down into the Hummer, and Shizuka grimaced but Hummer kept going, splattering two zombies in the road, several more going down to Kohta as the Hummer raced on.

About 10 minutes later they reached the river, and plowed into three more zombies there or were just milling about in the center of the road before going down the hill and then out onto the river.

Ranma again stuck his head down into the center of the Hummer, looking around at Saya. "How far do we take the river down before heading to your parents place?"

Saya frowned thoughtfully pushing up her glasses as she looked down at the map. "For that we have a sort of choice to make she said. We could try to take the main roads, where we've had mixed success. The group nodded, remembering back to that ambush they had run into before having to take a secondary route to be police station. Even the two mothers nodded, having been told about it on the way here.

Ranma's aunt in particular was looking a little amused remembering all they had been told about the teen's adventures up to this point. She had never expected that Ranma would be the leader of this group, indeed she had expected an adult to be somewhere in the mix. But after talking to Shizuka and Kyoko she realized that she had greatly underestimated her nephew. Not only was he an even more deadly martial artist than she had thought, he had a brain on him too, and the willingness to do anything he had to keep the rest of them safe. All in all she was well pleased with his leadership and was more than willing to back off and let him continue to be the leader. This also would allow her more time to be by herself and grieve for her husband. Despite what she had told her daughter she knew that she would never see him alive again.

Saya continued, "The other choice is to take the river further down, and then try the back roads. We'll be going through a housing district if we try that route."

Ranma nodded looking down at her, trust in his eyes as he asked "Pros and cons?" He wasn't really the kind to plan ahead, but he knew to take advantage of Saya, who was good at that kind of thing.

Saya grinned up at him thankful that he was finally learning to follow her example in thinking ahead. "The first choice would probably be faster, we might run into some more trouble in terms of numbers of zombies and maybe even other groups like what Ms. Miyamoto mentioned, but we might get there faster in the end, and we can double back more easily for the first leg of the trip until we hit the housing district."

"With the second option we have less chance of running into many zombies and far less of a chance of running into other scavenger groups because we'll be travelling through housing district the entire way. But it would take longer because that route would be much less of a straight line and, if we run into any barricades or anything that permanently blocks the Hummer we would have to backtrack almost to the river and try again. There are also places that if they're blocked we would be forced at least half an hour, maybe more out of our way to go around. Moving a

barricade would obviously make a lot of noise and would bring more zombies down on top of us."

Ranma frowned thoughtfully, tapping the chain around his waist. "Kohta, how's your ammo doin'?"

"The shotguns out, we ran out back during the fight by the police station," He said promptly, which caused Takashi to shrug unrepentedly in the front seat. Between conserving ammo or blowing away zombies he knew what he'd choose.

"The knight SR and Springfield M1A1 are down to about 60 shots broken evenly between them." The gun otaku sighed sadly. "If we had had time to police the area after that barricade incident we might've gotten some more guns and hopefully some more ammo too, but with the zombies coming on as they were that wasn't going to happen. And we didn't have the chance at the police station either."

"Couldn't be helped," Ranma agreed frowning thoughtfully. "What about the crossbow and the nail guns?"

"The nail guns are fully loaded, we grabbed a lot ammo for them at the few maintenance shops along the way before we dumped the bus, and they didn't weigh much so never got rid of any. We have enough to load them both up three more times."

Yuuki scowled at the memory of what happened to the bus and all her hard work on it and Rei patted her shoulder consolingly while Kohta continued. "The crossbow only has two bolts left, Kyoko sensei went through most of them during that last fight."

Ranma frowned thoughtfully then nodded decisively. "Let's go with the route through The back way. Kohta, Rei, switch out your guns to the nail guns, don't shoot if you don't have to. We'll try to sneak through. Once we get ashore Saeko and I will go ahead and scout out ahead of the rest of you."

Nodoka frowned slightly, really wishing she had kept up with most of her martial arts exercises. She had once been able to roof-hop as easily as Ranma did but that had been a long time ago. She had kept up with her sword exercises, but not the others, and even that hadn't proven enough to keep her from getting sore after the last few days constant use.

Ranma continued. "We won't use walkie-talkies or even speak much. we'll stay within sight of you and use hand gestures to signal what we want you to do. The rest of ya will have ta stay as quiet as possible. I don't think any of us are up to another battle at this point, so sneakiness is the way to go."

The others all nodded fervent agreement with that and settled in for a nice little break from the danger. Rei leaned against her mother's shoulder, smiling slightly as she remembered times when she was younger and fell asleep just like this. Kohta, Takashi, Ranma and Saeko all leaned back and tried to take a nap. Takashi first had to help Alice to move into the back where she sat down on Kyoko's lap, the two of them talking quietly about some kind of children's TV show. Yuuki moved to the front and joined Takashi in his chair, smirking inside at the glare this cause Rei to send her before they both closed their eyes in the hopes of a nap.

Shizuka pouted slightly at the fact everyone else was able to take naps, one of her favorite pastimes, but was comforted when Yuuki put Zeke in her lap to play with as she kept the Hummer in the center of the river.

Time passed quickly and 30 minutes later they reached the point where they would have to move off the river to head towards Saeko's house.

As soon as they moved up the little hill they came into the housing area that Saya had mentioned. Most of the houses around here were pretty large and very well-to-do especially the ones right by the river bed. There actually wasn't a bridge or road here; the houses just looked over the river bed with nothing between them. This forced the Hummer to smash through a fence and over someone's little lawn to get to the road on the other side. There ere a few zombies around, but Kohta killed them quickly as they responded to the noise of the Hummer's movement.

They successfully got out onto the street and Saya pointed out the direction they needed to go to Shizuka then passed the map with the route highlighted up to Ranma, squeezing her arm past Kohta's bulk.

He and Saeko looked at it then nodded at the others and silently jumped off from the top of the Hummer to the nearest rooftop. Saeko made the jump easily this time, and smiled at Ranma's grin of encouragement.

From there Ranma jumped to the other side of the street, and the two of them made their way a few houses forward of the Hummer, looking around for threats then turned and waved the Hummer on.

Shizuka move forward at a crawl, the engine barely turning over and she winced looking at the gas dial. They had filled up at the mall, but it was obvious that they were going to need to fill up again once they got to Saeko's house. Luckily the Hummer could run on practically anything, so it wouldn't be that difficult. Despite this Yuuki's work on its engine was proving its worth again, as the sound of the engine was barely audible to the two scouting marital artists.

Saeko and Ranma moved silently over the rooftops, stopping occasionally and looking around them, the sunlight of the fading day behind them. Most of the time they simply waved the Hummer forward, but twice they ordered it to halt, as they cleared out a patch of zombies as silently as possible. Despite this Saya looked to be correct, this area didn't have many zombies in it and while the going was slow, it was safe.

About thirty minutes into the trip Saeko called a halt then motioned Ranma over to join her as she jumped to the next house. The two of them stood there looking down at a barricade right below them blocking the route. It was a simple stone one like construction crews used, showing none of the ramshackle nature of the other barricade they had seen.

Despite this the two of them carefully looked around at the houses and the streets, looking for any sign of movement. They didn't see anything to indicate an ambush and with Saeko remaining on guard before Ranma jumped down. He lifted the stone up careful not to let it scrape on the asphalt, before dropping it to the side. With that done Saeko motioned the Hummer through, then went ahead while Ranma replaced the barricade before rejoining her.

It was very nervous making for everyone going this slowly in fits and starts like this, but it was also safe, and despite the few zombie groups and the barricade they didn't run into any trouble until about three blocks away from Saya's house.

The houses here were even larger than the houses they had been moving through, and were actually segueing into actual mansions rather than regular houses. One of them however caught Ranma's attention because he thought he saw movement in one of the upper story windows.

Raising one hand he called a halt, motioning Saeko back to tell the Hummer to stop several turns back. With that done he went down on his belly looking over the tip of the roof, staring at the window where he saw the movement. His patience was rewarded when about two minutes later a man stepped into view, holding a pair of binoculars

The look of the guy and two cut off fingers on the hand Ranma could see indicated he was a yakuza, not someone you would normally find in this area of the town. The fact he was staring out toward the Takagi estate rather than around probably meant he wasn't there to spot groups coming in or for zombies, but rather to keep an eye on the mansion and the people inside.

It looked almost as if someone had set up a spy on the house, and he moved back swiftly to join Saeko, whispering what he had found to relay it to the others. With that done he dropped down to the road, doubled back and around to come at the house in a direction where there were no windows that could spot him jumping onto the roof.

He landed lightly, not making any noise then slowly and quietly made his way around the roof.

He swiftly came to the point above the window where he'd spotted the guy. Looking over it he was able to see that the window had been opened, and he breathed a sigh of relief before flipping himself over and into the room, his feet impacting the man's face and throwing him back.

In the room he found two other yakuza thugs and a walkie-talkie set by the window which he deliberately crushed before charging the three surprised toughs. All three of them whipped out knives, even the man whose face Ranma had just hammered, and they came at him snarling. "We're gonna gut you twerp!"

Ranma ignored their rather idiotic threats and grabbed one man's arm when he tried to stab him, punching the man straight in the throat crushing it. The man fell down grabbing at his ruined throat as he began to choke to death, and Ranma whirled around a spin kick taking the man whose face he had smashed in the side of the head snapping his neck and flinging his body aside.

The last man tried to slash at him but Ranma ducked under it and got behind him, grabbing the man in a chokehold. The man again to gasp in pound at his hands, but Ranma's grip was like steel, and within seconds the man had succumbed falling unconscious to the ground.

Ranma left him there, moving through the house swiftly on silent feet. Luckily the three of them were the only ones there, and he moved upstairs once again to look out around at the other houses. On the roof across from him he could make out a bit of purple hair sticking out above the slope of the houses roof, and he whistled.

Saeko stuck her head out to look at him and nodded then stood up and made her way back to the Hummer motioning it to start forward again.

A shout from the mansion at the end of the road however brought her up short and she looked back at the mansion where a guard set in a tree near the outer wall of the area had apparently spotted her.

Wondering how he had missed Ranma she merely waved at him, then jumped down and joined the Hummer as it made the final turn and began to move towards the house. "Just to prove were friendly Saya-san," she said in a normal tone of voice, hoping it would carry without her having to shout, "I think you should come up here with me."

She helped Kohta stand up onto the top of the roof, and Saya made her way onto the roof as well, after which Kohta jumped back into the hatch. He'd had enough of being on the roof while the car was moving, thank you so much.

The hummer soon turned onto the road leading to the mansion's gate. Saya stood at the front of the roof waving her hands above her head to make sure that the people in the mansion could see her.

She almost fell in her exuberance, but Saeko caught her, pulling her back and Saya actually blushed a little at feeling the other girl's breasts pressed into her back like that. Saeko kept her grip on Saya however, her breasts continuing to press into Saya's back while the Hummer made its way forward slowly.

Ranma swiftly joined them, jumping down and landing lightly alongside the Hummer, his prisoner in a fireman's carry over his shoulders.

Ahead of them the group could see several people rushing out to the gate in the mansion wall, pushing it aside and waving them through. A few of them even shouted out loud in happiness at seeing the young mistress alive and well.

Inside the mansion's walls there were clear signs of fighting, several dead bodies scattered around, and even a few zombies near the walls. A limousine was parked outside the mansion's doors, but it seemed to have been hit by a fire bomb of some kind and smoke was still pouring out of it. Nor had the mansion been spared. It was missing several windows, the front door showed signs of more fire damage. There were also several tents on the grounds as well, but they seemed to have been trampled down and around them were a dozen other dead bodies.

"I wonder what happened here?" Ranma muttered looking up at Saeko and through the window at Kyoko. They both shrugged and Saya scowled angrily, wondering what the hell happened here.

The Hummer ground to a halt when one of the more officious looking guardsmen motioned with his hands for it to stop. Another guard moved swiftly to help Saya down from the roof but didn't make it before Saeko simply lifted the shorter girl up and jumped down easily. The group all boiled out of the Hummer, while behind them the Gates began to shut, sounding a little too final for Ranma's ears for some reason. Nonetheless, he was happy to be somewhere safe again. *For a given value of safe anyway.* He thought ruefully, then grinned at Saya and moved to stand next to her and Saeko, wondering what was going to happen next.

End chapter

Sorry about ending the chapter there, but felt the scene I have written next and with Ranma and Saya's dad just isn't good enough. As you can see I added tragedy, but didn't make it happen to the group, not quite anyway. And I showed that other people were just as dangerous going forward. Now the question is, should the group add another car, because the Hummer is hell'a crowded right now. And will they add any other people to their unit?

As always, read and review. And should Kiriko and Nodoka be paired with anyone? Could add to the comedy/drama factor, but I have no opinion on it one way or the other.

Next chapter will have Ranma and Saya's dad clashing heads, the group spending some time safe again, and some other things.

*formal version of mother, specifically mother-in-law (though don't quote me on that part)

***Chapter 8*: Was That Supposed to Hurt?**

I don't own High School of the Dead (Rei would have executed Shido whatever he said) or Ranma (for far too many reasons to list here).

Some reviews I'd like to mention:

Nekoshou ANBU: No, no curse, this Ranma never went to Jusenkyou. And please reread the story to find the answer to your other question.

Sandcrawlr: Another male lead from another series might be an okay idea, but it would have to be an adult or near adult and out of Sekirei (no, just no) I don't know any of the appropriate age. If you have any suggestions, PM me.

SavvySage: Next chapter man, hope you'll like it.

Tai Khan: The IFV's are interesting, would have to look up if the Japanese have their own version of course, but maybe could have them appear later when Ranma and Saeko start going out on their own to bring back supplies – raiding a military base for example. And the last bit of your review literally had be ROTFL, yet at the same time was disturbing enough to give me the willies.

AzoggThoth: Nodoka and Ranma aren't going to get together, I agree that is a little on the wrong side.

Xeno96: I have plans to add a few more people once they get out to sea along with Rika, but for now, no new additions.

To everyone who said Kriko and Nodoka should get with Ranma: no, just no. Ranma has enough mental issues, he doesn't need to have his mom jumping him for 'stress relief'.

Nomster: thanks for the great review as always man! I felt that Ranma and co was the first group the raiders attacked, so they didn't have time to gather other prisoners. Asami and Kohta will possibly be the only one to one relationship in this at least for a time. Definitely agree with the fact Kiriko would not be willing to just move on after losing her husband. Ranma actually captured the yakuza spy, though nothing will be built on that in this chapter. I want to write up a bit of background to that, and that will be part of the next chapter.

Chapter 8 Was That Supposed to Hurt?

"Saya-chan!" shouted a loud female voice. The group looked up and saw a statuesque woman, two heads taller than Saya yet her face showing clearly they were related. She had a slightly curvier form, her hair a slightly darker shade of pink than her daughters and her eyes and face showing a keen intelligence. That face was now broken by a wide happy grin, and she sped towards her daughter swiftly.

Next to her strode a man tall with slicked back hair, broad shoulders dressed in a black uniform of some kind with a sheathed sword at his side and a grim, aloof face that wasn't showing any emotion at present. Indeed, it looked the kind of face that would find it impossible to show emotions, though whether that was his public face or not Ranma didn't know, he had never actually met the man, only seeing him once when he dropped Saya off at home that first day. This was Souichiro Takagi, leader of the ultranationalist party in the prefecture, and Saya's father.

Saya took one look and raced into her mother's arms, crying "Mama!"

The man nodded at her before looking over at Kiriko and Nodoka, assuming they were the ones in charge given their weapons and Kiriko's police uniform. "I assume I have you to thank for my daughter's safety so far, but I must ask why you didn't come directly here?"

Nodoka and Kiriko smiled politely but they both shook their heads. Nodoka spoke for them pointing over at Ranma who was just then helping Alice out of the Hummer. "It wasn't us, we just met up with the kids a hours ago ourselves in fact. My son Ranma is the leader of this group."

Ranma let Alice go, smiling as she raced off with Zeke, gleeful for the chance to stretch her legs after spending the entire day in the Hummer. "You okay to walk Takashi?"

"Takashi shook his head, wincing slightly as he turned his body to the side from his seat in front of the Hummer. "I

don't think so to be honest. My ankle is really hurting now." As were his lower back and shoulder, but he wasn't going to mention them just yet. His shoulder was no mystery, it hurting like this was a natural reaction to his smashing in a door with it. The lower back thing was odd though.

"Well I suppose I could carry you..."

"Oh hell no," Takashi groaned, "Once was enough thanks."

The two shared a laugh while Shizuka hurried around the Hummer. She and Rei propped up Takashi after Ranma helped him down, and Ranma nodded. "You two and Asami were hurt to right right? I know ya hurt yer shoulder during that first mall fight Rei, and I doubt it's gotten any better. So they're all yours Shizuka-sensei, do with 'em what ya will."

Shizuka giggled at his wording and the four of them turned and followed one of the guards into the house heading for a guest room on the first floor. Ranma took a moment to look at the men here, and found a lot to be impressed by, and some that was a little worrying. They were all armed with pistols and swords, and a few of them had rifles, those that he could see had stayed on guard around the mansion's perimeter. They all seemed organized and focused, but there were a few who seemed a little shocky for some reason, especially the group by some wrecked tents in the far corner, and the sight of a small pile of bodies there made Ranma frown.

Souichiro had watched all this and nodded mentally in grudging approval. While Ranma's ignoring him was rather rude, his desire to see to his group's injured people was at least in the right place. Now however he asked his question again. "Why didn't you come straight here young man?"

Ranma shrugged. "It didn't make sense at the time. We couldn't get over the river at first, and we wanted ta pick up some resources and then once we were over it made sense ta hit you up last given the direction we were going. Retracing your footsteps is a lot more difficult than just goin' forward 'cause ya run into the zombies ya stirred up the first time through. By the way, nice place you got here, but what the heck happened over there?" He asked nodding at the tents and the bodies around them.

The don frowned at his flippant attitude, mode of speech and lack of manners. But Ranma had had a rough day, and was in no mood to be nice to a stuffed shirt like this. He hadn't really liked the first glimpse of the man he had when he dropped Saya off that first day, and hadn't spent enough time around Saya's house to really get any better impression of them. On top of that he didn't like the fact he hadn't actually greeted his daughter yet. His inner tomcat also didn't like the man in front of him, seeing him as another alpha and therefore a rival.

Souichiro barely glanced at the tents. "A minor issue, we let in a few sheep and found one of them was a snake in the grass. They tried assault us from within at an opportune moment, but they did not succeed."

Ranma nodded thoughtfully but still wondered what the full story was there. "Huh, well, maybe this guy will have some answers fer ya." He kicked his prisoner who he had dropped to the ground next to him then turned back to his odd little family. "Hey Kyoko-sensei, can ya drive the Hummer over ta the garage, I think it's over by the side there. Kohta go with 'em, ya know what ta look for then check out where ya want ta set up yer sniper spot." They both nodded and got back into the Hummer.

Souichiro looked at two of his men wordlessly. One ran off to find some rope and the other raced ahead of the Hummer to open the garage doors, while the don frowned heavily at Ranma's attitude. It was as if the younger man was treating him as an equal, his speech wasn't polite enough and his whole stance and manner was disrespectful, challenging. He looked over at the two older women who were talking quietly to a young woman he recognized as Saeko Busujima, the daughter of one of his friends. She was absentmindedly playing with a young girl they must've picked up somewhere as well as, for some odd reason, a white furred puppy.

None of them looked as if they were going to interject into the conversation so evidently the boy's mother didn't find his attitude worthy of correction. Before he could address it himself the young woman who looked something like a slut leaned over pressing herself against the boy's back and whispering into his ear.

Ranma flushed a little at the contact but nodded and waved Yuuki off, and the girl practically skipped over towards the garage, an inquisitive look in her eyes.

"I assure you you're perfectly safe here. The power outage may have hindered us, but we are safe behind our walls. There is no need for that boy to join the defense at present."

"Not going to last," said Ranma bluntly looking down at his prisoner. "If not someone like this guy and whoever the

hell he works for, eventually the zombies are going to move out o' the center of the city in too many numbers fer ya ta stop."

"I don't recall asking for your opinion young man," said the don sharply. He was not used to someone so young mouthing off at him in such a manner. Ranma wasn't mouthing off, but to someone like Souichiro didn't really know the difference. He didn't realize that he had gotten used to intimidating people, not just by his words and actions but by his presence, and when he ran into someone that he didn't intimidate it threw off his sense of equilibrium.

"Don't care," Ranma said almost cheerfully, "You're still going to get it."

Despite their ongoing reunion Saya and her mother Yuriko saw the rising tension between the two men and Saya moved to put a stop to it before it could go further. "Come on Ranma," she said grabbing his hand. "Let's see if we can find some food." Saeko stopped her for a moment, leaning in to whisper something but Saya only half-heard her, concentrating on getting Ranma away from her father before their verbal confrontation could go any further.

Her father was about to cut her off and tell her to go inside alone wanting to continue to try and put the boy in his place, but his wife Yuriko intervened shaking her head at him sharply. The two disappeared inside, and she turned to the two women who were still standing and talking together with Saeko and Alice. "You said that young man is your son, you must be proud of him."

Motoko looked up and smiled happily. "Oh yes, I'm quite happy with him. Even if I didn't really have much to do with his rearing he's turned out rather well."

"You mean arrogant and opinionated." muttered one of the men and then stifled himself under his Yuriko's glare.

Nodoka however simply laughed. "Of course! As I understand it he's the only reason many of them are still alive. And he has never been a friend of authority figures it must be said."

Saeko chuckled, raising one hand in front of her mouth daintily. "That is putting it mildly. I well remember the number of clashes he had with most of the teachers at school."

She turned to look back away at Ranma and Saya who had just disappeared into the mansion. She hoped Saya was going to choose to continue traveling with them, but wasn't going to pressure her one way or the other.

"Busujima-san," said Souichiro looking at her gravely. "Could you come with me to my office for a moment? I have something to show you."

Saeko nodded politely and followed the older man. Inside however she was chuckling quietly at his reaction to Ranma. She didn't know if it was his tomcat side or not, but Ranma had a very 'alpha male' attitude at times, and this man was obviously the leader around here and not used to being questioned. Ranma on the other hand, was simply the alpha of wherever the hell he was at present and wouldn't be willing to back down from anyone

Behind her Saya's mother began to talk quietly to the Miyamoto sisters, smiling faintly as she asked one of the younger guardsmen to take Alice inside. At the same time the man who had gone for rope came back and began to tie up Ranma's comatose prisoner with the help of two others.

OOOOOO

Ranma watched as Saya bustled around the kitchen, wondering what the strange tension he could tell had taken her was coming from. When she passed by him again he reached out and took her arm stopping her in place. "So what's going on with you and your parents?"

Saya scowled a little having hoped that he wouldn't notice but decided to answer anyway. It wasn't as if Ranma really cared one way or the other about her father's politics or knew anything about him so she could fill in the blanks easily enough, and it might be good to get it off her chest before she had to see him again. "My father is the leader of the ultranationalist political party in this district; he's really powerful, he's well respected amongst his party, a great organizer and influential and all that."

She sighed and ran one hand through her pink hair. "All that shit hasn't ever equated to him being a good father. He's never been there for me when I was growing up, he left that to my mother, but even then he usually took her with him on business trips and social gatherings and crap like that. Suffice to say I've never been close to him, he's always been this grim authority figure, but I thought he still cared, you know? Then this whole crap happens, and not only doesn't he try to come and get me even with his own army, I'm sure you noticed them outside?"

She looked at Ranma and he nodded. All of the men here, and there seemed to be about thirty of them seemed to obey Saya's father implicitly and respected him deeply if the glares Ranma got for arguing with him were anything to go by.

"And then when we get here he doesn't even look happy or grateful or anything! He doesn't even talk to me, he says nothing about why he didn't search for me, and doesn't even mention the fact that I tried to call them!? I like being thought of as independent but that's just ridiculous! He is always doing that, he's always putting the needs of his group before everything else! I mean I know he cares, but does he have to be so stoic and standoffish all the time! Would it have killed him to at least hug me or tell me he was glad I was safe or..."

She looked down, body shaking in anger and sadness and Ranma swiftly pulled her into a hug. She stiffened a little as she felt his arms go around her, but stopped nearly crying and simply buried into his chest a little. After a moment he looked down at her and said, "Feel better?"

Saya nodded and Ranma went on. "So I take it you won't have any objections to keep moving with the rest of us? I won't lie, your brain is one of our best assets. After all," he smirked, "we need someone around that can supply a bit of common sense to the group, and actually get yer voice heard. Kyoko-sensei may have the common sense, but she don't speak up often enough, and doesn't seem to have all the knowledge we need."

Saya giggled a little and nodded. "Yes, I think it'll probably irritate the hell out of him but our long-term goal is probably still the best. The equation hasn't changed after all. The larger the group equals the more noise you make and the more danger of their being internal strife, more noise, and the more zombies you'll pull down on yourself, and the city is going to be a deathtrap eventually."

"Why won't your father like it? Don't you think he wants to leave the city too?"

Saya shook her head firmly. "That's not how he works, he doesn't think in terms of retreating or anything like that. He'll try to hold society together as much as he can, and he won't leave the city."

"Then he's an idiot," said Rama bluntly. "He doesn't have nearly as many people here as he should if he wants to fight off the zombies for long periods of time, and I don't think this place is self-sufficient is it?"

Saya shrugged. "It's got a well in the backyard, and a little tiny garden, but that's mostly for herbs and things for the cook. Who I notice isn't here, I wonder what happened to her?" She stared off for a moment frowning in thought, but then shook her head and came back in here now. "But no it's not self-sustaining. The walls are a good thing to have against the zombies I suppose, but I don't think the front gate is strong enough to hold them out if they get past those concrete barriers we saw on the roads at points along the way here."

Ranma shook his head. "Eventually the zombies'd pile up over the walls anyway, which'd lead to the defenders being attacked from all sides." Just because he didn't like to think ahead, didn't mean he wasn't able to see the tactical situation for what it was.

Saya moved away from him reluctantly, and Ranma let his hands drop down her sides, gently tracing her curves with his hands. It wasn't anything overt, but it suddenly made Saya realize how close the two were standing and she suddenly remembered what Saeko had said to her right before they entered the mansion, that she wasn't against sharing.

She shook that thought out of your head for now, and went about making them some sandwiches. She didn't want to use too much food, since she didn't know how long her parents group would remain here, but they had more than enough for her to make some sandwiches for Ranma and herself for now, and hopefully enough to feed them all for the rest of the day and maybe even tomorrow, depending on how long they stayed here.

She bent over to reach inside a bottom drawer for some mayonnaise and Ranma stared at her rear as she did so. His tomcat side came to the fore again, demanding that he take this willing wench (while Ranma had found himself more of a breast man recently, his tomcat side was definitely more of an ass lover) and he also remembered what Saeko said about being willing to share. Whether it was that memory or the feelings for Saya that he had before this all began he didn't know, but Ranma suddenly decided to act on Saeko's suggestion, and he moved forward until his crotch was bumping against Saya's rear.

She gasped a little, but for some reason didn't pull away, stand up or shout at him.

Noticing her non-reaction Ranma gently traced his hands along her back and around her sides to her stomach then raised her upper body with a hand on her stomach which began to move in slow circles. He nestled into her neck

breathing deeply and she gasped a little. "Saaayyyya-chan," he said almost purring her name. She turned to stare at him. After a moment she leaned in and closed her eyes. Ranma took the invitation meeting her halfway with his own lips.

Almost immediately Saya moaned, humping back against him, delighting in his rising reaction to her. The danger of the past few days, the flirting they had done before that and after, and her deep friendship with him, all of it came together to make her respond ardently to his touch.

She pulled back as she heard a noise outside of the kitchen and Ranma quickly stepped away looking around and breathing heavily. She looked down for a second and blushed seeing his reaction now clearly visible in his China pants, complimented and aroused that she had caused such a response given his experience with Saeko. "So," she muttered turning back and getting out the stuff she had been trying to grab before. "So, I guess Saeko was telling the truth when she said she wasn't averse to sharing?"

Ranma breathed in heavily, closing his eyes to get control of himself. This was made easier by the sound of other people moving around outside the kitchen and he eventually nodded. "Yeah she kinda told me to go for it if it was somethin' I wanted, in fact I think she's looking forward to it."

Saya looked at him a little shocked by that. She would never have guessed that Saeko had leanings in that direction and wondered if she was just curious or had already realized that she was attracted to women as well as men.

Ranma looked at her earnestly. "It ain't just a physical thing though. Before this all began," he said waving one arm as if to indicate the world around them, the zombies and everything else that began with them. "I was sort of torn between you and Saeko-chan anyway. I mean I love her, but I also liked you and um, er, maybe more..." He fumbled a bit and pouted as she began to chuckle.

Saya waved his irritation away, smiling faintly. "I was attracted to you before this all began too Ranma, it's not just physical though that is part of it," she said almost smirking as he blushed. "That mind of yours that you go to such great lengths to hide also attracted me, and while your manners leave much to be desired as does the way you speak, I've known you are a good man for a long time now." She looked at him seriously. "I'm not exactly happy with how at home you and Saeko are in the current crisis, and don't think I haven't noticed some of the looks you both get during fights."

Ranma shrugged. "I put it down to just being martial artists Saya-chan. To be as good as we are you have to really like pain in some way, both inflicting and taking it."

"That's just an excuse Ranma," the pinkette replied sharply and he looked up at her in shock as she moved forward to poke him in the chest. "You can't just say stuff like that, it isn't just being a martial artist. Maybe for you it's part of your cat nature, cats are cruel little egotistical shits at the best of times. But for Saeko it isn't, and the both of you need to realize that you need to control it. It's not just your lives that you put on the line if you go crazy, and don't think I haven't noticed that you both wanted to a few times. You both wanted to stay and fight the zombies after we were ambushed by that gang of thugs, and if not for the need to get myself and the others out would you have stayed and fought at the school? Or when we met up with your mothers?"

Ranma looked down at her and nodded. "I probably would've," he admitted, "and I know Saeko would have too. You're right; we do need to be aware of it."

"That's what I'm here for," said Saya looking up at him through her glasses. "I don't care how dark you are inside, you and Saeko are our lifelines are **my** life lines, if you need to remember to be in control remember that! You can't protect us if you give in to that part of you."

Ranma looked down at her and along with love came another emotion in his eyes, admiration. He gently reached down and cupped Saya's chin and her eyes widened for just a second as he leaned down and kissed her. It was deep and soulful, and she felt her body begin to tremble as she responded, her arms going around him again. He pulled her to him deepening the kiss and Saeko felt his tongue tap against her lips and opened her mouth willingly. The two stood there making out for a few moments and then again another noise from outside of the kitchen interrupted them and Ranma pulled away still holding her around the waist. "Okay Saya-chan," he said, "I'll remember that. If you think you can handle us..." he said grinning and leaning down to nip at her neck quickly.

Saya moved away from him hearing footsteps coming towards the kitchen door. "I think I can handle it," she said, "in fact I'm going to enjoy seeing if I can." She turned away blushing and wondering what had come over her to be that forthright about her emotions, but shook it off quickly. *I'll have to talk to Saeko later just to make sure she was okay with this, but if she really mentioned it to Ranma and me then it probably is okay...*

OOOOOOO

Saeko followed after Saya's father sedately as they moved through the mansion to his office on the first floor, noticing the layout of the mansion almost absently. The mansion was a single building with one long wing along one side and a two story foyer with a large staircase leading up to the second floor. The wing seemed to have a bathroom, the don's office and what looked like a dojo while on the other side was a sitting room, dining room and kitchen. The upstairs seemed to consist on one side of two bedrooms, one smaller than the other if she had to guess, and there were probably more bedrooms in the upstairs wing.

Once inside the office she looked around with interest and frowned faintly at seeing none of the normal 'father accoutrements'. She knew her own father kept paintings and pictures she had made while she was younger, as well as several pictures of her and him together. He had always taken pride in her achievements, and displayed them as such.

Here there was only one family picture, and it was blown up and rather ostentatious along one wall. A large desk with two seats in front of it, all of them simple wooden chairs with little in the way of cushions dominated the room at the far end, and there was little in the way of decoration elsewhere. Along the wall behind it was a sword however on a case and she wondered why there was another sword there when the man was already carrying one. The one on the wall looked a little strange to her, possibly something from the same period as the rifle was introduced, where the design of the katana changed slightly. "Would you like to see it?"

Saeko looked at the man, one eyebrow raised in inquiry and man laughed the first sign of real emotion the man had shown so far as he took the sword from its holder. "I have heard tell that the daughter of Busujima-sensei follows the way of the sword, and that her skill rivals anything found anywhere in Nippon, man or woman. Please."

Saeko took the sheath from him, and pulled the blade out easily, then held the blade up to the light. She looked along the blades edge, then nodded when she looked at its curve near the tip. "A Murata-to, as I thought..."

The man nodded. "I do not believe that it has a single blemish. It is yours now." Saeko looked up at the man sharply. "Busujima-sensei gave me his guidance many a time, please take it with my gratitude.

Saeko looked down at the blade in her hands for a moment then shook her head. "I have to refuse I'm afraid." She tapped the blade she already had sheathed at her side. "It is a matter of honor."

The don frowned. He had hoped to get some influence over the young woman, who would be a strong asset for his faction here despite her youth, and was much more in control than that young pup who seemed to challenge him from the moment they laid eyes on one another. "This too is a matter of honor."

Saeko shook her head bowing formally. "I thank you, but as the blade I wield is the honor blade of the family I wish to join, I will not relinquish it."

"Whose blade is it?" the man asked seriously. He knew by name and face the identity of every samurai descendent in the city, and a woman of Busujima's station had to be with someone of equal standing.

"It is the Miyamoto family blade," she said, then reached back and pulled the blade out of its sheath. The don's eyes widened slightly at seeing the blade, the slight curve, the mix of different the lines of chikei and nie and the perfection of the edge.

Even without being able to see the maker's mark he knew the kind of blade he was looking at, but the name that went with it was unknown to him. "That is not a samurai name I know. Yet that blade..."

"Family or not," said Saeko, smiling faintly. "Ranma is a true ronin, a samurai without a lord yet still following the code as he sees it. He is a consummate martial artist, a kind, gentle man despite his martial ability, and his soul calls out to mine."

The man looked at the look in his her eyes, and sighed. "Very well I will keep this blade until such time as your father comes to retrieve it."

Saeko nodded and bowed her way out of the room intent on finding Ranma, followed quickly by the man who when outside.

OOOOOOO

"So how does it look nurse, am I going to live?" said Takashi wincing a little but chuckling all the same. Any boy at

school would have killed to be in his place right now.

Shizuka was kneeling between his legs massaging his ankle, working her fingers over it and trying to figure out if it was broken or not. Before that she had been rubbing some lotion into his wounded shoulder, which had entailed her sitting close by him and almost literally enveloping his arm inside her monstrously large breasts. And before that she had been working on his lower back, rubbing and kneading the muscles there. If not for Rei glaring at him all the while it would have been the best moment in his young life, and even with that it was in the top five.

Thankfully his shoulder was just bruised rather than broken as he had thought after his adrenaline had faded. The painkillers had worn off but she gave him some more quickly.

Shizuka stood up letting his foot rest for a moment on the ground as she pushed him back onto the bed and raised it slightly placing a cold compress underneath it and a bag of ice on top. "It's just twisted, not broken or anything. You'll want to stay off it as much as possible, and tomorrow morning I'll wrap it in gauze before you get out of bed, the best thing you can do right now to stay off it."

She looked over at Asami with a frown on her face. The young girl's shoulder was actually in a worse state than Takashi's. Takashi was a big kid who had played baseball and soccer most of his life so his body could take quite a bit of punishment. Rei too, despite the hammering her own shoulder had taken from firing her gun so often, was able to take it easily enough. Her own martial arts background was well up to the task of ignoring it easily enough. She hadn't even needed more pain killers, and was now looking on, eyes narrowed at Takashi's enjoyment of Shizuka's treatment of him.

On the other hand Asami was petite, and the jarring shot of that one blast from the shotgun had hammered her shoulder badly. She was going to have a black and blue bruise there for days, and it was a testament to how tough she really was that she had been able to ignore it for so long with only a few aspirins. She had made up a compress for her and strapped it in place, then ordered her to not move her shoulder at all if she could help it. "How are you feeling Asami-chan?"

"Asami feels fine, just a little loopy right now," said the police girl, still speaking in the third person alas.

Shizuka giggled. She had deliberately given her the same number of pills she would give to Takashi, which because of her lower body weight would definitely have made her a little loopy. "That's good, just so long as you don't move that shoulder. We'll see what we can do to get some books or something to do up here."

As she was speaking the door behind them opened, and Saya and Ranma walked in. Upon seeing the boy Shizuka did something she had wanted to do for hours. She got to her feet quickly and charged grabbing Ranma in a hug and pulling him into her large chest. "Kitty-chan," she said and began to stroke his back while his arms waved wildly, unable to breathe. She pulled back just slightly enough to let him breathe and continued to stroke his back nuzzling into the side of his face. She looked at Saya who rather than getting angry or jealous had simply grinned at Ranma's misfortune. "I wanted to do that for a while, ever since we left the mall," she said giggling quietly. "You don't mind do you?" she said and she put on a puppy dog face.

Despite his inner tomcat like every other man in the world Ranma caved quickly. "I-I er, I suppose not," he said and Shizuka squealed happily, loving the fact that as soon as she began to scratch his back again he close his eyes and let loose that rumbling purr of his that always made her think she was petting a giant cat.

Saya sighed and left him there, going outside to show Kyoko and the two mothers where they would be going. As she came down the stairs, two of her father's men came in dragging the trussed up prisoner. She glared at the prisoner, wondering what the hell the man represented and why he and the others Ranma had taken out were watching her parent's house. She asked one of the guards, who she remembered had watched her a few times when she was younger. "This is the first time you seen guys like this around? What the heck happened here?"

Before the man could answer her mother and the two Miyamoto sisters came in, talking quietly to themselves while Alice ran in ahead of them with Zeke towards the kitchen following another guard.

Her mother frowned slightly at the sight of the prisoner being dragged away. He had woken up, but the men tying him had simply gagged him quickly as they were tying him up. "I don't know, but he might have had something to do with what happened here after the power went out in the city."

Yuriko frowned even harder at that thought. Before the power had gone out, Souichiro's plan had been to evacuate the mansion with as many people and perishables as they could then move to take over the closer of the city's two power stations and use it as a rally point. The generator had wide open areas on its property where foodstuffs and

other people could be dropped off or picked up, and would provide open ground for their shooters too, and had held out up to this point. Despite the size of the mansion its grounds were not actually large enough for a full-scale evacuation or reinforcement project like that, and its generator wasn't nearly powerful enough even if they could connect it. to power other houses. The power station would have served as a rally point for other survivors, and with them Souichiro felt he could retake the city from the living dead.

Other circumstances had prevented this from happening however, including but not limited to the power outage. "Your father and I had decided almost immediately to open our house to other survivors and for a while it seemed as if it was a good move. They were fractious and irritable and didn't really trust us because of our politics, but they didn't make that much trouble. Groups kept trickling in from time to time, and about two days ago, a small group came in and suddenly that changed. Rather than being sullen and argumentative they were standoffish, angry and confrontational. It got worse after the power in the city stopped, as they seemed to see the fact that we had our own personal generator as a sign that we knew what was happening. As if Souichiro and I were part of why this outbreak began or something."

She shook her head scornfully at the very idea. "A few of them apparently began to preach to the others that the zombies were sign of God or something, while others seem to think we were the reason behind it all, and were trying to lure them into our power or something. Yet they still weren't actually fighting us, simply shouting and argumentative which of course neither my husband nor I or any of our people would respond to."

Saya nodded at that, her father led his faction like a general led his troops, which was part of her problem with him.

Yuriko went on. "During the night after the power went out a few more refugee groups joined us here, but they were followed swiftly by zombies, and we moved forward into the surrounding area to fight them off. During this chaos the refugees we had already taken in rose up and attacked us from within. We lost two guards that way before we were able to hold the zombies off and finish them off." She sighed sadly looking over her shoulder through the still open doorway out onto the grounds towards the tents that had been put up and the bodies there. "A few of them ran off after, and we have no idea where they went or even if they escaped the zombies." She switched her gaze back to the prisoner. "Maybe this one will have some answers for us."

Saya frowned thoughtfully, wondering about what could have caused such a dramatic shift in attitude, but shook her head. It had nothing to do with them at the moment, and she wasn't going to waste time thinking about it. "If you want you could ask Ranma to do a look around for more listening posts. He's surprisingly good at sneaking around, especially since almost no one thinks to look for someone moving along the rooftops."

"So it's Ranma is it?" said Yuriko looking at her shrewdly. Saya blushed a little but didn't look away. Her mother giggled a little, as well as Nodoka, but she refrained from getting out her victory fans at the look at her sister was giving her.

They were quickly joined by Kyoko coming in from the garage Saya showed the ladies their rooms, then went to talk to her mother.

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While Saya talked to her mother Yuuki and Kohta were rummaging about the garage. Yuuki was looking for anything that she could use to help quiet the Hummer further, as well as looking at the other cars present wondering if she could quiet them down enough for them to take one of them with them. She had decided after a moment however that that was not going to happen. The only one that looked like it could be used without hours of work was too small to be of any use carrying any other stuff.

It was a small six bugger, low slung with six tire, but it looked like a tough little thing, but it was just too small for them to load it up with enough gear to be of use for that. *But we could put a few people in it... They could use it like a advance scout or something. Now, can it's engine be silenced that is the question.* With a grin Yuuki got to work, opening the buggy's hood and looking inside before grabbing some tools and pulling them over.

While Yuuki was doing that Kohta was pulling the guns out from the truck and rearming them. He shook his head sadly and looked over at her. "Were down to 50 shots for both rifles that's it. I thought maybe we had more hidden back here somewhere but..." he shook his head again.

"Well Saya-chan said we could probably get more ammo for them here, maybe we should ask someone." Yuuki shrugged unconcern.

"Hey," shouted a voice, and a man who was dressed like a grease monkey and two of the guards came out of a

shack by the garage. "What are you kids doing with those guns?"

The two teens looked at them like they were idiots. "They're ours," Yuuki said cautiously. "I mean yeah they are ours, we even got the okay of their original owner didn't we?" she asked looking over at Kohta.

Kohta nodded. "Shizuka sensei said something about that yes. Not that it matters of course, we'd already use them and in this kind of the world it's finders keepers."

"You kids shouldn't be playing with those things they're too dangerous," said one of the men reaching forward but Kohta backed away quickly. "Come on kid hand them over."

"Besides," the other guard said "we could probably use them much better than you guys can anyway."

Kohta quickly dropped one of the rifles and raised the other to his shoulder pointing it at the man. "If you want to take my guns you'll have to pry them out of my cold dead fingers."

Two of them reached down to where they had pistols at their sides, and the other one, the one who looked like a mechanic backed away quickly looking over at Yuuki and trying to be there voice of reason. "Come on girl, can't you get him to let 'em go?"

Yuuki shook her head at his stupidity. "Why in the hell would we want to hand over weapons to you guys? We're not staying here after all."

The mechanic looked at her in shock. "B-but surely that's why you came here, to live with us here with Saya-sama? So we can protect you?"

Yuuki shook her head again. "No we came here to check on her parents and see if we can arm up a little further then move on. The cities a death trap now, even a place like this it's just a matter of time."

"Oh that's just stupid, there is no way the Masters going to let his daughter leave." said one of the men. He pulled out his pistol and trying to aim it at Kohta but he failed as the gun nut turned swiftly pointing his rifle straight at the man.

"What is going on here?" said a loud voice and the three man looked up in relief as they saw their boss coming towards him.

Matsudo the mechanic looked at Kohta and Yuuki. "Sir, these kids picked up some guns somewhere, and now he won't let us have them."

The man glared at the boy. He had always been a little contemptuous of people who relied on guns for their strength, but there was more than that going on here. For one thing, the idea that the boy should have such guns was bad enough, no one that young should be trusted with such weapons. But then there was the fact that if the refugee groups who had turned on him and his men had such weapons the uprising would have been much worse than it was. "While I applaud the fact you took your life into your own hands, those guns will do far more good with my men here, and this is my house, and my land. Hand them over."

Kohta flinched under the man's glare and might have eventually given his guns over if not for aloud voice once again interrupting the proceedings. "Hey!" said Rama jumping down from a second story balcony where he had stood looking out over the cityscape with Saeko for a moment. "If you have a problem with some of my friends, he said, striding angrily forward to within an inch of the older man's face. "You take it up with me not them." He didn't even look over at the man who had pulled out his pistol as he said "And if you don't put that away I'm going to make you eat it through your asshole."

Saya's father glared down a Ranma. "I don't like having my people threatened, and as long as you are under my protection here you will not need those weapons."

"Who says we're staying under your protection?" Rama asked bluntly. "Were not staying here, whatever plans you got for your group don't apply to me and mine."

"That is my daughter you're talking about," said the man becoming even angrier at this lack of respect.

"Wonderful time ta mention it," Ranma said glaring up at him. "Since according to what I've seen and what she's said you ain't exactly been a father to her at all have you?"

The man's hand came up swiftly, and his fist caught Ranma in the side of the head but rather than staggering back or

stagger under the blow, Ranma simply moved his head slightly with the blow then grinned at the older man. "Was that supposed to hurt? Gotta tell you sunshine, that's your one free shot. Try it again and I will retaliate."

At this blatant threat to his superior the man who had already pulled out his pistol made to raise it and point it at Ranma, but suddenly Ranma moved like lightning. He was in the man's face holding his gun hand, one hand on the gun ripping it out and not incidentally breaking one of the man's fingers. The squeal of metal grated on all their ears as he crushed the pistol in his hands after popping out the clip. Saya's father look at that in shock, he had known Ranma was a good martial artist like that strong?

Before things could escalate further, Saya and her mother came out and got between him and the rest of Souichiro's group. The man glared down at her his daughter. "Saya is a true that you wish to leave us?"

Saya looked over at Ranma grinned at her tossing the bundle of metal that had once been a pistol up and down in one hand. The sight of his face filled her with a bit more courage, and she nodded at her father. "Yes sir, we've got a long-term plan were trying to stick to, and will be moving on hopefully sometime tomorrow."

"But you don't want to stay with us?" asked Yuriko a little weakly, "Why?"

Saya decided not to bring up the emotional aspect of why she wouldn't want to stay with her parents. She didn't really have a problem with her mother per se. She knew her mother loved her, and had she had made as much time as she could for her daughter after all, and Saya wasn't going to project her problems with her father onto her mother. "There are a few reasons, most of them to do with the fact that none of us think that staying in the city is the most intelligent thing to do. Whatever happens the cities are probably doomed long-term. There are too many people and there just aren't enough people with guns that are on the side of order for to be anything else."

In Japan that was more true than anywhere else given the stigma against firearms that was such a part of their society. It was almost a rule that if you had a gun you were either a policeman (and even then not often) part of the Army, or a criminal. Souichiro's bodyguards got a bye for that given their status as bodyguards, but even that was pretty thin for most civilians.

It was probably not true in places like America where owning a gun was part of the national identity, which Saya's opinion was rather stupid and you would think the Americans would've learned by now that allowing everyone access to guns simply meant more people died from them. But here, the yakuza were actually far better armed than the majority of civilians. They wouldn't have even tried to keep order, and those wouldn't have taken the losses the police did, and were much more ruthless about protecting themselves.

She explained their reasoning about this, as well as their plans going forward. Souichiro frowned heavily throughout this and then interjected "but surely you all would wish to fight to preserve our nation?"

"No," said Rama bluntly. "We don't. We're getting the hell out of here, were going to fort up someplace and then were going to just ride this whole thing out. Let some general somewhere, or maybe the Shogun if he's still around figure out how to save the nation as a whole if it's possible, but I don't think it is. Maybe retaking it later would be possible if you pulled back for now arms up and came back later, but maybe not. I've got no loyalty to the nation, I'll loyal to my friends and as long as I can keep them safe that's what I'm going to do."

"Saya," he said looking over at his daughter. "Do you agree with this? Have you learned nothing of what taught you?"

Saya almost glared at the man, biting back a sharp retort for her mother's sake. "Of course I agree with it, I was the one who came up with most of our long term plans! Fight for this city if you want, spout homilies or other such **crap** about national pride all you want, but I'm not buying it. I never have!"

The last three words came out far more bitterly than she had wanted, but Yuriko broke in at that point, and gently began to diffuse the situation further. She wasn't happy about her daughter leaving them but Ranma's apparent skill as well as the fact they had all survived up to this point gave her hope that they would be able to see their plan through, which put them a bit above Souichiro and his plan now that the power was out. After that Kohta agreed to leave the guns where they were in return for no one attempting to take them, and the group went inside the mansion proper.

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About an hour later, the sun had finished disappearing from the sky, letting full night in. Ranma and the others had all congregated in the invalid's room to let them take part of the discussion. Kohta had just finished explaining the confrontation in the garage to those that hadn't been there, and Kiriko shook her head. "I feel sorry for your parents

with you leaving them to stay with us Saya-chan, but the confrontational and authoritative attitude your father is displaying, without taking into account our own experiences or skills, is making that very hard."

Saya scowled. "Don't expect me to try and defend him, he's always doing shit like this. He just seems to think he knows what's best all the damn time, and he is always so damn **certain** all the time." She spat that word, shaking her head, sending her hair, done up in ponytails at the moment, swinging around.

"Nee, nee, Saya-onee-chan," Alice spoke up, tugging at the older girl's skirt and looking up at her with sad eyes. "Don't you like your otosan?"

Saya sighed and went to one knee in front of the little girl, ruffling her hair softly. "It's not that simple chibi." The hand on Alice's head suddenly became a fist and Saya ruthlessly noogied her. "And what did I say about the onee-chan stuff huh? It's onee-sama to you brat!"

Nodoka giggled at their antics and shook her head. "I think your father seems to sort of be stuck in the past. He would have been a magnificent husband and father in the Showa period or Meiji era, stoicism and a lack of emotion in public was a part of the samurai culture. Given today's culture however I can't say I find it surprising that he hasn't been able to connect with you Saya-chan."

Kiriko muttered something about 'a kettle calling a pot black', alluding to how strange and backward Nodoka's version of honor had been for so long, but Ranma merely grinned. "What, ya mean like me and Saeko-chan? We didn't exactly fit in with 'normal society' ya know."

Saeko chuckled leaning against his side where he was leaning against the wall. "Quite true my love, but in the present time of turmoil our skills allow us to survive while normal society crumbles."

Yuuki laughed. "Time of turmoil Saeko, really? Please don't say stuff like that, it sounds like you're channeling that asshole Shido, he always talked like that, all pontificating and shit."

Kyoko and the others all blanched and Shizuka spontaneously grabbed the swordswoman in a hug, squishing their breasts together in such a way that every boy in the room even Ranma gulped and stared. "Noooo, don't let him control you Saeko-chan!"

Saeko gently pulled the other woman off her. "I think Yuuki was joking Shizuka-sensei, I truly doubt that Shido can take control of other people from a distance like that."

Yuuki, who was sitting on the bed Asami had been assigned (much to the chagrin of Rei, who felt that the girls shouldn't need to sleep in the same room with the boys, but there weren't enough mattresses to go around as it was) nodded, but then wiggled one hand in the air. "Yeah I was joking tits-chan," Shizuka pouted but the others all laughed a little, but sobered as Yuuki went on. "But Shido had this, I don't know, not charisma, Ranma's got charisma, not empathy or anything like that, but he had something in him that made people believe in him, way more than they should. You all didn't really look at the impression he had on his followers, but I did."

She shivered a little, her arms coming up and hugging herself. "Maybe that's because before Ranma transferred into the school I might have taken up with his crew." Shido had his fingers in a lot of pies at school, and she had been part of the girls track team, which Shido had been the advisor for (as well as the male side). "But he was able to get people to agree to things and follow his orders when otherwise they never would."

Ranma moved over, hugging her around the shoulders. "Yeah, but ya ain't part of his crew now are ya, and we're all happy ta have ya here." The others all nodded and Yuuki smiled, then her lips twitched mischievously as her hands, hidden between Ranma and her body, made their way down to the front of his pants. He jumped a little but moved away after a second, the look in his eyes as he looked down at her sent a thrill through her.

"Speaking of Shido," Kiriko said, reaching over and taking her daughters hand gently, sitting down next to her where Rei was sitting by Takashi's head. "I think you need to tell me why you had such a bad reaction to him." She looked around at the others. "And I think you owe it to the others here for running off like that."

Rei flinched and was about to refuse, but then she felt another hand on her back. She looked back angrily, but all she saw in Takashi's face was concern, and love. She looked at her mother, seeing the same expression, then at the others, seeing their concern and acceptance.

After a moment she nodded and began. "My problem with Shido began..."

Ranma interrupted her, saying "He's name's Shido-shit, get it rut cuz."

Rei grinned at him as the others chuckled, and she began again. "Shido-shit has a father who's a major politician, really big time, a little bigger and more important than even your father. And like a lot of politicians there've been rumors that he was corrupt. But these rumors were a little too substantial and my dad was part of a group of investigators assigned to his businesses to see if there was anything beyond the rumors."

"I remember that," Kiriko muttered. "That was basically all my husband could tell us about it."

Rei nodded then went on. "Yeah, but dad apparently got too close to something he wanted hidden, and he had Shido use his power as a teacher to hold me back as a message to dad. He also... he also threatened dad, both his job and his life. He, he had pictures taken from rooftops following Dad around, as if someone was already deciding to... Anyway, Shido offered to protect dad in exchange... in exchange for certain..." she shuddered and couldn't continue but her listeners all got the message and her mother's hand was suddenly gripping her hand tightly. After a second she went on, "When it came to it, I, I just forgot about dad's well being or his job and when he tried to touch my, my chest from behind I attacked him." She shuddered, remembering how disgusting it had been, feeling that snake's touch, his breath on her skin, the helplessness she felt before it was wiped out by a red hot rage.

Shizuka blinked. "Wait, that time he said he was mugged, when his arm was in a sling and he had that really nice shiner, that was you Rei-chan?"

Rei smiled for the first time since she began. Yeah that was me, and it was really satisfying too." She soon frowned however. "After that he had even more material to threaten me with, but I threatened to make his assault on me known, and we sort of had a standoff, but he still held me back. I know it humiliated you and dad, momma, but he still had those pictures of someone following dad around, and I, I was so scared that if I said anything Shido-shit's father would go through with the threat to have dad killed."

For a moment everyone just looked at her aghast. Kyoko and Shizuka were both appalled that something like that had been going on at their school, and wondered what the hell the principal had been doing to let Rei be held back without looking into the reason. Unfortunately the principal had been mainly involved with the sports teams and securing more funding for them, and the teachers had been allowed to run their classrooms like their own personal fiefdoms.

Takashi was even more disgusted. The night before Rei had told him about Shido holding her back to humiliate her father for his, and that had seemed enough of a revelation at the time. Takashi had never even seen a hint of that before, let alone that Rei was going through something like this. He was filled with self-loathing for a moment, wondering what that said about him. *Is that why she went out with Hizashi, because he noticed her problems and I didn't?*

Ranma however concentrated on the here and now. "If I ever see Shido-shit again I'm going to rip off his balls and stuff them down his mouth." He reached over and ruffled his cousin's hair. "You want me to take a picture if I do?"

Rei looked up suddenly grinning. "That would be great cuz, thanks."

Saya shook her head. 'I hate to break this up, but we should move on here. Are we going to stay here for a bit or move on tomorrow morning?

Ranma looked at her. "What would ya vote for Saya-chan?"

"Leave immediately," Saya replied promptly. "I want to get you as far away from my father as I can before he tries to intimidate you again and you knock his fool head off. We've already got as much material as we can pack in the Hummer, and we should get as far as we can while there are still other groups moving around to distract the zombies." She shook her head frowning heavily. "I'll say goodbye to my parents but they're the kind that can survive this easily enough. But the city is dying, I said it before, and nothing we've seen since leaving Rika-san's apartment has changed my mind. If anything its worse than I expected, I didn't think there would be so many yakuza still around or organized, and the attack on the police station and the bandits we ran into..." She shook her head again. "That group probably lost a lot of its people, but they must have made off with a lot of guns like Asami and Kiriko-san said, but the more violence, the more zombies will be attracted to the sounds."

Ranma looked around at the others. Nodoka and Kiriko looked at one another. "I don't think we care one way or the other, so long as we are all together dears." Rei hugged her mother tightly, causing Takashi, who was right behind them and with his head propped up to about chest height to blush and think bad thoughts. Ranma grinned at his mother who smirked impishly. "You're not getting rid of me that easily my son."

Shizuka frowned. "I'd like us to stay here a few days to let Takashi's ankle heal up, and let him and Asami heal from their pulled muscles and her from her shoulder, but I suppose as long as they don't move around much, the Hummer is just as good."

Kohta and Asami both voted to go too. Kohta was still pissed that someone had tried to take his guns away, and Asami didn't want to be around 'the scary guy' anymore.

Kyoko however had her mind firmly on group dynamics. "I vote we move on as well. I have no doubt that your father is an honorable man Saya-san, but there is no way that he and you can get along Ranma. You're too different, and you're both leader types." They were very different types, but that was true. Souichiro lead by force of personality, Ranma led by simply being the best and knowing what to do in a crisis. Souichiro didn't seem willing to listen to others most of the time, Ranma always listened, but would still be the one to make the decision. Ranma showed his emotions on his sleeve and obviously cared about them all, Souichiro was more of a granite mountain who demanded you live up to his example. "Two leaders like that in one group, no matter how you try there would still be conflict, and eventually that would boil over to between the two groups rather than simply between the two of you."

Yuuki shrugged. "I don't care if we stay or go, but Saya's right, there isn't much we can gain supply or part wise here. We might be able to restock on bullets if they let us, but that's it. I looked at the other cars, and most of them have fried electronics, and the one that doesn't has an engine I can't silence. That little buggy might make as much noise as the Hummer did originally, so I wouldn't vote we grab it."

Ranma nodded but had his own point to add. "Alright, so we're all agreed that we should leave, so we'll get outta here first thing tomorrow. But grab some heavy duty towing rope if they've got it, I saw somethin' by the river we might use, since we're gonna use it ta head down ta the ocean." The other's looked at him but he waved their curiosity off.

After that the group broke up. Shizuka and Kyoko had been assigned the room right next to this one, along with Alice, while Saya and Saeko were sharing her room. Yuuki and Rei had the room right next to hers, while the two mothers had a guest room next to that, between that room and her parent's room. Nodoka however ambushed Saeko and dragged her along, wanting to ask questions about her relationship with Ranma. Kiriko stayed behind, not exactly wanting to hear that stuff, and wanting to spend time with her daughter. The two of them went downstairs to talk over a cup of tea.

Ranma had his own room since Kohta wanted to bed down with the invalids so he could talk (and possibly make out with) and was about to head there when he was interrupted by one of the guards. This one was tall, and seemed much more self-contained than the two he had 'met' in the garage and Ranma vaguely recognized him as someone who had been standing behind Souichiro when they first arrived. "Saotome-san, Takagi-sama wishes to speak to you. Follow me please." Ranma looked at him for a moment, then shrugged and followed him.

Shizuka and Alice left to grab the young girl a futon and some blankets, giggling quietly about it being like a sleepover and if they should build a fort. And since Kohta and Asami had gone out to the room's balcony, this left Kyoko and Takashi alone. The former schoolteacher moved over to sit next to Takashi, looking down at him. "How are you holding up Takashi?"

Takashi blushed having caught sight of her thigh as she sat down, her skirt riding up noticeably. "Um, uh what do you mean, um, the pain killers are working pretty well, I'm not feeling anything."

"I mean how are you holding up here." Kyoko smirked a little, leaning over deliberately to tap his forehead.

Takashi flushed even more heavily staring down her shirt for a moment then her words registered and he looked away. "I, I'm holding it together for now. Its just, well I know it was only a day ago that I found out..." he shook his head, "But, well a lot has happened since, and I guess, I'm just dealing with it for now."

"There are no words I can say to make this easier for you Takashi-kun." *And I'm sure that finding about Shido-shit and Miyamoto-san didn't help matters. I realize why Kiriko wanted her to share that with us, but it puts even more of a burden on Takashi,* she thought. "Just know that we are here for you if you want to talk. And that we care for you." She leaned down and kissed him on the lips, then stood up and left the room, swaying her hips. Kyoko still wasn't certain if her attraction to the younger man was real or not, but was willing to go with it for now.

Takashi stared after her, touching his lips gently and then shaking his head in bemused wonder. About ten minutes later Rei came back and the two of them talked for another few hours, clearing the air between them some more.

OOOOOO

Ranma followed the man down to a small dojo set at the back of the mansion, and when he entered found Souichiro standing there, his back to the door as he stared out a window at head height. He probably was trying to be all dramatic and stuff but Ranma really didn't care. "Yo, yer man said ya wanted ta speak with me."

Souichiro turned and stared at him, but wasn't going to make the mistake of looking down on Ranma for his lack of manners again. He was still surprised at the skill of the boy. He had seen him roof-hopping, but crushing a pistol in his hands and moving faster than Souichiro was able to follow, that was even more astonishing. The don had met a few martial artists who could roofhop when he was younger, but the sheer speed Ranma moved was beyond anything he had ever seen.

Yet that didn't mean the boy was the proper one to care for his precious daughter. "I realize you wish to leave tomorrow, and I am not going to gainsay your will, you have a long term plan and the ability and will to see it through. However my daughter will be staying here." The last sentence came out flat, without any give in, a simple statement of fact.

Ranma growled low in his throat, his tomcat side rearing its head, demanding he rip out this other tom's throat for daring to give him orders. But Ranma held it in, simply responding verbally. "I think Saya-chan's made her point of view clear enough. I ain't about ta tell her no. If you want her to stay, convince her don't command her." He moved forward to glare at the other man from a bare foot away. "And don't try ta make demands of me either."

Souichiro's eyes narrowed angrily but he reined it in. "My daughter is still a child, she cannot be expected to know what is best for her. I have twenty five men here, all of them armed and well trained, as well as myself and my wife. Can you actually say you can protect her better than we can?"

"Hell yes" said Ranma laughing harshly. "I've protected her so far, and I trust myself a hell of a lot more than I do you and yours. And I'm noticin' again that yer not taking her opinions or feelings seriously. Saya-chan ain't a child, she's easily the smartest person I've ever met, and most of our long term plans are things she's come up with. Saya-chan's leaving with us because she thinks the plans she came up with are better than the ones you've got. She's an important part of our group, and I ain't leavin' her behind on your say so. You want her ta stay, you'll have ta use force." Ranma crackled his knuckles. "In which case we might as well start the party right here!"

Yet again the don had to fight his instincts, which told him to strike this boy down where he stood. Yet he wasn't willing to let his anger at being questioned so much get him into a physical confrontation he would almost certainly lose. "Very well," he ground out. "You may go."

Ranma stared at him for a few more seconds, then some of the tension in his frame left him, and he turned to walk out of the room.

Souichiro called to him as Ranma was about to close the door. "Saotome-san." Ranma stopped and looked over his shoulder at the other man. "Take care of her for me, please."

Ranma nodded. "With my life." And with that walked out, leaving Souichiro behind.

OOOOOOO

Saya sighed, stretching her arms above her head before reaching forward to open the door to her room. She had just finished having a conversation with her mother, and while it hadn't been argumentative or anything like that, it had been emotional.

Yuriko hadn't actually tried to convince Saya to stay, she just wanted to make certain Saya wouldn't regret it, what her reasons were, and if there was an emotional aspect to why she wanted to go with Ranma and the others. While Saya hadn't admitted to anything, Yuriko had gotten the truth of her feelings for the outspoken boy out of her, as well as more stories about the past few days.

She had come away impressed with both Ranma's skill and the skills of the whole group, as well as the amount of thought they had put into surviving both short and long term. The whole enfilade maneuver that Kohta and Ranma had come up with to take attention off the group's movement was impressive, and the story of Ranma and Saeko's skills was even more so. It looked as if the group really had all the skills they would need to survive, and that set Yuriko's mind at ease. The fact her daughter was obviously besotted with the young man simply added to that.

Saya entered her room and was surprised to find Saeko there, already getting ready for bed, a spare futon (possibly taken from one of the guards for the night) behind her. Saya stopped and stared, almost entranced by the other girl. Saeko had already taken off her blouse and skirt, and was standing there with her breasts barely covered by a silky

red bra, which dropped to the floor as Saya watched, revealing high perky breasts with dark pink nipples.

Saya shook her head muttering under breath "I'm not a lesbian, I'm not a lesbian, I'm not a lesbian," turning away. Funnily enough the idea of trying to deny that she was bisexual didn't occur to her just then...

"Are you alright Saya-chan?" Saeko looked over at the pinkette, wondering what she was muttering to herself.

The pinkette waved her off, moving to her bed, not noticing that Saeko watched as she stripped out of her t-shirt and shorts. Saeko looked over the other girl appreciatively, amused that she had a pair of hello kitty panties on of all things, but other than that the view was rather incredibly. Saya wasn't a martial artist, but she was decently in shape, and her rear was fantastic, her curves enticing, and her breasts (to Saeko's slight irritation) were larger than the swordswoman's by a full two sizes. Unlike Saeko her breasts sagged slightly, under their own weight, but that only made them seem more enticing.

But the other girls face seemed to indicate something was troubling her, so Saeko asked, "Something seems to be troubling you Saya-chan."

Saya turned back to her, pulling a flannel pajama top over her head, making a note in the back of her mind to bring this pair of pajamas along with them. She looked at the purple haired girl for a moment then blurted "Were you really serious about sharing Ranma?"

Saeko chuckled wickedly, knowing now what was bothering Saya. "Fuffufu, of course I was Saya-chan, why did something happen?"

Saya blushed, looking down at her feet for a moment, but she still nodded. "Yeah, we, we sort of made out while we were in the kitchen earlier."

"And how did it feel?" Saeko asked then giggled as Saya's eyes lost focus for a moment. "That good hmm?"

Just then there came a knock on the door and Saeko moved to answer it, clad now in just a large t-shirt that barely covered her bare pussy. When she opened the door slightly to look out she saw Ranma there and smirked, opening the door wider. "Ranma-koi, we were just talking about you."

OOO LEMON START OOO

Ranma smiled a little nervously at seeing Saeko together with Saya, but went on gamely. "H-hey, Saeko-chan. Um, I, I um, I wanted to tell you that Saya and I," he flushed pulling at his pigtail unable to continue, but Saeko still got the message.

She chuckled throatily at his embarrassment. "Ranma-koi I would never have said anything about sharing you in the first place if I didn't think it was an appealing idea." Upon seeing his still worried expression she decided that action would speak louder than words and leaned in to kiss him hard on the lips.

Ranma stumbled for a second then began to respond. As Saya watched tongues began to it be involved, and Saeko pulled back just slightly enough so that they tongues were now drooling midair between their mouths rather than inside his. It was quite frankly the most erotic sight that Saya had ever seen.

After a second Saeko pulled back breathing heavily. All the combat they had done today had really revved her motor, and they hadn't had any time between fights for Ranma to help her scratch that itch. Her libido had been going up and down like a roller coaster all day, and it didn't take much to get her going again.

Still she had other things on her mind along with her desires, and she reached over and grabbed the startled Saya pushing her at Ranma. Ranma caught her easily, and Saeko moved behind the pink haired girl and began to kiss her neck.

"EEEEP!" Saya squeaked at this sudden assault, and was about to turn and shout at the other girl when Ranma, acting on instinct he really didn't know he had until recently, leaned in and captured her lips with his own. Saya's objections disappeared and she slowly closed her eyes giving herself to the kiss. After a moment Ranma deepened it, and she willingly opened her mouth to his tongue letting him explore it to his heart's content.

Saeko gasped as one of Ranma's arms went down her back gripping her rear firmly. Ranma's other hand moved down Saya's side, gently stroking her side through her pajama top then slowly worming underneath the shirt and up to gently massage her stomach.

"EE— " Saya squeaked again pulling her mouth away from Ranma in surprise, but that turned into a low moan as Saeko found a sweet spot on her neck. "Ahhhh..."

The purple haired girl moved up to her ear, and murmured into it. "Just let it happen Saya-chan, the two of you have been flirting almost as long as Ranma and I have. And while I don't care for you as much emotionally as he does," she paused licking around the other girl's ear sending a wave of sensation through her body. "I do find you **intensely** attractive."

Saya turned her head to stare at the other girl from about an inch away, and then without warning leaned in and kissed her, causing Saeko to gasp in surprise "UMPFH?"

While later she would deny this, simply saying she was lost in the moment but Saya was actually quite bi-curious, and Saeko was epically beautiful. And while like Saeko said Saya wasn't nearly as emotionally connected to the swordswoman as she was to Ranma, there was enough there to get on with for now. More would be formed later, and eventually they would come to love one another as much as they did Ranma, and the group (once it sorted itself out completely) would find in each other support and love in equal measure for them all.

As the two most important people in his life (minus his mother of course, though Ranma hoped he never see her in such position, that was a cringe worthy concept) made out, Ranma began to move his hands from Saeko's rear and Saya's stomach up to Saeko's breasts, cupping them under her shirt and working his thumbs over her nipples. While the few times he had been with Saeko wasn't enough to make him an expert at this sort of activity, he had easily been able to figure out how to read the woman he was with and figure out what they liked and what they didn't like, and apparently this was something Saya liked a lot.

"Mhhmmmm!" While Saya's breasts were larger than his hands, they weren't so large that he needed both hands to work on one of the matter time, and while they were slightly less sensitive and Saeko's, her nipples more than made up for it. The instant he began to play with her nipples Saya blocked and thrashed between him and Saeko. "MMMMM OH FUCK!"

The now almost delirious with pleasure Saya reflected that she was very thankful that she had moved into this room at the far end of the mansion from her parents room about a year ago. Before that she had a room right next to the master bedroom, but when she had hit her teenage years she had started to stay up later listening to music and other things. Her mother and she had decided between them that moving Saya to the other end of the mansion would let her have her own space, which was very important for teenager, well away from her father and mother. That way they could get sleep without listening to her noise, and she could be up as late as she wanted. As her moans began to echo in the room this fact made her very, very thankful indeed.

Saeko stepped back a little and began to pull Saya's arms up above her head. Ranma stopped what he was doing with Saya's nipples, letting his hands fall from her breasts to grab the side of her flannel shirt and between them they pulled it off her.

Saya shook out her hair, and then moaned again as Ranma attacked her lips. "Ahhh...."

"Sayaaa, loveee youuuu" he purred, moving from her lips to nibble at her neck while Saeko stood back again, pulling off her own T-shirt standing there in only her T back panty. The sight of this over Saya's shoulder caused Ranma eyes to literally glow with desire, and he purred deep within his chest, a sound that revved both women's engines even higher for some reason.

With a grin Saeko moved forward and pushed Ranma and Saya onto the bed behind them. She bounced after them, and found herself suddenly caught by Ranma, pulled in and kissed thoroughly then pushed onto her back as he moved down her body, grabbing her breasts and tweaking and squeezing then in the way he knew she liked.

Saya looked on at this, still a little dazed from the earlier activity, then hesitatingly reached down and began to play with the other girl's breasts with both hands.

Ranma switched from Saya to her, pulling her closer to his position kneeling between Saeko's legs to reach her where she was sitting next to the sprawled out Saeko.

Saya began to moan continuously as Ranma worked her breasts over. "Oh crap oh God, Ranma, Jesssussss AahhhH...." She moaned aloud, saying things she would never have us ever believed she would be saying. "My nipples, my nipples bite them, bieeeeeeEEE! The last word rose into a loud moan as Ranma complied, gently working her nipple between his teeth, then sucking hard on it. At the same time he slipped one hand down her stomach into her lap, and his thumb found her clit at the top of her pussy.

For Saya her nipples were one of her strongest erotic points, and the earlier activity had revved her engine beyond anything she had felt before. The double attack on her nipple and clit at the same time caused Saeko to come with a scream. "**AHHHmnm!**" Thankfully sound didn't carry through the household to her parent's bedroom because Saeko leaned up quickly and clamped her own mouth over the other girl's to muffle her moans.

The swords woman's arms went around the other girl and she held her in place as she continued to kiss Saya until the spasms subsided and she stopped screaming.

She moved away slightly looking at the other girl in bemused surprise. While she was no stranger to screaming orgasms since she and Ranma had begun to have a physical relationship that had been remarkably quick. "Are you all right Saya?"

Saya shuddered and gasped shaking her head, "S-strongest, that was..." she shook her head again unable to put it into words.

Saeko nodded happily. "Yes he's really good at that isn't he?"

She was interrupted by Ranma growling at her and pulling her down into a kiss that took the swordswoman's breath away. She responded ardently, pulling him down on top of her and thrusting her body up against him, her hands moving down his back to his pants trying to push them down his legs.

Saya watched this through still bleary eyes then reached down and began to play with the other girl's breasts again, moving closer to the other girls splayed out body.

Ranma leaned back to gasp in air, and Saeko reached up over him to pull Saya down, putting the girl again between the two of them.

Saya and Saeko began to exchange kisses, the swordswoman easily dominating the other girl despite the fact that it was Saya who was on top, while Ranma used his hands to gently cup Saeko's pussy through her barely there panty, not doing anything with it just touching it gently as he moved his fingers across her lips as if giving her pussy a gentle massage.

Saeko humped up into his fingers, and when he refused to really use them she lifted her legs up and wrapped them around his upper body, pulling him down and trapping his head between her legs. He chuckled amused at how demanding she was then he leaned down and began to work over her pussy with his mouth. His tongue darted in while one hand rose to start fondling Saya's rear while deep in his mind he blessed the fact that he was a martial artist and able to multitask.

Both girls shuddered and moaned but while Saeko continued to hump her legs into Ranma's face and kept her legs clamped around Ranma's head, Saya nearly collapsed, her body flush now with Saeko's upper body. The swordswoman reached up and while kissing her shoulders and chest gently rearranged her so that she was fully on top of Saya, rather than perpendicular, allowing Ranma better access to the pink haired girl's legs and rear.

Ranma took advantage of this. While his mouth remained firmly clamped over her pussy, working her folds with this tongue he used both hands to knead and play with Saya's rear before letting his thumbs fall through her crack. His hands parted her thighs and moved towards her front and began to play with her pussy with his thumbs through her flannel pajama bottom.

Despite still having her pajama bottoms on, the sensation of her pussy being played with was almost enough to send her over the edge again, and Saya began to moan aloud again, completely submissive to everything the two of them were doing to her. "Ahhhhnnnn....!"

Saeko noticed this, and was rather amused by it. *You would think that she would be as demanding in bed as she is in all other aspects of life* she mused to herself.

Then her conscious thoughts broke off with a gasp as Ranma stopped tonguing her pussy and moved up her pussy to clamped down on her clipped. This sent Saeko over the edge for her first orgasm of the night, and she cried out, "**Ranmaaaa!!**" As she bucked and screamed, her arms clamped around Saya even tighter rubbing their breasts together adding further to the sensation.

For her part Saya was now nearing her own peak again. Her body was simply out of control, unable to respond to any of her thoughts, if she even had any at the moment which she actually didn't. Saya wasn't very experienced, and had in fact only begun to play with herself a year prior when she had moved into this room. She had never even kissed a

boy before, while Saeko had had a relationship before Ranma, though it never got further than kissing. Her body was simply on autopilot, responding to whatever Ranma was doing to it.

Ranma lifted off of Saeko was pussy, grinning at having had his lady call his name like that, just like he had promised he would after their first time together. He looked at what his hands were doing, and saw that there was now a very large damp patch spreading over Saya's pajama bottom.

Realizing that the girl was in no state to really agree with anything even if she wanted to Ranma decided not to pull them off, despite his tomcat side wanting him to completely dominate the girl. His human side however knew that Saya wasn't a martial artist or even that athletic, which probably meant that she still had her hymen and her first time would probably be painful. Ranma wanted her fully conscious when they went that far so that he could get her verbal permission. Besides which, it wasn't as if he didn't have Saeko here as well.

He leaned up slightly rubbing his nose along the center of the damp cleft in the pajama bottom, and then brought his tongue up to touch that dampest spot right over Saya's pussy, licking and flicking his tongue and the tiny nub that was sticking out.

This attention to her clit once more did the trick and Saya came with a wail "Oh God, again **RanmaaaaaAAAA!**" Seconds later she collapsed forward, her eyes fluttering in her head and her breathing irregular. A widening damp patch spread over her pajama bottoms and Ranma wondered how she had been able to produce so much juices.

"My turn now love!" With a grin Saeko pushed Saya to the side and leaned up, pushing Ranma up, whereupon she crawled into his lap and lined herself up with his hard cock. The large vein covered shaft twitched in her hands, its head damp with pre-cum as she guided it into her pussy and she hissed as it entered her. After that she let herself drop-down onto it quickly, gasping aloud as he bottomed out inside of her, his cock hitting the back of her pussy. She shuddered a little once more getting used to his length and girth then smirked looking into his face. "Are, are you just going to sit there?"

Ranma grinned at her, and thrust up hard, actually opening up her cervix a bit with the tip of his dick, which caused her to gasp aloud again and Ranma clamped down on her neck as their hips thrust against one another.

Unlike Saya, who had basically simply gone along with everything they did and only really acted on her own a few times, Saeko and Ranma battled for dominance. Unlike Saya there was not a single submissive bone in Saeko's body. She could play the docile and quiet woman well enough in public, but even then there was a challenging edge to her that told you there was more underneath the surface. Even in the bed room this was true and every time she had Ranma made love would have a similar battle. This time Saeko was prepared to give it her all to win.

Despite still being tired out from having to use his meteor hammer's lengthening trick, Ranma still had more endurance than Saeko. She was able to control their joining for a time, and he grunted and gasped under her for a few minutes. Then with a snarl he leaned back from her neck to clamp down on her breasts as his arms went around her, allowing him to modify the speed of their coupling to his satisfaction.

Saeko tried to fight it, but was forced to go along with it eventually, and she laughed a little breathily as she nuzzled his ear. "Ranma-koi, I love you!"

Ranma responded by clamping down on her ear a little with his teeth then said into it, "Love you, love you! My swordswoman, my love!"

About 5 minutes after that Saeko came with a gasp and a near shriek, her hands like claws digging into Ranma's back. The sensation of her nails in his back actually added to Ranma's pleasure a little, and as her pussy clamped down even more on his cock he lost it, thrusting up one last time and coming into her with a roar. "**SAEKO!**"

The feel of her lover coming inside of her for the first time Saeko coming even harder, sending her into the land of multiple orgasms for the second time since they had gotten together. "AHHH!"

The number of orgasms sent Saeko into the same lala-land that Saya had previously entered and she collapsed against his shoulder. Ranma was barely able to support their weight for a few more minutes as his own body recovered then slowly leaned his body forward, moving her body to collapse back onto the bed. Once there Ranma reached behind him and gently unlocked her legs from around his waist allowing him to pull his thankfully flagging cock out of her.

As he did so his cum began to drizzle out of her, gushing out mixed with her own juices. Ranma shook his head angry at himself that he had forgotten to pull out. But she had felt so good and had just clamped down on him so hard he

had been unable to stop himself.

He looked up startled as the door to the room opened.

OOO END LEMON OOO

"My son, my son, is, is **manly!**"

Nodoka was interrupted before she could get out of the bed she shared with her sister in one of the guest rooms by a pillow smacking into the side of her head. "God damnit nee-chan shut up with that perverted stuff and go to bed! Who knows when the next time we'll have a decent bed to sleep in will be?"

Ranma's mother subsided with half but still giggled occasionally to herself as she got back into bed.

Kiriko shook her head at her sister's antics, more than a little disturbed that her sister seemed, or at least thought she could send when her son was having sex. There was something very disturbing about that. On the other hand, the amount of times she had made that comment seemed to indicate her son at least had a lot of stamina and drive. When she began to think that it had been a long time for her and her husband however she shook that thought out of her head quickly and tried to go to sleep.

OOOOOOO

Yuuki had never been so thankful for anything before than the fact Rei was a heavy sleeper. She'd come in from having talked with Takashi for a few hours then gone right to bed and had apparently nodded off quickly. Thankfully she hadn't objected to Yuuki having one of the windows out onto the balcony open, or else the smell of sex might have woken her up even so.

Yuuki had been given the bed or at least had taken the bed next to Saya's room, and Saya, Ranma and Saeko had fallen onto the futon that had been placed against the intervening wall. When they had begun the sounds had easily penetrated, and Yuuki's imagination had been well up to the task of supplying video to the audio.

She sighed and pulled her hand out of her pants, giggling quietly to herself. *If that was half as good as how it sounded, then my going after Ranma over Kota was by god the best idea fucking ever!*

She couldn't stop her curiosity and began to get up out of bed, her legs still weak from the force of her orgasm. Not that jilling herself was actually a new thing to her of course, but it had been a few days since she had last been able to, and she was a little pent up. On quiet feet Yuuki patted to the door and out, intent on satisfying her curiosity.

Unbeknownst to Yuuki, Rei had not been asleep and her hearing was actually better than Yuuki's so the distance between her bed and the wall to Saya's room had not mattered at all. Now that the other girl was gone, and Rei prayed to god that she wasn't about to go over and try to join in, Rei let her hands travel down her body, one hand cupping one of her large breasts and playing with her nipple under her silken negligee, (which she had grabbed from one of the stores of the mall) and the other dipping down to her already incredibly wet pussy.

For once this didn't make her feel bad, the image of Shido failing to appear in her mind. She dreamed of having Takashi's hands on her doing the things she had just heard Ranma do to his two (and wasn't that a shock!) lovers. Unbeknownst to her however, what sent her over the edge was the idea of being with Takashi and another woman at the same time, a thought that would haunt her a few times in the coming days but which would set the foundation for her Takashi and Kyoko to become their own little group.

OOOOOOO

Ranma looked up like a deer caught in a car's headlights anticipating parental fury was about to descend upon him. He nearly collapsed with relief at seeing Yuuki open the door and swiftly move inside.

Yuuki looked at Saya still unconscious form, as well as Saeko who was moving around now, her body recovering slowly and shook her head. "Wow, you destroyed them. Where the hell do I sign up?"

Saeko chuckled a little then shook her head. "Later," she said sighing faintly. "I want to get some rest." She looked down at herself, and only then realized that the sensation that had created the multiple orgasms might cause an issue in the future.

Yuuki caught her look, and shook her head. "Don't worry, I grabbed some morning after pills from the pharmacy at the mall."

Saeko sagged with relief then nodded then. "Thank you, that is a load off my mind. Not that I wouldn't mind having children in the future, even in this environment I feel that we could eventually carve our own place out and live relatively well, but for the near future it would be a hindrance."

Ranma also nearly collapsed with relief. The rest of what Saeko said registered quickly however and he leaned down and kissed her gently on the lips. "I'd love ta have kids with you sometime Saeko-chan, but you're right not right now. Once we move out to an island, get it already and set up and up and running, then we can start talking about maybe having a kid, but there's no need to rush right now."

Saeko giggled quietly and reached up to pull at his pigtail gently. "That sounds like a lovely idea."

Ranma nodded happily, then jumped a little as you keep raced around him and grasped his cock in one of her hands. She whistled, impressed. "Now I'm really looking forward to my shot. Though don't look my way for kids, that's not my scene."

Ranma moved away swiftly, not really wanting to spend the remaining energy he had on this, he had a little bit of a mission to do tonight after all. On top of that he was leery of agreeing to let another girl into their relationship with Saya so out of it she couldn't agree to it.

Saeko chuckled at the other girls forward nature, having known for a while that Yuuki was attracted to Ranma, but shook her head. "Later perhaps, I want to get some rest tonight as I said."

Yuuki nodded after all she wanted her first time with Ranma to be something special, not sloppy seconds. She looked over at Saya who was still out of it and shook her head. "Who would've thought that the bossy megane-hime would be so sensitive as to be knocked out like that?"

"Hey," Ranma said shoving her shoulder playfully. "Be nice, with a father like that asshole she has, I doubt she's had much in the way of privacy, and I know she hasn't had any boyfriends."

Yuuki nodded. "True, I just find it with surprising with her attitude. Oh well I guess that's logical if she's a real Tsundere."

Ranma looked at her with his head cocked to one side not understanding the term, but Saeko did and began to laugh.

Ranma shook off his curiosity and pulled up his pants moving over to do door out to the balcony. "I'll be back in a bit, I've got something I want to look into before we head out tomorrow night."

Saeko pushed herself up to look at the man and was amused to see that Ranma, despite the fact that he should be even more tired than her still responded to her moving around. His eyes tracked her breasts as they moved when she sat up, and she could see he rearranged himself in his trousers. "Are you sure you're up for it?"

Ranma didn't take offense understanding that she was concerned, while Yuuki laughed aloud at the double entendre. "Yeah I'm good to go, I wouldn't've been if we continued, but the food, rest and the lack of heavy combat along the way here from the police station has let me recover."

Yuuki nodded and waved her hands at him. "Go on then, do what you want to do, I'll look after these two."

Ranma nodded with a grin. He pulled open the door heading out to the balcony, stood there for a second then leapt up onto the roof and away.

Yuuki chuckled throatily as one hand traced down her body. "I am so looking forward to putting that energy to better use."

Saeko chuckled herself, making to stand up from the bed on very wobbly legs. "It is an experience I can tell you that. I believe there was a shower on this floor somewhere?"

"Yeah I used it earlier." With that Yuuki gently helped the other woman along then came back with a wet towel to wipe down Saya and change her out of her soaked pajama bottoms, so that she wouldn't have sleep in her sweat and juices.

O O O O O O O

Ranma shook his head as he leapt from the mansion's roof to another rooftop nearby. Despite their attentiveness none of the guards on the grounds below saw him go and that was the way he wanted it. He retraced their route from

the river, which they were going to keep taking further down to the ocean, and saw what he had noticed out of the corner of his eye when they had moved ashore again.

From there he moved along the riverbed toward the docks, frowning as he noticed several clumps of zombies, as well as a few other people moving around quietly. He debated following one armed group but shook his head after a moment's thought. So long as they didn't bother him and his crew group, he didn't really have a problem with them.

He moved on, swiftly covering the distance marking out areas for Kohta to cover their route, and frowned further when they got out of the housing district and into another commercial/factory district. The further down towards the wharfs you went, the more factories and warehouses you saw. In this area he saw zombies in their hundreds. Since these were big buildings with lots of workers but few exits normal people could use the people inside would've been caught there by the zombies. He didn't doubt that groups like his own had made their way out eventually in different ways, but right now that didn't change the fact that they were literally thousands of zombies in the area.

He landed on a roof overlooking about 100 zombies below him milling around where the river dumped into the ocean, frowning as he looked around. The place looked as if it would be a perfect ambush point. It had an overarching bridge over the river that had high stone sides, several buildings looking directly down into the river much like the one he was standing on. Damn I hope those zombies stay the hell here, clearing them out if we had to would be a lot easier than trying to fight a group dug in here

He looked out to his left to the giant bridge that connected the city's highway eventually to the international airport. *I wonder what boat Saya-chan saw that she thought was so good, how did she put it, poetic justice or somethin'? Whatever. I also gotta wonder how the hell Shizuka-chan's friend is doin'.* Ranma had actually thought that maybe if the bridge was clear he could rush across and meet up with her and carry her back, but the bridge wasn't clear. The end of it where it met the four roads that fed into it was alive with thousands of zombies he could see even from here a mile away, with dozens of crashed and stopped cars.

Still our route looks okay so far, I just hope that we'll be able to meet up with her somehow.

OOOOOO

At that very moment Rika was making her way into the city on foot over the bridge Ranma was looking at. Without power the airport was useless, and was indefensible besides, since only a few people had any training or inclination, despite the amount of weapons they kept on hand. Like the police, the security team had taken severe casualties, and it was all they could do to keep the main terminal clear of zombies. She had also lost her partner in an attempt to see if the zombies could be set on fire to clear the runway, but it had failed.

She had left immediately after that, making her way across the large bridge that connected the international airport to the rest of the city, but hadn't been able to make her way very far before nightfall came and she had to fort up someplace. Good as she was Rika was no idiot, and knew she would be at a disadvantage at night, especially since she had to leave her night vision goggles behind. She fortified up by the simple expedient of quietly opening up a nearby abandoned truck and climbing inside the back. She curled up there with two SIG Sauer P226 in her hands, and her sniper rifle laid out across the leg area beside her. Luckily she wasn't someone who moved in their sleep, and she would be able to make it through the night despite being woken up a few times by the moaning and groaning of nearby zombies.

OOOOOO

Ranma made his way back to the mansion, and was surprised to see Yuriko outside on the terrace of the master bedroom. He was so surprised to see her in fact that he allowed himself to be seen and she motioned him over with a silent wave, not showing any surprise at his roof-hopping.

Ranma easily jumped from his own terrace over to hers, and perched there in a crouch on the corner looking at her with his head cocked to one side. She raised an eyebrow and he whispered, "Just checking out our route, wanted to make sure that there wasn't anything major in our way."

The woman nodded gravely and leaned forward so that her face was right by his ear so she could whisper. "Take care of Saya-chan please."

Ranma pulled back and nodded. "With my life, on my honor." Yuriko looked deeply into his eyes for a moment then nodded.

With that Ranma turned and headed back to bed.

He found his two ladies now both in bed and Yuuki gone back to her own futon. He curled up next to Saya putting one arm around her as his other reached across her to gently touch Saeko's hair.

The swordswoman raised her head to look over Saya at him one eyebrow raised and he shook his head indicating nothing happened. She nodded and reached over with her own hand to grasp his after he pulled up the covers again. After that the two of them joined Saya in the land of sleep.

OOOOOOO

The next day Shizuka checked in on her patients and found that Takashi had been able to go to sleep without moving his ankle much. It was still swollen slightly, but it looked much better than it had, and she gently wrapped it in gauze.

Asami too was on the mend, though nowhere near as close to healed as he was. Her general constitution just wasn't as tough as Takashi's, and her shoulder was still a vibrant black and blue. Rei was nearly healed already, her shoulder only bothering her slightly.

The group met up downstairs for breakfast, and Yuuki grinned as she looked at Saya who was sitting there trying to act as if the night before hadn't happened, but her blushes whenever she looked at Saeko or Ranma gave the game away. Saya for her part couldn't look Saeko in the eyes, and even being near Ranma was enough to get her blushing.

The group met up with Saya's parents over breakfast and Yuriko again wished her well while her father simply sat there stoically talking to Ranma and Shizuka about their route. Even now he wasn't willing to show emotions, and Saya sighed sadly. *My father the almost ideal samurai. Back in the feudal era he would've been an astonishingly good father, but not in modern times, and not for a female daughter.* She kissed her mother and the group went out to the Hummer

The mechanic Murouda who had often watched her as a child stood outside the car, smirking as he patted a box next to him. He looked at Kohta and said. This is an apology for last night kiddo. I can't say I'm happy about the idea of you and the others using guns or anything let alone having to fight for your lives out there, but these should see you right for a long time."

Kohta opened the top of the box and grinned evilly at the contents. There were over a dozen boxes of bullets for both the rifles and the shotgun in there, and he nodded at the man in thanks. He and Yuuki went to work with Ranma to tie them down to the roof of the Hummer, while the rest of the group sorted themselves out.

Rei sat in the front passenger side seat with Alice, while Shizuka again was nominated as the driver. Asami and Kohta shared one seat much to their not at all hidden pleasure in the back. Kiriko took up the gun position while Yuuki and Saya sat in the back with Kohta and Asami and Takashi, who had the side seat behind Rei and Alice, who pulled their chair up as much as they could to give him enough leg room to be comfortable despite is twisted ankle. Nodoka joined Saeko and Ranma up on top.

Saya kissed her mother one last time on the cheek. "Maybe once we get set up we'll send you guys a message and you'll have realized that trying to save the city isn't going to work." They left a radio behind for that purpose, but Souichiro had refused to even contemplate the idea of leaving the city. Yuriko nodded while her husband simply stood there not saying anything, unwilling to show emotions or admit the fact that his ideas going forward might fail. Saya took one last look at him, then shook her head and hopped into the Hummer.

Ranma shook his head, but without but nodded as he looked past Kiriko to Shizuka. "Let's go." With one final wave goodbye from Saya the Hummer started and left the mansion behind them.

By the corner of the grounds where the tents for the refugees had been and where their bodies had been stacked while graves were prepared two of the guards lifted up one of the bodies off the pile. If any of the teens had been watching, they would have noticed that surprisingly this corpse was that of a young teen, dressed in their school's uniform.

End chapter

As always read and review. In regards to the next chapter, I have found that I can't really do Shido justice, and if anyone thinks they could help me with this, please PM me.

Oh BTW, I took a look at the manga High School DxD, I got to say there is a new low for male leads. What the fuck, we seem to have gone from the complete asexual super strong dork (Tenchi I'm looking at you, you hillbilly from

space) to a complete unmitigated perv that only becomes strong in the most dire of circumstances. There is a happy middle ground for harem leads out there, I hope that some anime finds them.

***Chapter 9*: Mercy Doesn't Live Here Anymore**

I do not own Ranma or Horse of the Dead. I dislike Akane far too much for the former and can't draw nearly as well for the latter.

In regards to the last 'update': I received five hysteric PMs Thursday about a law being considered in Washington called SOPA 2014, which would make fanfiction, fan-made videos and fan art illegal. As this was the first I'd heard of such a law since I began to post my own stories, I reacted by trying to spread the word by posting announcements asking people to sign a petition that was due to end on the 19th to shut down the law in my current stories and Chaotic Space. It was only later on Friday that I found the law was not under serious consideration, and it was merely rumor mongering, the law is not seriously being considered, though some Hollywood big wigs wish it were otherwise. As such, I took down my notices, hoping that it would no longer be seen as an update. This effort failed. I apologize for getting your hopes up. Despite this there is indeed a SOPA law that might be considered in the future and I hope that all of you will look into it and look for the real petition.

I do however ask those of you who posted reviews with your opinions about the announcement to take them down. I would like the reviews for my stories to be about them alone, sorry.

Some Reviews I would like to mention: Everyone who pointed out the number of small mistakes and mix-ups in the last chapter (especially the Ronald thing – ugh, so ugh) I have gone back and corrected what I could find, so thank you very much, though I doubt I found them all. If anyone wants to beta this story I would be ecstatic to go over it with you.

Holy Half vs Chaos Half: I am uncertain if you will enjoy what happens in this chapter, since Shido-shit does get some recognition, but hey...heh

Rake1810: I am looking forward to Rika as well, and yes, from this point on practically everything I write in this story will be original sans the actual universe and the characters I use.

Death of Snipers: Nope. Read on to see what it did mean.

n0mster: Thank you as always for the great review! As a character Rei is indeed progressing. She will still have her moments, but they will become fewer as time goes on. The reasoning for her willing to be in a threesome was heavy-handed, but it won't effect the story for a while. She and Takashi will get together, but only later, where survival can take a backseat and allow the group dynamic to settle down and shift around (in other words when the characters have time to angst). Where would the fun be in going all the way right away, there would be nothing more to look forward to... hehe. However, with Asami and Kohta now together, and with Saeko giving her the green light, Yuuki can really start to flirt with Ranma. Souichiro and his wife are survivors, so nothing will happen to them. I stand by what I say about him as a father though: he would have been fantastic as one back in the samurai eras, but not in modern times, and not for a daughter.

Janissa: Ranma let Souichiro hit him because he knew the guy wouldn't do any damage. It was the equivalent of letting a child hit him, signifying nothing. He also didn't want to start anything physical with the man since he was Saya's father. After however he would have ended it easily.

Grappler: I do like Chronicles of the White Knight, the Tenchi spinoff – much more than GXP, though the girls in GXP were all cute the main character sucked. And Issei is but one problem I have with High School DxD.

Hiryu, this is for you.

I put up a poll to see which of my current Ranma stories people liked, and which they wanted to see me make a priority. However a friend of mine pointed out that the original reason I started this story was to give myself a guilty little pleasure, and that hasn't faded. A reviewer also pointed out that once I have the group situated on the island, the story will become rather slow-paced and somewhat boring barring any setbacks. I won't leave any doubt that the group is doing well, an epilogue set X months after they arrive that sort of thing, but at that point it will be more about farming and surviving on their own rather than surviving and fighting zombies and the psychology of the impact of the crisis, which is what makes High School of the Dead interesting.

And with the way my life is going I might be forced to cut down to two stories rather than my projected three this summer – might have a new time intensive job starting up in the next few weeks. This unfortunately means I am not interested at this time of starting another humongous project, which the second book of Chaotic Space and my idea

for a Ranma/Fairy Tail cross would be. I am sorry to all my fans, but real life needs to take precedence.

I will try to get out the next chapter of my Mass Effect/Ranma cross sometime this week then concentrate on this story, posting every two weeks and finish it, since that should only take two to three chapters more including an epilogue. Unless of course people really want me to continue it after that to cover them getting set up and Ranma and a few others heading out on expeditions and such like. Otherwise I will switch over to my Mass Effect/Ranma cross.

That is not to say I'm done with this universe and its characters. I might come back to this universe and write another version or something if I am inspired, and **I LOVE SAEKO!** I may try to bring her into another universe with Ranma in some fashion – not certain how just yet, but I think having the two of them be in the Highschool DxD world for example would be fascinating. If anyone wants to exchange ideas along those lines that would be a lot of fun, but be warned, I will not let either become resurrected as a demon in Highschool DxD or become ghouls or anything like that in Vampire Rosario.

Now, on with the show!

Chapter 9 Mercy Doesn't Live Here Anymore

Kasumi and Happosai had made their way out of Tokyo with difficulty, hampered by the fact that Kasumi was in no way up to roof hopping coupled with the sheer number of undead everywhere. While in other cities survivors might have banded together or had access to enough weaponry to see them through, in Tokyo the sheer number of people stuck in a small area worked against that. The police had been overwhelmed so quickly, and the army bases had their own issues going on, that there hadn't been a concerted effort to fight back.

While they were still some survivors here and there, neither Kasumi nor Happosai had any interest in seeing them. Kasumi didn't because she knew herself to be a liability and Happosai because while he pitied the people stuck in this madness, they were not his priority.

With Happosai carrying Kasumi, an odd sight to anyone who looked though of course there was no one around to see it, they followed the rail lines out of the city. This worked for a time, since the rails were raised off the ground until they were well away from the city. Then however it came back down to earth and they immediately ran into problems at the first station outside the city.

A train had stopped there, and there were literally hundreds of zombies, and even more dead bodies everywhere. Happosai forced Kasumi to look away, then turned and raced back up the track before jumping off into a bit of woodland.

From there they had to live off the land, where Happosai learned something new about his companion. While he could gather edible food easily enough, cooking had never been something he had ever bothered to learn. Kasumi however was a phenomenal cook, and cooking over a fire didn't seem to bother her at all. Now he looked across the fire at her shaking his head, after biting into a bit of succulent bird he had found. "My dear this is amazing, you are a true goddess of cooking!"

Kasumi smiled, blushing faintly at his praise. "Thank you grandfather, but you're the one who found all the food." She went back to chewing slowly on her own bird, leaning over to the fire and turning the second bird he had brought in on its spit with a fork.

The fork was one of several items Kasumi had pulled out of a ki space that Happosai hadn't even known she could use. It was a sign of her upbringing, that had always been a specialty of her mother. Happosai remembered being chased around the house by Kimiko, dodging all sorts of bladed weapons and even a few more esoteric weapons. The European war hammer had been a surprise but he could evade it, the sink though had been his downfall.

The ancient master of Anything Goes was wondering if he could learn how to train a woman at the moment. *I still need an heir after all, and if Genma and his son Ran-something or other? Well if they aren't still alive, then Kasumi will have to be it. I'm old, and despite the little bit of ki I can leech off Kasumi without her knowing, I'm not going to last long before my years catch up to me.*

Happosai had learned a long time ago how to keep himself alive by sucking the ki from women's clothing. Unfortunately by the time he learned this he was already ancient, and the technique could only keep him alive, not turn back the clock. If he had learned how to do it when he was younger, or had built up his ki enough in other ways, he could have kept his youth, but such was not to be.

"Grandfather?" Kasumi's voice interrupted his thoughts and he looked up at her again, smiling at her. The young woman had lost so much so quickly, she needed all the emotional support she could get, and even if Happosai knew he wasn't the best to do it he was going to give her as much support as he could. "Where are we going?"

"Hmm, well I'd like us to head over to Kansai if we can. I know a few martial arts schools that should have been able to fort up against this disaster, and they might be able to tell me if Genma, my other student is still alive. If he is, meeting up with him and with his son would be the best plan." He cackled, putting in as much humor into it as he could. "If anyone could survive in this mess it would be Genma!"

Kasumi smiled faintly, and then turned back to her meal, while Happosai told her tales from his training her father and Genma. Heavily edited of course.

A few days later they stopped in a small town, where alas they were not surprised to find zombies. Here however the majority of people seemed to have escaped the village, and the two of them were able to scrounge up some more food, which Kasumi and Happosai split between them to put into their ki spaces.

After the two hit the market they moved down to the shoreline. The small town had been part fishing, part fishery, and they both noticed how few boats were still here. It gave them both hope that the majority of the people here had escaped to the sea. Indeed everywhere he looked he could see signs of a hurried evacuation, and while there were dozens of zombies around the center of town, there were not nearly as many as there should have been. Neither of them were willing to go into the houses however.

Happosai stood on the shoreline looking out at the boats that were still here thoughtfully while Kasumi hovered over a fire she had made right on the shoreline where she was preparing something. Happosai still wasn't certain how she was able to do it, but every meal she made even over even a small camp fire like this tasted excellent, and he was eagerly awaiting the meal. But he also was thinking about debating what they should do from now on.

Should I keep going toward Kansai? I really have no certainty that the schools there have held out, and even if they have, few of them would welcome me even now. Ahh, if only I could control myself around the pretty silken darlings, if they had never opened their schools to women... Ahh well, no need to worry about spilled milk now. So the question is, Kansai or Hokkaido? Where would Genma have gone to ground during this? I doubt that even he would have kept on moving in this madness, but where would he go? Kansai is a good place to drop off Kasumi, much as that would be a wrench to do at this point, but still it would be much easier to move around if I didn't have to protect her.

Kasumi walked up to him, holding out a bowl of chicken and rice, which he took gratefully. "Tell me my dear, you know anything about sailing?"

It turned out she didn't, but Happosai knew enough to get them by for now if they took a small boat, which were really the only ones left here. They found a small boat, something that looked like a small family seiner about 33ft long and with a sail. Unfortunately none of the boats left had a motor, so it was the best one they could grab. Minutes later they began to make their way, rather clumsily it must be admitted, out of the tiny harbor and out onto the sea

Here however they ran into a problem, as Happosai's scant knowledge of sailing failed them badly. The boat began to flounder, twisting and turning as the two of them frantically tried to figure how to steer. As they were doing this Kasumi looked over the side for a second and gasped before pointing excitedly. "Grandfather look!"

Happosai looked over the side as well, and noticed a small hand waving at them from a small boat.

He hopped onto the side of the boat peering closer but his eyesight wasn't what it once was. "Can you make out any details dear?"

"It looks like a little boy grandfather, I" she paused, looking a little afraid. "I can't tell if he's been bitten or anything from here."

Happosai thought for a moment then looked back at Kasumi's hopeful expression and sighed. The smart thing to do would be to keep going, in this world you would have to be insane to go about helping people. But Kasumi wouldn't let him do that, and would be disappointed in him besides. For some reason the idea of disappointing Kasumi bothered the heck out of the old lecher. "Well then I suppose we should figure out how to steer this boat over to take a closer look, yes?"

The last remaining Tendo nodded happily. After a few minutes more work however, she decided they weren't getting anywhere. She turned back to the boat and shouted "Er, Ahoy there, I think is the phrase? Do you think you can make your way over to us, we don't know what we're doing here."

Happosai laughed at her honesty, but it had the desired effect. The boy stuck his head out over the side of his little boat looking at them searchingly for a moment then started paddling the boat their way.

"How do you stop this thing?" Happosai muttered as the wind started to pick up and blow their boat away from the boat. What little of the sail the two of them had been able to raise now worked against them, pushing them around wildly. By the time the boat pulled up beside the fishing boat the boy was exhausted.

Happosai jumped down to face them in the place scrambled backwards screaming "Oh my God a goblin!"

Happosai chuckled. "I've been called worse. Let me get a good look at you boy, we need to know if you've been bitten or not. How did you get out here anyway? And what's your name?"

The boy stood up readily and turned around allowing the old man to look at him, even pulling up his shirt. "My names Makoto Nagano, I, my family and I, we pulled in here a few days ago Sir, we're fishermen of course, and we always stop here about this time of year mostly so that I can hand in my schoolwork and my parents can sell their fish. I," he paused shaking his head. "I don't know what happened to my mom, but I saw my dad he tried to protect a few other people when this all happened, after he pushed me into the boat, but he couldn't join me." He looked down sadly. "One of the zombies bit him in the leg and he just he pushed me off not wanting to put me in danger."

Happosai nodded softly touching the boy on the shoulder. "Your father was a brave man Makoto, he saved your life doing that. Now come on kid," he said grabbing the little boy around the waist. In actuality the boy was the same size as Happosai, but that didn't matter. He jumped up easily to the top of the fishing boat, where the boy was immediately greeted by Kasumi. "Are you all right? Do you need anything? When was the last time you ate?"

As the boy blinked at this deluge of questions Happosai looked up at the sails and asked "And do you think you can make this thing work?"

OOOOOO

While at first glance it would appear as if Shido didn't have anything in the way of skills or physical ability to see him through the current crisis, what he did have was the gift of gab, and he had that in spades.

This gift had allowed him to keep his group under control and moving silently through the city until they found a small grocery store, where they held up. It had everything they needed except for weapons, and it allowed him the time to completely suborn them all utterly, most especially the young girls, Kawamoto and Taniuchi. The two young girls were like empty bowls, easily filled with his words.

Next he talked his group into ambushing another group of teenage survivors that he first suborned. As a teacher they trusted him enough to let him in and he led them straight into an ambush on the premise that he knew where a cache of cash was. The other group was stupid enough to think that money still mattered in this new world, and were easily taken from surprise by his followers welding hammers and other blunt objects.

That and the three women in the group (lulled by his words that the men were plotting against them) turning on the four boys let his original followers, especially his budding enforcer Tsunoda take them out. Tsunoda had killed one of the other teens with ease, and when Yamada had balked at the violence he hadn't hesitated to work with Shido to knock him down and leave him behind to distract the zombies while the group, now with the three new girls added, ran off.

That gave him three teen males working with him and five young supple-bodied teenage girls. The other two teen males seemed to be a little more leery after the violence but the night long orgy Shido talked them all into when they got back to their present base seemed to settle them right down.

Eventually however there were just too many zombies in the area and they moved on, almost immediately running into a group of yakuza thugs. Here Shido's luck worked for him. One of the toughest looked at him at the head of the motley group of students, frowning in thought. "Hey don't fire," he said to his fellows, "that one in the lead looks kind of familiar for some reason, almost like the guy who sold our group that shipment of weapons a few months back. I was one of the bodyguards with the old boss when he made that deal."

The others all looked interested at that point, but also leery. "On your head be it, the new boss isn't like the old boss, he's as liable to shoot you as reward you for thinking ahead. Those girls at least'd be nice to have around." A bald man said, rubbing one hand over his head and leering, especially at the girl with glasses on.

The yak who had recognized Shido gulped a bit, but came out of hiding and motioned the group to halt. When they

saw his rifle pointing down at them all they did, the boys moving forward in front of the girls, who shivered at the looks they were getting from the yakuza.

Shido on the other hand contained any outward reaction, simply moving forward, hands outstretched, every bit of him exuding confidence. "My name is Koichi Shido, and I would like to talk to your leader."

The tough nodded, recognizing the last name. "Shido huh, yeah the boss will definitely want to talk to you." He waved up at the other yakuza, who had taken position in all the windows on the third floor of the office building they had been hiding in. The zombies inside it had been cleared out up to that point, and the doors leading upwards blocked when the group of six toughs had taken this place as one of their positions. "Follow me, and don't any of ya break off, there are still a lot of zombies around, stay quiet and follow me."

Shido nodded and without a word followed the man off. The teens followed him, most of them trying to make themselves look tougher and nastier, with only Tsunoda and one of the girls from the second group they had ambushed, a massive lacrosse player type named Ikki having any real luck doing so. The other girls crowded in behind Shido and he turned with a smile on his face. Don't worry, I have a plan." He reached out caressing the faces of Kawamoto and Taniuchi. "A plan that you two will be crucial to pulling off."

The group moved on slowly and quietly for about twenty minutes before they were waved to the side by another group of guards. Now they were in a small but expensive looking housing district, and they entered a old fashioned Japanese house, passing by gates guarded by more yakuza thugs. Everywhere around the entrance were the concrete mobile walls normally used by construction companies to close off pieces of road, used here to ward off zombies. Shido could see zombie bodies scattered about, several of them actually inside the protected area.

The man they were introduced to was not the man Shido knew his father had been dealing with, instead a younger man who looked tougher, nastier than the old man. He looked at the girls who trooped in behind Shido, especially Kawamoto and Taniuchi, the youngest looking ones, with desire plain in his face.

At a subtle nod from Shido the two girls moved to take up places standing to either side of him then the two men began to talk. The new oyabun in the area wanted to know if Shido knew where his father kept the weapons he sold to the yakuza. Shido's father had been a big name in the black market, both for drugs and for guns. His group didn't have enough guns to go around, since it was more of a consolidation of the survivors of several groups rather than simply one, and they had no way of making bullets either.

The man didn't beat around the bush or anything like that nature, he simply stated his demands instantly. It was as if Shido and his people were already under his power utterly, a belief Shido had no interest in ending just yet. "Of course I can lead you right to where the guns are oyabun, so long as you and your men can take us in. I am afraid alone we would not last in this new world." Shido said as humbly and obsequiously as he could, motioning to his followers to bow their heads.

Since he had spent the minutes it took after they met the guards coaching them, they all did their parts very well. Even the younger girls performed flawlessly, bowing their bodies in just such a way as to let the man in front of them see straight down their shirts to their budding breasts.

Shido personally liked them larger, and was bitter that Shizuka and Kyoko had so adamantly opposed him, but at least two of the new girls had decent bodies, though nowhere near as good as the group of girls they had left behind on the bus. That still rankled, but Shido had more important things on his mind now.

The man in front of him however, despite being distracted by the young nubile bodies of the girls, knew that if Shido was anything like his father, trusting him would be much like trusting a snake in the grass, yet snakes were useful too. "I think that last can be arranged, but I require a down payment, both from your group and from you personally. You see, I think this whole disaster is an opportunity, one I mean to take advantage of. But there is a group already moving, making plans and uniting people led by the ultra-nationalist leader Takagi Souchiro and his followers. They've been taking in refugees since this started, gaining man power enough to start possibly winning back portions of the city if they are careful. I think we need to take them down a peg. All of my men are known to them, but you and yours could get inside, and undermine them from within."

Shido's eyes gleamed at the chance to hurt Takagi Saya in any way he could for being part of the humiliation he had suffered at Ranma's hands.

The man in front of him went on. "But I don't think you'll need all your followers for that. So while that is going on, I think I'll take my down payment now."

After a moment Shido turned and nodded at Kawamoto and Taniuchi, who after looking at him again made their way forward toward the man, heads bowed submissively. "I trust this will be enough?"

The oyabun nodded affirmatively and waved the bespectacled former teacher and his followers away, not noticing the slight nods the two girls exchanged with him before the door closed behind him. The oyabun would be so busy with his new prizes that he left the planning for the attack entirely in Shido's hands.

So it was that Shido found himself along with a few of his followers at the Takagi estate when the power went out. By that point he had spent almost an entire day riling the refugees up, and when the power went out that was more than enough to get them all behind him. That night when another group of refugees was followed swiftly by a group of zombies he made his move, breaking out with quite a bit of food, medical supplies, and a few weapons. This was not without cost of course, most of the male refugees had to be left behind 'for the good of all,' as did one of Shido's original followers, Miura. The net gain was ten women and three men all devoted to Shido who willingly joined with the yakuza group.

When he came back with this largesse he was immediately admitted to the oyabun's presence in the man's personal bedroom. The man, Shido never learned his name, looked across at him as he sat on the side of the bed uncaring of the fact he was naked, and nodded. Shido spared a single glance at Taniuchi who was even now sitting between the man's legs on the floor giving him head with every sign of happiness. The girl looked at him out of the corner of one eye from behind her spectacles, and Shido's fingers waved slightly in a signal.

Then he turned his attention back to the oyabun. "You did pretty well. Apparently none of the girls you brought from the mansion of that bastard ultranationalist are nearly as good looking as these two, but they'll do enough for my men. Yet you could've done better," he said, now glaring at Shido. "I wanted you to weaken them and then open the gates for the zombies to take them out for us."

"A craftsman can only do so much with so little tools," Shido reposted looking at the brown haired Kawamoto, who was lying naked on the bed behind the oyabun. With one hand he gently tapped his watch seemingly in a nervous gesture and her eyes widened for a moment then hardened noticeably. "You asked me to make a motley crew of refugees into a force capable of taking on professional bodyguards, that wasn't going to happen. Be grateful that I got out at all."

"It is not for you to decide whether or not you passed or failed," the oyabun shot back, leaning forward. "Remember who is in charge here. I..." he suddenly gasped and turned staring at the brown haired slip of a girl who had just plunged a small knife into his back.

Feeling another stab of pain lance through him he looked down in shock at Taniuchi. The bespectacled teen had reached underneath the bed and pulled out a small knife that she had hidden there after breakfast that morning. Much like the one her friend had just wielded, Taniuchi had used it to stab the man right above his groin under his ribs.

Kawamoto put her hands over his mouth to muffle his cries, and Shido swiftly stood up, closing the distance quickly then stabbed the man in the neck with a tiny holdout knife of his own. After he had ordered one of the women he had brought from the mansion to entertain the man's guards, neither of them had bothered to search him. "I believe," he said cheerfully, smiling like a snake about to devour a mouse, looking down at the man who was now gasping and gurgling on his own blood as he died. "That it is now time for a bit of a rearrangement of the leadership structure around here."

It took him the rest of that night and the next day to solidify his hold on the group, but with his promise of knowing where a cache of weapons could be found, as well as his own small band of followers he didn't have much trouble. After all, the man he had just killed had killed the old boss after the zombies began appearing, so the yakuza's loyalty to him was minimal. The next day his new group, around fifty strong excluding the girls, moved through the city toward the dockyards, carrying everything they could as he intended them to not come back. They also left noise traps behind set on timers, which helped clear their way of zombies, as did the several yakuza who had rifles with silencers on them.

Despite this they lost some members along the way, but they also gained some as well from other surviving groups, until he led them into one of the warehouses nearest the docks overlooking the river leading away from the ocean deeper into the city. After clearing out the warehouse, he led them up to the rooftops and ordered that rope bridges be constructed connecting it to several other buildings around. With the doors onto the roofs of those buildings barricaded they were safe enough.

As about twenty of the men began work on that, Shido stood in front of the rest of his followers down below. He

wasn't as happy about their loyalty to him as he could be, most of them were looking out for themselves first and foremost, but his original followers and the ones he had led away from the mansion were utterly under his control.

Now it was time to get the self-serving ones fully behind him as well. Words could after all only do so much, and there was a reason this specific warehouse had been his target. "Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for following me this far on faith alone. Look around you at your new home. This warehouse and the surrounding warehouses are large enough to house us all in comfort and more bedsides. We can as a unit, as a working team, with me at your head, make this a bastion against the undead. Your fellows are even now creating the means with which we can move about this area freely. The ground is no longer a refuge we can trust, but the rooftops and the heights, those we can use."

"But hark, I hear you say, how do we defend this territory, how can we live here? The means ladies and gentlemen lie all around you. Most of the crates here hold bags of flour, rice and other foodstuffs. And when those run out, we can send cutting out parties into the rest of the city to bring back more. We will do that even now for luxury items, beds, blankets and other necessities."

Shido looked directly at a group of ten men from a single yakuza family who he knew were among the most self-serving of this bunch. *They will be the first to be sent out on such expeditions. After all, they will all want to prove how strong they are, to prove they can challenge me if need be, but such expeditions will bring their own danger. And when they return I will reward their leader whoever he may be by sending my two 'favorite' girls to him as a mark of my favor...* "Yet again, who are we to do this when we have so few guns to go around, when we expended so many bullets to get here?"

Shido raised a crowbar over his head, and turned to the large metal crate he had been standing in front of. With Tsunoda's help, he wrenched the lock off the crate and together they pulled the doors open. Inside there were smaller man long crates stacked end to end. Tsunoda and Shido grabbed one after breaking its top, and dumped the contents out onto the floor. Several rifles scattered across the floor. These were Sowa type 64, the same type used by the JSDF. When they went through the crate they would find thirty such rifles as well as a lot of ammunition for them, along with a few Sowa type 89 assault rifles, and three Sumitomo type 62 machine guns. No sniper rifles, though most of these guns came complete with silencers.

While one of the former yakuza began to distribute the weapons Shido smiled faintly, knowing he had them now. Soon with this place as a starting point he would extend his control over the entire city, a good start to his rise to glory.

OOOOOO

After leaving the mansion Ranma and the others made their way back toward the river. They intended to once again use it to bypass the majority of the problems they would encounter in the city as they made their way down toward the port.

With the crowded conditions on the Hummer it was almost impossible to notice, but Ranma did see Saya looking back over her shoulder a time or two at the mansion before resolutely turning her head away and facing the way they were going.

He looked over at Saeko, who also had noticed, and the purple haired swords woman shook her head. She leaned in close, whispering, "Of course she'll have regrets Ranma, but she still came with us, and it was Saya's choice. Besides I don't think it was the fact that she was leaving her family behind so much as just her mother and that woman is a survivor almost as good as her husband. We'll meet them again sometime, and hopefully it will be under better circumstances."

Ranma nodded, but still unhappy that Saya seemed sad. Soon however he had other things to concentrate on, since they were making very good time back to the river. He leaned forward, banging lightly on the roof of the Hummer right above the driver seat. "Slow down for a second sensei." He looked over at the others and then down past Kiriko into the crowded confines of the Hummer. "When I was scouting around last night I found a small boat. I figure we could use it to carry some of our load or free up some space in the Hummer at least."

He looked around getting his bearings and pointed off to one side on a diagonal from the way they were going. "That way I think."

Saya looked around too, leaning over Takashi much to his hidden pleasure to look out the window.

Seeing this Ranma growled low in his throat, his tomcat side not liking the idea of one his mates getting near another

male like that, and Takashi blanched, leaning as far back as he could. Ranma glared down past Kiriko's rear (which Takashi and Kohta had both been trying not to stare at. Asami was sitting right in Kohta's lap after all, and if she saw where his eyes went pain would soon follow, and, well the things Rei would do to Takashi for looking at her mother like that didn't bear thinking of) and nodded sternly seeing Takashi looking away from Saya then looked up as he heard Saeko chuckle quietly.

Saya hadn't noticed this bit of byplay, and after a moment she nodded sadly. "That would probably be from the Torachino place. The grandfather there was a fisherman when he was younger, and he used to take his boat out a time or two every year. Probably just to get away from his son-in law if I'm honest. Saya remembered the elderly couple rather fondly actually, the wife had been an avid reader of anything coming from Europe or America, and her collection of science fiction and fantasy novels had been a joy to a young Saya. Well that and the romance section but Saya would rather choke yourself to death then admit that. The son-in-law and the daughter had been a different story, especially the son-in-law, who had begun to hit on Saya the last time they saw one another, despite already being married.

Kohta nodded excitedly. "We've got a lot of rope, we could tie the boat to the Hummer and drag it along behind us or vice versa if we want to go faster."

"The only problem," said Nodoka sitting on the roof next to her son and his girlfriend, "is the fact that retrieving this boat would take us off the trail that is noticeably clear of zombies at this point."

"There's also the fact that the roads over there are all one way, it would take us out of our way by at least an hour to get over there and then head toward the River." Saya agreed.

"So we split up," answered Ranma decisively. "Kohta, Asami, Takashi and Rei stay here to guard everyone else in the Hummer. Keep on heading down to the river, hit it and head on downstream, the rest of us all meet you there. Saeko-chan, mom and Kiriko-obasan can protect me while I lift the boat and carry it to the river." He looked over at his mother. Are you up for some roof hopping?"

His mother frowned faintly. "I'm afraid I am not in that good a shape actually, not enough to make the initial jump anyway. And..." She looked over at Kiriko who looked pale for some reason. "And my sister has a major problem with heights."

"Whose fault is that huh? Whose?" Kiriko muttered under her breath.

Nodoka still heard her however and chuckled. "It was your own fault for following me sister dear."

Kiriko growled but didn't argue the point, looking across at Ranma. "She's right, I can't stand heights."

"I never knew that. Why do heights bother you momma?" Rei asked, looking over the back of her chair with Alice.

The little girl put in her own two cents. "Yeah, heights can be scary but when ninja-nii is carrying you its like being the only person in a roller coaster, really fun!"

Ranma laughed at that, as did everyone else who had travelled Ranma express™ save for Shizuka who pouted, still not liking the fact that driving kept her from having time with her neko-chan.

Kiriko however shuddered and reached down, ruffling Alice's hair. "You're not helping Alice-chan. In answer to your question Rei-chan, that is a tale for another day."

Ranma shrugged. "Well whatever." He looked down past Kiriko's chest, manfully ignoring the mounds that grabbed his tomcat sides attention to look at Rei. "So what about you cousin? Ready to learn some real roof hopping?" Rei frowned but nodded.

At Ranma's insistence the Hummer kept moving and Rei opened the window, climbing out easily, though not without flashing Takashi her rather daring black panties under her school skirt, which she still insisted on wearing. Everyone else had changed to pants or shorts, but not her.

Takashi gaped, flushing a bright red until Saya elbowed him back to life while Kyoko barely beat out Yuuki to scramble forward to join Alice in the passenger seat. This alleviated some of the crowding in the back, but not much.

Kiriko handed her daughter the jumonji-yari that she had been wielding since this all began, and Rei nodded solemnly as she held the yari in her hands. "We'll be right back momma."

"I know dear, just be safe okay?" Kiriko wasn't happy about letting her daughter go off without her, but at least with Ranma and Nodoka along she would be well protected.

Rei hugged her fiercely then nodded to Ranma who without any preamble lifted her easily into his arms and jumped easily from the roof of the Hummer over to the roof of a nearby building.

Saeko laughed quietly then turned Nodoka. "Are you ready?" Nodoka nodded, holding her sword in her hands and the younger woman picked her up easily.

Saeko was actually much stronger than she looked at this point, having trained for several weeks with Ranma would do that one. Yet even with that jumping with the weight of another person added to her own to the nearby rooftop was almost a disaster, and she landed with both feet barely on the edge of the roof.

Ranma however had already set a mildly blushing (she remembered what she had heard last night) Rei down. He reached forward swiftly, grabbing her shoulder and steadying her until Nodoka was able to put her own feet down.

Saeko nodded at him having gotten her balance back. After grinning at her for a moment Ranma turned to Rei, giving her a run down on how to jump from one roof to another, which was much easier on the legs than going from the ground up onto the roof then without further ado the four of them set off.

Kiriko looked after them shaking her head seeing her daughter make her first roof jump, with Ranma behind her and Saeko and Nodoka to either side. "That is one thing I doubt I will ever get used to seeing."

"I don't know," said Shizuka smiling a little while she started the Hummer moving forward again. "I think you can get used to practically everything. The human mind is above all things adaptable."

"Don't compare this old woman's mind to you younglings" Kiriko replied, her lips twitching. This was answered with several derogatory remarks from both Shizuka and Kyoko who were close to her age, while the drive to the river continued.

OOOOOO

When they arrived in the area they saw that Saya had been correct. All of the streets around here were one-way streets. That coupled with the size of the Hummer meant there was no way they could've been able to simply turn around, they would have had to go well out of their way.

To top it off there were literally hundreds of zombies within sight, scattered around in small groups. There were a dozen clumped around one house, three in the back of another house, several in houses they could look down into as they continued.

The boat that Ranma had found was set onto the lawn of a small house, pretty much dominating the back lawn entirely. It was locked down to a concrete pillar by a heavy chain, which probably doubled as the chain to connect its roll deck to the car. The one car garage of the house was filled by said car, a large SUV.

The boat however was what interested them. It was about forty feet long, with a motor at one end, and was wide enough for two people to sit together in the middle. There were three rows of benches built into the bottom of the boat close together in the center, and another bench at the far back right next to the motor.

Looking around Ranma took a moment to reflect there was probably a good thing that Saya had not come along for this since she seemed to have known the people here. One of them at least was already a zombie, walking around the front lawn reacting to whatever stimuli zombies reacted to when there was no food to be found.

Saeko looked around, noticing that there were at least 15, possibly 20 zombies on this street alone, with a few more directly on the other side of a wooden fence separating this property from the one abutting the rear of it. "What should we do?" she whispered leaning over Ranma's shoulder. "I'm up for just wiping them all out you know that, but the noise that would make would bring more in on us."

Ranma shivered a little as her breath tickled his ear, reaching back with one hand to squeeze her thigh. "Actually there were a lot more zombies around here last night. I wonder where they got to. Anyway, you think you could cut that chain Saeko-chan?"

With the majority of the zombies on this road gone for some reason Ranma was thinking of turning this into a educational experience. He could do it easily enough, rip the chain apart or cut it with his meteor hammer, but what kind of sensei would he be if he let a learning experience pass by?

Saeko frowned faintly. "I would not like to damage our family blade in that fashion." She replied, reveling in the 'our' word there. In response Ranma turned around enough to hug her around the waist.

Nodoka giggled at their interplay, glad her son had found someone like the young Busujima-san. "My son is talking about using a ki technique dear, you've seen what tricks he can pull off with that meteor hammer of his, it's the same principle except you enhance the cutting edge of your blade."

Rei looked on interestedly as Ranma nodded allowing his order to appear for a moment. "This is ki," he said as a faint blue/green flicker surrounded his hand. "You already know how to put it into your muscles or speed, what you do is you push your ki into your weapon instead. Think of your weapons as an extension of your body, that should be easy for you, and then let your ki merge with the weapon. After that what you do with it is up to you, you can either strengthen the blade, enhance the cutting edge of it or both."

The swords woman frowned faintly, looking down at the blades that she had wielded for the past few days. After a moment she nodded. "I'll do it."

With that the two of them jumped down with Nodoka following. She landed heavily but smoothly enough for someone who hadn't practiced such a maneuver for years. It was really only the strength to jump up to the rooftops she lacked, not the skill to do it. Rei jumped down first to a small ledge and then down to the ground, lashing out with her yari to slice open the head of the zombie stumbling around the front yard.

The two of them took up station on either side of the house facing toward the road.

Saeko stood by the chain with Ranma standing beside her. She breathed in deeply, searching for her center, the point where she could feel the energy of her own body inside of her. Slowly she breathed out, concentrating feeling her hand where it held her katana's hilt, pushing her ki into it and then without opening your eyes slashed forward in a classic I-ai maneuver, bisecting the chain.

The 'TING' sound of cut metal echoed around the houses, causing the nearby zombies to react and come towards them. Some of them began to bang against the wooden fence on three sides of the house, but many of them were on the street in front of the house. Nodoka and Rei however were ready, though the number of zombies coming out of houses to add to the rush was worrisome.

Saeko was too busy breathing in deeply, centering herself once more to notice this. She shook her head a little wearily. "That was strangely exhausting, is it always like that?"

Ranma shrugged. "I've got higher levels of ki than you do, but whenever I do that chain-enlarging thing that my meteor hammer can do, yeah that takes a hell of a lot out of me. We'll need to figure out some way of building up our reserves, but none of the Masters I studied with told me anything like that." This was mainly because his reserves were already quite large, and all of them had thought that he had already known how to enlarge it further via techniques and meditation.

He walked over to the side of the boat, tipping it gently onto one side. Ranma then grabbed the sides of the boat lifting it into the air over his head, grunting slightly under the weight. He experimentally crouched for a moment then nodded. "I've got this, can you get mom and Rei?"

Saeko nodded frowning faintly and wondering if Ranma was really able to rooftop while carrying the boat. While she would like nothing better than to cut their way to the river over the bodies of any zombies foolish enough to get in their way, it would be extremely difficult to do given the roads around them.

After killing a few of the first zombies to reach them Saeko helped the two women up to the rooftops.

Ranma grunted explosively lifting into the air and landing beside them still holding the boat above his head. "Let's get on with it," Ranma grunted, "this thing is heavy." It actually wasn't that heavy, but jumping with it onto the roof was a whole different issue. He was also not looking forward to jumping from one roof to another with it either.

Saeko was about to offer to help when Ranma shook his head. "Don't worry about it Saeko-chan" he said smiling faintly. "I've got this, it was just getting up onto the roof that was the main issue. I'll be able to jump from one to the other easily enough, and I want you to help mom and Rei."

Saeko frowned fiercely at that, but nodded. With the first jump however Rei proved that she needed the help, nearly mistiming her jump from the roof they were on to the next. The clatter of the tiles caused several zombies to move toward the house they landed on, and it was only Saeko catching her that kept Rei from falling off the sloped roof.

Not that Ranma had an easy time of it either. Jumping was tough with the boat, not so much because of the weight but because of the unwieldiness of it. It threw off his balance something fierce, and keeping it raised as he was doing was tough on his arms.

The group stopped for a moment as they noticed several dozen zombies clustered around one house they had just jumped over. Nodoka sighed looking at the front door which had been burst open seemingly by weight of numbers given the dead bodies there, presumably the first zombies through the door. "It would seem our good fortune came at the cost of someone else's," she said, bowing her head and muttering a Buddhist prayer to the dead.

The other two women followed suit while Ranma simply stood there stoically, shaking his head sadly. After a moment the quartet moved on, and soon the river was in sight.

Kiriko and the others hadn't had any trouble getting to the river, having simply backtracked the way they had gone to the mansion. All of them turned to stare as best they could given the crowded conditions inside the hummer as the quartet returned, watching Ranma jump down from carrying the boat over his head as he jumped from one roof to another.

Jumping out over the water from a house that overlooked the river Ranma flipped the boat around underneath him holding onto the sides and landing in the water with a whoop splashing water everywhere and rocking the boat as it landed.

Saeko laughed, and she, Nodoka and Rei jumped down to join him rocking the boat even further but nowhere near as violently as his own landing.

"Throw us a line!" Ranma shouted, and Kiriko laughed, then threw them the heavy line they had taken from the Takagi estate.

Ranma grabbed the end of the rope out of the air, and, after bracing his feet against the front railing began to pull the boat in toward the hummer swiftly. A moment later the tip of the boat smacked into the bumper of the Hummer, and Ranma tied it off, then jumped up to the roof of the hummer. "Any trouble along your route?"

Kiriko shook her head. "Nothing, we didn't run into a single zombie on the way here. We were just retracing our steps, I guess that nothing happened to draw zombies back into the area."

As they were doing this Kiriko levered herself out of the way in the gun port to let Saya take her place so she could look back at the boat.

The pinkette felt two hands push on her rear and she 'Epped' a little before scrambling out-of-the-way hanging onto the side of the Hummer's top and glaring angrily as Yuuki made her way up the gun port and out. "I call room on the boat," Yuuki said firmly. "It's so damn crowded in here."

Ranma turned from where he had helped his mother back on to the side of the Hummer, which it was now becoming even more crowded despite the fact that Saeko and Rei had stayed behind on the boat.

Saya scowled at her, both for the fact that she could've sworn Yuuki had fondled her rear and not just pushed at it to get her out of the way, and because the boat would be much more important than simply allowing the humans in their group more space. Still she felt they could at least have three people on the boat which would allow them much more space in the Hummer and they could still have space enough to add some more supplies.

She voiced these thoughts aloud and Ranma nodded. "That's not a bad idea, Saya-chan." He said before helping Yuuki down onto the boat which rocked slightly.

Yuuki smirked briefly leaning in to steal a kiss. "Thanks," she said and then slid out of his grip, making certain to press her chest against his as she slid down his body before sitting down right at his feet. This let her head even with his crotch and she smirked saucily up at him, licking her lips.

The imagery was unmistakable to Ranma who blushed lightly and gripped his catlike instincts by the scruff of their fur and shoved them back into the nether portions of his mind. Once he had a grip of himself he shook his head at Yuuki then jumped back up to the top of the Hummer, hearing her throaty chuckles behind him.

Saeko chuckled quietly reaching over to slap Yuuki on the shoulder. "That was evil."

"I am what I am," Yuuki retorted, smiling brightly. She then moved over, making certain to crawl on all fours in such a way that it was an undoubtedly sensual act looking over her shoulder. Ranma had looked back at the boat and

caught this movement and he shuddered again.

Once at the back of the boat Yuuki turned her attention to the small engine at the back of the boat. She frowned faintly at it, all thoughts of teasing Ranma further going out of her head as she realized this thing was a noisemaker just waiting to happen. "We can't use this, it would make more noise than the Hummer would have before my modifications to its engine housing. Even if we're in the water I don't think we want to pull that much attention to ourselves."

She said this loud enough so that the people back on the Hummer could hear, and Ranma turned from where he was looking over the map with Saya, nodding in her direction. "That's right, the river is a good idea, but there's a problem at the far end. There's a bridge where we leave the city area and head into the port area, and it would be a perfect ambush point for someone else like that group we ran into before the police station. If anyone sees us coming they'll be able to set something up there pretty darn quick."

Saeko frowned leaning back against the front of the boat as she stared up at her lover, smirking when he couldn't stop himself from looking down her shirt, basking in his attention. "How likely do you think that is? And should we keep on assuming that the rooftops are still a viable option? How far ahead do you think they'll be able to see us coming?"

Ranma shrugged. "If there's a group in the area, I would say in about two hours or so going at this speed. As to the rooftops, I couldn't tell ya."

Shizuka looked up at the roof, turning in her chair to gaze up toward where Ranma was sitting. Kyoko swiftly grabbed the steering wheel, shaking her head in amusement at her friend. "Does that mean I should slow us down? I don't know how that will affect the boat behind us now."

Saya nodded. "Slow us down as much as you can sensei, I think we need to think about this some more."

Shizuka nodded turning back and accepting the boat from Kyoko waving away the other woman's half-joking admonishments. The Hummer soon slowed to a bare crawl, simply pushed along by the current, which was struggling against the heavy weight of the Hummer.

As this was going on Ranma bumped his shoulder against Saya. "What kind of supplies do you think we should be searching around for if we can?"

"Simple tools," the pinkette answered. "Shovels, hammers, other farming tools. We've got the nail gun, but we might need some more. Wood and other things like that we can probably find elsewhere, but do you know how to mix concrete?"

Ranma shook his head. "No but I thought we were going to go to an island that was already inhabited in the past. Wouldn't there be houses and stuff already there?"

"Doesn't mean we won't have to make repairs," she answered back promptly. "Oh and more foodstuffs of course. Bags of rice as large as you can find them, large bags of wheat, flour... Stuff that we could plant after eating of course would be better, so that we can have as varied a diet as possible to avoid future health and morale problems."

"I did not see any pots or anything similar. Do we have cooking utensils and supplies?" Asked Nodoka, with Kiriko nodding beside her.

"We have stuff that would do for a cookout over a campfire," said Ranma thoughtfully. "Are there any stores nearby that would carry this stuff? And mom if you make a list I'll see what I can find."

"You mean I will," Saeko replied. "You need to rest after lugging that boat. You can raid anything very close, but if there is scrounging at any distance to do I will do it with Rei." Rei frowned at being volunteered without being asked but one look at her cousin's slightly drooping shoulders stopped her from speaking up. Instead she merely nodded.

Ranma frowned but seeing all of the girls around giving him hard stares he nodded acquiescence.

Shizuka spoke up as well, showing that despite her normal ditzy attitude the gigantic-chested blonde was still a nurse. "Vitamins and supplements and as much medical supplies as you can find would be nice. The first two can help us fight off diseases and the second will be excellent to have in the future." While she had grabbed a few bottles of painkillers and other things, she hadn't been able to grab as many bandages, gauze and other things as she had wanted to.

The planners on the roof of the hummer all nodded and said that was a good idea.

Saeko jumped up from the boat, switching places with Nodoka for a moment so she could look at the map while Saya pointed out the target stores. Luckily the grocery store was nearby, and that would have many of the food and tools they wanted to add to their stores as well as the cooking utensils. A gardening store was shown on the left side of the river from where they were, about twenty blocks away where Saeko could find farming tools, and a pharmacy about three blocks away from that.

Saya tapped at an electronics store near the grocery store thoughtfully. "Pick up something that you could make into some more noise traps. Those could help if we run into danger of the human kind."

Ranma nodded and after exchanging rounds of kisses and hugs, Saeko, Rei and Ranma made their way to the shoreline. This wasn't an easy task for either of the girls, but they made it eventually, and split up moving out over the roofs to their different targets.

In the distance gunfire sprang up and shouts began where more survivors tried to fight their way out or were cornered, and the city continued to die by the hour around them.

OOOOOO

Saeko and Rei raced over the rooftops, with the swordswoman staying close to the yari user just in case she fell again. There were a few times she nearly did, but Rei was learning with every jump she took. Eventually they reached the roof of an four story apartment overlooking the gardening store that Saya had told them about. There the two of them paused, looking down at the store. While there were dozens of zombies nearby, the front door of the store was boarded up, and the windows had been blocked as well.

Rei frowned. "Do you think there's someone alive in there?"

Saeko frowned as well, looking around. "Let's move to the back of the shop, maybe there is a way inside, and if there is not, there might be fewer zombies around to bother us."

The brunette nodded and followed Saeko when she jumped down from the apartment and landed on another lower roof before jumping across the street to land on the roof of a building right next to the gardening store. Rei nearly didn't make it, landing with one foot on and one foot off the roof, causing her to flail around until Saeko reached back and grabbed her by her shirt right above her chest, pulling her to safety. "Thanks," Rei gasped.

Saeko merely smiled before moving on, with Rei following quickly. Rei seemed to be struggling with herself for a moment then she muttered, "I... should say thanks for more than just now. I know, well I know that I've been a bit of a bitch a time or two since this all began."

"You have had good reason for the way you've acted." Saeko replied, not commenting on how accurate Rei was when she called herself a bitch. "The fact that Shido tried to do what he did with you coupled with the general trauma of this disaster would get to anyone."

"Still, thanks for putting up with me."

Saeko shrugged and the two moved on in silence, arriving swiftly near the back of the gardening store, which led out into a small garden with a rocky path meandering through it. There were only five zombies in it, and there was a stone wall surrounding the garden, which did not have any other entrance.

The two women exchanged a look, then as one leaped down, their weapons flashing. Within seconds the zombies were down, chopped to pieces.

Rei took a look at the swordswoman next to her then looked away shaking her head at the look of disappointment on the other woman's face. Sometimes she was really disturbed by the amount of enjoyment Ranma and Saeko showed when it came to fighting. She looked around, frowning when she noticed that there weren't any of the tools they were here to get for their group. "Guess we'll have to get in there huh?"

Saeko nodded and the two women made their way over to the door leading into the store. It too was boarded up and Rei hesitantly knocked on the door. "Hello, anyone in there?"

Almost immediately a voice hissed back at them from inside. "Go away!"

"We just want some tools. You can pass them out to us, we don't even have to come in. The five zombies that were

out here are dead." Rei soothed, glancing at Saeko who merely shrugged.

There was a mutter of conversation behind the door then a small flap up top was open. The two outside watched as an eye appeared there looking around then pulling back. A moment later there was more muttering, then the door opened a crack. A middle-aged man's head appeared there, looking around furtively once more before opening the door wider. "You two stay right where you are," he muttered, holding a mattock in one hand. The blood on the blade of the mattock showed it had been used recently.

Several more people were grouped behind him of various ages from one teen male who looked at the two girls with barely hidden lust, two kids and their parents, as well as another middle aged rather obese woman, though judging from the fact she had a turned off chainsaw in her arms there was some strength to her. The woman, the teen and the man in front of them all wore the same dirty uniform, showing they had worked here.

The teen spoke up, leering at the two newcomers. "Damn, if they're trying to join up I saw we let 'em."

Saeko moved forward, letting the katana she held at her side be seen before flicking it lightly, sending the blood of the zombies she had slain seconds ago splattering everywhere. The teen flinched slightly under her gaze before she looked back at the man with the mattock, assuming he was the leader here. "We're not here to join you we are here to merely pick up some farming tools. Shovels, picks, bags of quick dry cement, other things of that nature."

The man looked over his shoulder at the woman with the chainsaw, who moved forward to take over the discussion making Saeko reevaluate her former assumption. "We'd be willing to trade you some of those for certain, but you two seem to be a little more mobile than we are. Can you tell us what's going on elsewhere in the city? And do you have anything to trade for them?"

The teen couldn't help himself and muttered "I know what they could trade with me." One of the fathers reached over and slapped him upside the head, causing the teen to fall silent before Rei could move forward to stab the pervert with her jumonji-yari.

Saeko however ignored them and nodded at the older woman. "Yes we are able to get around with relative ease for now. As for trade, we were going to hit up a pharmacy for things, as well as a luggage store I just saw down the street." She looked over at Rei, shrugging. "That would give us something to carry the vitamins and other things in."

The overweight woman seemed to think for a moment. "Grab us several days worth of energy bars, diet drinks and medicine, an entire duffel bags worth, and you've got a deal."

Saeko nodded and turned without another word, with Rei following her. The group of survivors looked on in shock as the two young women leaped up onto the side of the wall and from there to the roof of a nearby building before moving off. "Now I've seen everything," the man muttered, while the younger kids gaped and began to exchange excited whispers.

The two young women made their way through the luggage store down the road easily enough, grabbing three duffels and moving on. Their good luck faded however when the two of them found the pharmacy. There were dozens of zombies in and about it, forcing the two to draw them off first. Saeko frowned for a moment, then smiled. "We both have walkie-talkies correct?"

Rei nodded and then smiled, getting where Saeko was going. "Where do you want to set up?"

"Over there." Saeko pointed down at an apartment building with a bit of a stair leading up to its front door. On both sides of it was a small indented patch of grass, with a tree in the center. "Set it up on the stairs, then just keep talking. I'll wait a few minutes then head inside."

The brunette nodded, took the other woman's radio and split off moving swiftly down the street to her target point before leaping down for a moment, stopping the radio set to maximum down on the stairs before making her way back up to the roof. Once there she turned on the other radio and began to talk into it. "This is a test, this is a test, come on you zombie fuckers, come get some!" She giggled a bit, getting into it and releasing some pent up tension while she watched the street below. "Get your fresh chunk of flesh here! Are you listening? How the hell do you undead creeps hear anything anyway? How the hell does that work you freaks of nature!?"

Down below the zombies around the pharmacy and many inside it, as well as several around the apartment, heard it and began to make their lurching way toward the radio which was blasting Rei's voice out as loudly as it could. "That's right lurch your asses over here if you want to bite mine! Hah, none of you look like I'd let any of you near my ass even if you were still alive! Damn you're all so fugly!"

Surprisingly the radio was surprisingly picked up by its fellows back at the Hummer and Saya's voice came through a certain amount of static "What the hell Rei! What in the world are you doing?"

"Using a make shift noise trap Megane-hime, and my call-sign's not Rei, it's, its Spear-lady Lightning!"

"Oh I am **never** going to use that, god your naming sense is worse than the gun-otaku's!"

"Um Rei," Takashi's voice came in. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, just being a distraction for the moment."

While the conversation continued, drawing the zombies in even more now, Saeko made her way inside the pharmacy. Surprisingly it didn't seem to have been cleared out, and she moved around swiftly, slaying the seven zombies that remained inside quickly and as silently as she could manage. After that she took the duffels off her shoulder, laying them out on the ground, filling them up one by one. It took her about forty nerve wracking minutes to fill them all then transport them back up to the roof. She had to take them one at a time, since the very idea of going around without her katana was ridiculous. All the while she was doing this she had to stifle her laughter at the conversation going on between Rei, Takashi, Saya, and eventually Kyoko and Shizuka too.

It was with a certain amount of regret that Saeko waved Rei over to join her. When she did, she gaped at the literally hundreds of zombies that had gathered, milling around, bumping into one another as they tried to find where the voices were coming from, unable to comprehend the fact it was coming through a walkie-talkie by their feet as well as from the roof above them.

She shook her head, gently taking the walkie-talkie from Rei. "As amusing as this was, we're done here and moving on. We'll be back soon I hope."

"Roger that," Ranma replied for all of those back at the Hummer. "Stay safe you two."

Saeko and Rei left two of the duffel bags on the roof, both of which contained bottles of vitamins, energy drinks, gauze and other medical supplies that Saeko had been able to find. The one Rei had contained some medicines, some vitamins, several diet drinks and a ton of energy bars which was what the other group of survivors had asked for.

They arrived back at the gardening store and leaped down, startling an exclamation from the teen and one of the fathers. All of the group were outside, the zombie bodies gone for now while they began to work on converting the show garden into a real one.

Rei dropped the duffel she carried down onto the ground. "Here's what you all wanted. Now where are our tools?"

The middle aged man moved to take the duffel but Saeko raised her blade warningly. Instead the man opened the bag and rifled through the contents. "It looks good," he reported, looking over his shoulder at the others.

The middle aged woman nodded, and moved back into the store, motioning one of the wives to come with her. The teen took this moment to attempt to sidle up to the two girls, slicking his bleached blond hair back in an attempt to look suave (or something, neither girl was really certain what the heck he was trying to do). "You sure you don't want to join us here babes? I don't know what you've got goin' on elsewhere, but we're safe here, and we could use your help."

Both girls simply stared at him disdainfully and Rei made a little gesture with her jumonji-yari to make him back off. "Go away little boy, and take your attempts at flirting with you. We're both spoken for."

Saeko giggled. "So does that mean you've talked to Takashi to formalize things Rei-san?"

"Not yet, but I will when we get somewhere really safe, not just a place with an illusion of safety." Rei grinned back at her.

One of the kids came forward then looking up at the two teenage girls admiringly. "Nee, nee, Are you two superheroes?"

Saeko and Rei laughed before Rei replied for them both. "Not super-heroes, just martial artists. My cousin is even stronger than we are."

"WOW!" The boy exclaimed, while the teen scowled at being ignored.

Thankfully for the teen the two older women came back carrying several tools tied together with wire. Three medium sized metal shovels, four picks, two spades and two hoes along with a medium sized bag of quick dry cement. "Here you are." The obese woman said, dropping them on the ground by the two girls.

Both women noticed that all of the adults had grabbed up weapons and were looking at them grimly. Saeko sighed, realizing that the distrust was a good defensive mechanism. Rei slowly grabbed up two bundles of the tools before transferring it up to the roof. Saeko pushed the duffle across the ground toward the group before Rei came back and grabbed two more bundles along with her before, without another word, the two swiftly left, moving over the rooftops back to where they had dropped their own duffels.

Transferring their new resources back to the river took them a while, but within two hours they had everything back and were storing it on the boat with the bags of quick dry cement, soil and other things that Ranma had grabbed. Ranma had a much easier time of it (only ten zombies to kill in the grocery store) and made dozens of trips in half the time it took Saeko and Rei to get back. He even had the presence of mind to grab enough electronics to put together another few noise traps, a few small speakers and radios.

The boat being towed behind the Hummer was now loaded high with bags of rice, flour small bags of spices and nearly everything else Nodoka and Kiriko had asked. This included an entire cooking set of pans and utensils, as well as several bags of nails and several other items.

With that done however he had decided to go on ahead right away, leaving before the other two returned.

Hearing this Saeko frowned. "I don't like the fact he went ahead alone. In this situation being alone like that is a recipe for disaster."

Nodoka nodded. "I agree, but what would you have us do? Of us all only you could possibly keep up with my son. My own roof hopping skills are nowhere near his. And you were not here."

"Besides," Saya cut in, "This way saves us some time. It's already after three, if we have to fight our way in up front it might be pushing dark by the time we get out onto the water. I don't think anyone here wants that." The others all nodded, even Saeko despite her irritation at being left behind. "Now, let's get this boat organized."

The others nodded and began to move their newly gotten gains around under her direction, while above them the sky began to turn grey as clouds began to fill the sky.

OOOOOO

Rather than take to the rooftops and head directly downriver, Ranma moved in a half-circle through the city, coming at the danger zone down by the docks from the side. It wasn't as easy by any means, and he routinely had to defend himself from small groups of zombies along the way, and even dodge around a few groups of survivors on the move. Yet it was a very good thing he had decided to go the roundabout path, because almost as soon as he spotted the danger area Ranma knew that their easy time had passed.

From where he was standing in the shadow of one of the factories, with two zombies barely three yards from him, he could see that several factories alongside the river had rope walks attached from one roof to another which had not been there the previous evening. Nor had the three or four dozen toughs moving around on the roofs been there when he came down this way last night.

Looking closely at them Ranma saw they were a very odd bunch. Some of them looked like regular yakuza, complete with tattoos visible even from here. Others looked youngish, like delinquent gang members. Still others looked like regular civilians, mostly youngish but still, and... *Is that guy wearing one of Fujimi High's uniforms? Weird.* It was a very eclectic group that he would never have thought could work together.

Not that all this movement and whatever else had come cheaply. The ground below was littered with bodies as well as dozens of zombies moving around, and he could see hundreds bumbling along the streets below the rope walks. There was one area in particular where it looked as if the group had tossed both the bodies of their own group and the zombies they killed when they cleared out the warehouses. The pile was large, but someone at least had made certain it wasn't tall enough to reach any of the second story windows.

There were a few guards on the actual bridge overlooking the river, though they seemed more concerned with the watching the cityscape on the other side of the bridge than anything coming down the river. As he watched what looked like a groups of foragers came in from that side, carrying several large boxes between them, which looked like furniture from here.

Sticking to the shadows and in part thanks to the now overcast sky Ranma was able to remain unseen and scout around the area, getting a swift head count. There were at least thirty people on the roofs alone, all of them armed with guns. To make matters worse, all of the warehouse doors looked like they had been heavily barricaded. Even as he watched the group returning were forced to tie their fins up to ropes and have them hauled up to the rooftops, swiftly followed by the foragers themselves. Unfortunately the group on the bridge stayed there for some reason.

Ranma moved all around making certain he had seen all there was to see. Luckily for him, while the odd group had fortified up well they hadn't put scouts out around their fortress, which made this much easier. Deciding he had seen enough Ranma moved far enough around the area so he was no longer in sight of the people on the warehouses' roofs then swiftly returned to his friends.

There he found that the others had actually reloaded everything to allow two of them to be on the boat freeing up room in the actual Hummer. Under Saya's commands it had actually been done very properly putting all of the supplies around a central area which was clear for the people who would be using it. On top of that rather than the one rope that had connected the boat to the Hummer when he left there were now three of them. Two ropes were tied to the sides of the boat down the length of the boat to the far end, and one was tied to the bumper of the Hummer from the front end of the boat.

Normally Ranma would be happy to see this, glad that Saya and the others had enough initiative to think of doing this. Unfortunately given what he just saw, well, all that hope might be in vain.

"We got problems," Ranma said, landing lightly on the front of the Hummer. He took a moment to wave at Shizuka through the windscreen before easily moving onto the top of the Hummer. Once there he looked quizzically at Saeko and Saya, who was standing with Rei in the gun port together for some reason. All three of them were staring at Kiriko, their faces the red of embarrassment save for Rei, who just looked aghast at something that her mother had just said. "What's up with you three?"

Saeko coughed delicately into one of her hands, looking anywhere but him for the moment. "O-oh nothing, just something Ms. Miyamoto mentioned about your mother that is somewhat surprising."

Saya shook her head, her pink pigtails bouncing around for a moment. "More like disturbing really. Ugh... almost enough to make me wonder if this whole relationship thing is a good idea. Your mother is a special kind of crazy Ranma."

Ranma shrugged. "Meh, tell me something I don't know."

Rei shook her head, putting the entire rather disturbing conversation behind her. "You said we might have problems Ranma?"

Ranma nodded. "The river we're on head is sort of a line between a section of the docks devoted to warehouses and stuff, and the other side which is houses and stuff. The problem is on the warehouse side and on the bridge that connects the two." He made a small circle along the edge of the River. "There's a group, at least thirty, maybe up to fifty or more that have taken up residence on the roofs of these three warehouses, sort of forming an corner shape facing away from the river. They've made up rope bridges connecting 'em all. They're pretty simple, but it keeps 'em off the ground, and they've barricaded the entrances pretty heavily from what I could see. And they've got a group of guards on the bridge itself, connectin' it to the corner. Don't know why they've got that group on the ground, but they were damn nervous being there let me tell ya. Wer'ent many zombies near 'em on either side, but they were still in sight of a lot of 'em."

He tapped the sections where he saw the rope walks along the roofs, shaking his head. "None of this was here last night, I don't know where the hell they came from. The worse news is, all the ones I saw, they were armed with rifles."

Kohta looked up sharply at that, but before he could speak Kiriko spoke up. "Couldn't they be just another band of survivors? A really large band certainly but still, shouldn't we be able to just move on by?"

Ranma shook his head. "The groups composed o' yaks, gangbangers and regular people all working together. There was one, wait, come to think of it two, things that bothered me above and beyond their being there at all. One, I swear I saw one of them wearing a Fujimi high uniform."

Kyoko and Shizuka both looked up through the gun hatch sharply at that joining the other teens save Asami to stare at him.

Ranma shrugged incomprehension and went on. "And two, there were no women among the groups I saw on the roofs."

Kohta broke in at this point. "Can you describe the rifles you saw?"

Ranma did so and Kohta's frown deepened. "That sounds like Sowa types, regular and assault rifles. That's the kind used by the JSDF. How the heck did a group this large get that many of them! And the other one, that's a Sumitomo type 62 machine gun! Those might not be used much any longer but they weren't released to the public **ever!** A few rounds from those would punch through the bulletproof glass on this Hummer."

"That is strange on many levels," Saya growled, pulling at one of her ponytails in thought. "Is there any chance of us just getting past them if we speed up, maybe blow our way through before they can bring too much of their firepower to bear?"

"No chance," Ranma replied shaking his head. "They've got about 35-40 guys spaced out around the rooftops here near the bridge and seven or so more on the bridge itself. What's worse is there are hundreds of zombies around, and the river gets really shallow under the bridge for some reason, we'll have to slow down to get the boat across. It's a perfect trap. If we make too much noise we bring on the zombies where the water is shallow enough to let 'em get at us and we're sittin' ducks for this damn bunch."

Saeko frowned as she looked at the map. "It's not as if it was created to stop us specifically, but you're right with them holding the bridge as well as the nearby rooftops it makes this very difficult."

"We really screwed up with that boat then," Kiriko said looking back at the boat behind the Hummer. Nodoka, Alice and Yuuki were back there, Nodoka and Yuuki talking quietly about something while the Alice played around with Zeke. "I really don't want us to give up all those supplies, but should we? I mean the Hummer is a four-wheel vehicle, we could head up out of the river around here easy enough and circle around somehow."

"Doubt it." Ranma shook his head. "There are a lot of zombies out and about, I think we'd be fighting our way through the entire city on the right side of the river."

Saya frowned. "I know the area around here somewhat. On the left side of the river the city has way too many one way roads for my piece of mind. We would be forever doubling back and trying to figure out different ways. I'm afraid it would only be a matter of time before we attracted enough zombies to pin us in place." Once that happened even with Ranma and the other martial artists it was only a matter of time before they were overcome. "And the Hummer isn't exactly small road friendly."

"So we have to fight our way through," said Kohta rubbing at the bridge of his nose right over his glasses. "Not a good thing. With this set up whatever we do will attract a hell of a lot of noise."

Ranma shrugged. "No help for it, we'll just have to go for some shock and awe as well as some flankin' attacks. Never attack from just one place if ya can help it. We pull their attention this way and that." Ranma looked over at the gun otaku. "Kohta, besides you who's the best shot here?"

"Asami-chan," the four-eyed sniper replied promptly. "She can't handle the recoil unless she's prone anyway but even with that she's easily the best shot why?" Actually Kohta didn't know that, he was just going by Asami's knowledge of guns and the fact that she had shot guns before the zombie crisis began. Maybe Ms. Miyamoto was just as good, but he hadn't seen her use a gun yet.

Down in the Hummer Asami blushed heavily, pleased at her boyfriend's trust in her.

"If I can get you both up on top of one of those large cranes that are..." he looked at the map "around here," Ranma said pointing at them in the industrial sector of the port, "could you shoot at people on the rooftops around here?" he pointed down at the danger area.

Kohta examined the map closely then nodded. "I think I could, Asami might have some trouble though. I'd definitely head hunt whoever has or is near one of the machine guns. You think you can get us both up there without anyone seeing us?"

"That would be easy enough yeah."

"You're hoping that we can draw off their attention? What if it doesn't work, you'd still have to blast our way through. Trying to break through won't be pleasant whatever happens. I don't think we could range on the bridge from there."

"We get the noncombatants inside the Hummer and shut it tight," said Rama grimly nodding over at the gun port where Rei and Saya were both standing, pressed together in such a way that Takashi who was looking up from below had nearly gone blue due to blood-loss from his nosebleed. Ranma might have had one as well (or beaten the shit out of Takashi for looking at his Saya-chan like that) but he had more important things in on his mind right now. "That means you close the gun port. The glass is pretty much bulletproof, this thing is almost bulletproof you just the pounding and keep on going. At the same time that's goin' on, Me, Rei and Saeko will circle around and attack the group on the bridge from the left."

Kiriko frowned. "How the heck are we going to get it over the shallow section it will be scraping the bottom of the boat."

"We'll just have to chance it," Saya said grimly. "If we have to, some of can just get out and push. Those supplies will make our lives a hell of a lot easier once we get out onto whatever out island we decide to fort up on. And even if we leave them behind and make our way around, well run into other problems, some of which are worse."

Rei however was worried about something else. "What's to stop them from dropping something into the shallow portion of the river once they figure out we're here?"

"That's where you Saeko-chan and I come in." Ranma looked over at Saeko. "We'll attack from this other side," he said motioning over to the living section of the city. "And take the group on the bridge in the side once they start concentrating on the Hummer. Clear off the bridge, there goes their chance ta stop ya from moving on"

They all looked at one another. This wasn't the best plan, but given the constraints and the fact that it was pushing five in the evening and that only left them two hours of daylight, it was probably the best plan they could come up with. Unless they wanted to go to ground somewhere in the city for the evening, which frankly was something none of them were willing to consider. They had gotten lucky so far with finding places they could defend after clearing out in the case of Rika's apartment complex.

At this point trusting their ability to find a similar place without first ejecting or making a deal with someone else, or fighting their way through zombie hordes which in turn would attract more zombie hordes, would be the height of stupidity. And while on the surface making a deal to share shelter sounded good, the makeup of their little group, and the attractiveness of the women in it, made none of them wish to open themselves up to that danger.

"Let's get this done," said Ranma firmly. "I'll take Kohta with me now while the rest of you guys start rearranging stuff again, then I'll be back for Asami."

Saya nodded resolutely, and Ranma picked up Kohta and the Springfield rifle then once more jumped off the Hummer out onto the sloped hill that lead down into the river. From there he easily jumped again up onto a roof and made his way in a diagonal across the city until he was far enough away from the route of the river, then made his way down once more toward the docks. Behind him the Hummer slowed down once more, as Saya began to shout out orders. Luckily her voice didn't carry that far from the river.

Nodoka had not been part of the planning session. When the others began to once again rearrange things on the boat, and Alice and Zeke were alas once more confined to the front of the Hummer with Kyoko, Nodoka realized she had missed something and her sister filled her in.

The ex-Saotome matron frowned. "I am not happy about My son, his lady and your Rei-chan going off on this job alone Kiriko. I think you and I should join them."

Kiriko shook her head. "That would only leave Takashi and the other mid level fighters to protect the Hummer should something go wrong. I realize the plan calls for us to just 'batten down the hatches' as it were, but plans rarely survive contact with the enemy."

"Still...." Nodoka frowned. "In that case I will go with them and make certain they don't get into anything they can't handle."

Yuuki giggled. "From what I've seen, Ranma can handle anything that comes up on his own."

Nodoka laughed, bumping her shoulder against the young woman's before starting to help the others move things around the boat. "Ha, I just beat you want him to handle you my dear."

"Not going to deny it," Yuuki chirped, swinging her hips a little as she made her way down the boat to help Saya at the far end. Nodoka laughed while Kiriko rolled her eyes, then bent to her own work.

OOOOOO

Ranma easily made his way around the section that was being occupied by this weird ass group, though he ran into problems moving through the cargo section of the port. While there weren't many zombies around, what there were of them reacted very quickly to the sounds, and they even followed the sounds when they couldn't reach what was making. Sound seemed to propagate among the massive metal crates, but the zombies were somehow able to discern what sounds were made by prey and what were mere echoes. And with Kohta weighing him down Ranma wasn't able to move nearly as quietly as he could alone.

Still he was able to get Kohta to the huge transport crane set alongside two of the deep docking bays and up its side. Once there he waited until Kohta got his eye in and then that shooter nodded. "Yeah I can hit the three rooftops that have people moving on them." Despite his rising eagerness to start shooting however he frowned back at Ranma. "I can only see one of the machine guns set up though. I don't like the idea of one of those things getting off a belt at the Hummer. The glass won't last long under that pounding, hell the metal won't last long either."

Ranma frowned. "We'll just have to do what we can."

Kohta went on. "I won't be able to shoot at the bridge over the river either, most of its length is out of sight from here, and it's just a little too far as well." In truth Kohta was worried about his ability to hit his targets on the roofs but he wasn't about to say that. Though for their plan accuracy wasn't a necessary thing, and he was damn certain that there was nobody on the other side that was going to be able shoot at him from there.

"See again my last answer," Ranma drawled. "Are you going to be okay up there until I bring back your girl?"

"she's not my girl," said Kohta blushing heavily.

"Whatever man," Ranma laughed. "Your blush sort of gives it away you know." Kohta blushed but didn't bother arguing, turning his attention to his gun sight and staring down the barrel at his targets.

Ranma chuckled at the non-reaction and then jumped off the edge, sailing through the open air for a few seconds before grabbing the side of a smaller crane and flipping himself on to a metal cargo container, landing so lightly on the metal that it didn't even make a sound. Look around for a moment he nodded then raced off again, making his way around the area once more ducking into alleyways and keeping to the sides of buildings clinging almost like a spider as he made his way back the way they had come along a slightly more direct route.

He repeated this with Asami, her gun and several clips for both guns. Once they arrived Asami immediately laid down next to Kohta, getting her eye in on the modified Knights SR-25. Kohta barely nodded at her before turning his eyes back to the targets he was marking out in his mind.

Ranma looked at the two gunners who were laying down side-by-side. "You two okay here? Once we're ready to go, we'll call you on the walkie-talkie." Kohta nodded, having pulled out his handset and set it by his head.

While Asami had started out leery about killing real people rather than zombies, after the run in with the thugs before the police station that had abated. She still wasn't very happy about it, and she had taken Kohta to task rather severely about his eagerness to start shooting a few time but that was all to the good in Ranma's opinion. He well knew that Kohta had some of the same darkness that he and Saeko had inside them, and if Alice could keep a lid on it more power to her.

Ranma arrived swiftly back at the Hummer to find Rei and Saeko ready to go. His cousin was standing on the roof, her hands on her spear. Saeko was kneeling on the roof of the Hummer her eyes closed as one hand worked over the handle of her katana.

Yuuki was on the roof as well, seemingly unwilling to enter the once again confined space of the Hummer. Kiriko was standing in the gun port, talking quietly to Nodoka who also looked ready to go. Ranma looked at her with one eyebrow raised and Nodoka chuckled. "You didn't think I'd let you young ones go on off by yourselves did you?"

The pigtailed martial artist frowned and opened his mouth to say something, but almost immediately thought better of it and Nodoka nodded. Instead he turned and looked at the others. "You two ready to go?"

Saeko nodded, her smile turning a little eager which Ranma returned in full while Rei simply looked grim. Saeko led the way, gently carrying Rei across the river to the left side of the river.

Kiriko made her way down into the Hummer and Takashi looked up through the gun port. "Good luck you guys, I wish I was going with you, but," he looked down at his battered ankle and shook his head.

"Don't worry about it," answered Ranma, his smile becoming a little feral as his blood began to pump in anticipation of the action to come. "You'll get a chance to get it stuck in at some point again."

Takashi laughed but Saya broke in rather angrily. "If you two are quite done banging your chests like macho guerrillas we've got an operation to do!" She looked up and squeaked as Ranma grabbed the back of her head and pulled her into a kiss. A second later her eyes fluttered closed and she leaned into the kiss and it was nearly a full minute before Ranma disengaged and pecked her on the forehead. "For luck, stay safe okay Saya?"

Saya could only stare at him through half lidded eyes for a moment until Kyoko and Takashi's laughter brought her back to reality. "Baka! Who the hell told you it was alright to just grab me out of the blue and kiss me like that!"

Ranma chuckled hearing Saya do her tsundere impression, while below Shizuka was frowning and kicking her legs slightly against the dashboard above the pedals. *I'm getting jealous. I want some more time with neko-chan. Or perhaps meet up with Rika sooner, whichever will get me more cuddles.*

Yuuki, waiting for her turn to reenter the Hummer (with quite a lot of irritation behind her normal attitude) chuckled, moving behind Ranma and leaning against his back. Her breasts in her light shirt pressed hard against his back, and her arms went around his waist, her pinkies trailing along his waistline right above his crotch. "Got one of those kisses for me stud?"

Her target shuddered, once again having to grab his tomcat instincts and throw them back into the far corners of his psyche while Nodoka chuckled. "Time and place dear, time and place. I'm certain my son is manly enough to satisfy you after the current crisis is over with."

Saya and Ranma both flushed and spluttered at the implication while below Kiriko groaned, putting her head in her hands. She was in no way a prude, but Nodoka seriously got on her nerves sometimes.

After a moment Ranma was able to disengage from Yuuki. Then he picked up his still chuckling mother and leaped away to join Saeko and Rei. Saeko looked at her lover with one eyebrow raised in sardonic amusement. "What kept you?" Ranma growled at her, sending a shiver down Saeko's spine before turning away and starting their trek across the rooftops.

Behind him Saya kept watching for a few minutes then resolutely ducked inside the Hummer closing the hatch behind her. She sat between Kyoko and Takashi, while Kiriko had chosen the seat by the other window on Yuuki's far side. She also had both the nail gun and the police pistol that Asami had used, while Takashi had the shotgun loaded laying between him and the door. Despite the plan to just sit tight and race through both of them were ready to open the windows and start shooting if they had to.

Saya sighed, looking out at the boat behind them, hoping that it would survive this because the supplies on it would be a lot of help, but there was little they could do to protect it. She looked up at the front of the Hummer at Shizuka. "Let's go."

OOOOOO

Ranma and the others swiftly close the distance to the opposite side of the bridge where the weirdly mixed group had set up, hiding along the side of one house that had a small alleyway between it and the one next to it.

They had to kill a few zombies on the way here, but not many because they were able to move silently and quickly. "You know the moment we start, zombies are going to be honest correct?" Rei asked in a whisper, one hand keeping her yari's blades from banging against the wall of the building behind her.

"Can't be helped," Ranma whispered back. "We'll just have to keep on the move, don't get pinned in place. Momma, you'll guard our backs, I'll hit'em first and then the rest of you follow up." The other women nodded and Ranma took out his walkie-talkie for a moment, whispering into it. "All teams, this is Ninja and company, we're good to go."

Saya's voice came back promptly. "We're moving up now. Start it up gun-boy."

"That's Gun-god, Megane-hime! Firing now!"

A second later Ranma and his group began to hear the sounds of gunfire in the distance. This wasn't wildly unnamed fire or fast automatic fire this was slow methodical aimed fire, and shouts of alarm went up across the river.

OOOOOO

Kohta's first shot had taken the man who was standing with the heavy machine gun in front of him in the shoulder, a horrible shot for him really. Much to his delight however it worked out for the best. The man screamed, reeling away and knocked machine gun, which had been balanced on the wall along the warehouse's roof, off the roof to the ground below, where dozens of zombies were still moving around.

As Asami joined in his next shot took his next target in the side of his head, blowing his brains out in welter of brain and puss. Asami's own shot took a man in the side, and he went down screaming. The rest of the group on the rooftops suddenly realized they were under attack, but hadn't figured out where the shots were coming from. They all ran for cover where they could, many of them ducking down the stairs into the warehouses.

One of them however, standing on the roof right across from the bridge, looked down river as he glimpsed movement out of the corner of his eye. "Something's coming down the river! It looks like a... car?" A second later his face disappeared from a round from Kohta's Springfield, but the damage was done.

Inside the building a pair of binoculars was raised, a wide, evil grin appeared before a snake-like tongue licked the grinning lips, and someone began to relay orders to the thugs on the rooftops.

OOOOOOO

Ranma cursed as the group on the bus opened up, regardless of being on the ground and with the zombies already reacting to the gun fire. "Shit!" that shit wasn't just because several dozen zombies were lurching quickly (which made Ranma how the hell zombies could do something so ungainly as lurch quickly) but because one of the guards didn't have a rifle. Instead he had one of the machine guns, and he raised it to the bridge's safety wall.

Ranma ran forward quickly, killing two zombies in his path before leaping up to the rooftop and zooming towards the bridge. Saeko and Rei had both seen the same thing, and they quickly raced after him, with Nodoka following, guarding their back. A few of the group on the bridge saw them coming, but couldn't hit them before Ranma had jumped down among them.

The man with the machine gun was able to fire into the oncoming Hummer, over forty bullets flashing out, denting the nose of the Hummer, the roof, and nearly shattering the windshield. However that ended the moment Ranma jumped down among him and his fellows, his meteor hammer smashing out, crushing skulls all around him as his legs did the same. Two of them were smashed over the sides of the bridge to fall into the water below.

Yet at the same time, a dozen people from the rooftops opened up on the Hummer as well. One of them even threw out what looked like a Molotov cocktail at the Hummer.

OOOOOOO

The Molotov cocktail didn't hit the Hummer, where it would have done little real damage, but it did hit the boat they were towing. "Oh Crap!" Takashi shouted, looking through the little bit at the back where you could seat out the back wheel.

Before he could think of trying to do something however he was pushed sideways into Yuuki's lap as the car suddenly wrenched to the right. From its back wheels a wave of water cascaded back over the side of the boat. Another wrench, and more water splashed back. Back and forth the Hummer went, and soon the fire was out.

Yuuki shook her head in surprise. "That was awesome Shizuka-sensei!"

Shizuka grinned tightly back at her. The blonde woman's life had flashed before her eyes when the surface of the windshield had suddenly gone white and gray under the impact of the bullets from the machine gun. She could see where the glass had been warped and battered, and knew that if they were hit again by a similar weapon it would go. "I'm not just a pretty face!"

The Hummer surged forward even faster now, the tires starting up the slight slope in the river that led to the shallow section.

OOOOOOO

Ranma had a brief moment to wonder why the hell the group on the rooftop was concentrating on the Hummer when the others of his group joined him and beyond them, the zombies were rushing toward the noise of combat.

Saeko sliced the last thug to the ground while Nodoka and Rei turned to face the oncoming zombies, spreading out slightly to cover the expanse of the bridge. The two women weaved a shield of flashing steel, cutting down four

zombies even as they fell back toward Saeko and Ranma

The purple-haired swordswoman raced toward the other end of the bridge, asking aloud, "Why in the world are they ignoring us?"

Almost as soon as the words left her mouth a few more people up on the rooftop opened up on them. "Me and my big mouth!" She shouted, grabbing up a corpse and using it as a makeshift shield, with the others quickly doing the same.

Ranma grabbed up two of the corpses and he tossed them up to splat up on the rooftop forcing the group firing at them to stop just long enough for the four of them to run forward, getting to the side of the warehouse where they couldn't be shot at so easily. Behind them however the zombies were closing in swiftly and more were coming around the sides of the building.

Above the din of gunfire, the moans of a few wounded (mostly because Asami wasn't quite good enough to get a kill on all her targets) and the groaning of approaching zombies a familiar voice shouted. "Get some more Molotov cocktails out there, don't let the hummer escape. That nurse is a major find in more ways than one, and Shido-sama doesn't want her to get away!"

Ranma and the others all exchanged wide-eyed glances. Rei's teeth gnashed together and Ranma growled deep in his throat. Turning he jumped straight up, landing on the roof, meteor hammer whirling. One end caved in a yakuza's head the other sliced the arm off of someone who looked like a salary-man.

Tsunoda ducked back down the stairs, knowing he didn't want to be anywhere near Ranma, but the rest of the people on the roof didn't have that luxury. Two of them turned to bring their rifles around to aim at him ,but one of them went down with a gurgle, his throat gone from a shot from Kohta.

The other got off a single clip of wildly inaccurate fire as he turned before Ranma's meteor hammer's blunt end took him in the face, throwing him back over the side of the roof. Surprisingly the thug survived long enough to scream as the zombies descended on him.

Ranma tossed a bundle of rope he found over the side, and stood there a moment to make certain that Rei and Nodoka had grabbed it before diving out of the way of several bullet sprays heading his way.

The group on the next roof over, which had been trying desperately to find out who was firing on them, turned their guns on Ranma. Ranma dived for cover along the rooftop edge and Saeko, who had just jumped up to the roof to join him, ducked and rolled into the lee of a cooling fan. Several bullets hit and spanged off going everywhere and she winced a little as a piece of stone clipped her wrist.

Rei and Nodoka pulled themselves up just in time to avoid the grasping hands of dozens of zombies. Climbing up swiftly Rei rolled over the edge of the rooftops wall, rolling further along the ground, then pushed off ducking into cover, wincing as her knees thrust her forward.

Nodoka moved to do the same, but gasped as she felt something smack into her shoulder. Luckily she was already ducking toward the protection provided by the doorway leading into the warehouse.

Kohta and Asami had kept up their fire with Asami aiming at the nearer targets who were targeting Ranma and the others, and she was able to force them back under cover allowing Ranma, Rei and Saeko to break out and join Nodoka in the stairwell. Kohta kept firing at the bottommost warehouse roof moving toward the ocean, because that group were still firing at the Hummer in the river.

OOOOOO

Takashi flinched away as bullets began to hammer at his side of the Hummer, but grimly opened the window just far enough to poke the shotgun's end out into the face of the man who had grabbed the Hummer. One of the two knocked into the river by Ranma he still had enough of a fight to drag himself onto the Hummer. Takashi didn't know what the man was trying to do, and didn't care either.

The shotgun ran out, and Alice and the others cried out at the sound in the cramped confines of the Hummer, but the man fell back, his head completely gone. Takashi winced at the splatters of blood now covering him and Yuuki scowled as she got some blond on her too.

Kyoko however was much more concerned about what was ahead of them. "The shallow parts coming up soon, I can see it!"

Kiriko leaned forward over the driver's seat, staring at the bit of concrete directly under the bridge. She idly wondered what the hell it was supposed to do, but in the end it didn't matter worth a damn to them. "There is no way the boat will go over that!"

They all had to shout to be heard over the clamor of the bullets still raining down on them and all of them were very thankful that the machine guns had been taken out already. Alice was still hiding down in the leg area with Kyoko's legs on either side of her, with Zeke in her arms.

Kyoko, much like Shizuka had seen her life flash before her eyes when the windscreen began to take shots from the machine gun, but now had to move past her fear. "Can the Hummer even make that?" The piece of concrete looked like a step to her of some kind, and she had to wonder if even the Hummer could make it over.

"I can get the jeep over, but the boat might be stopped unless we can lift up the front enough to get the bottom, the keel thingy over it! After that it can scrape along for a bit!"

Takashi groaned. "That means getting out and lifting it up! Damn I wish one of the others had stayed. Guess it's up to me then."

Kiriko nodded, grabbing the handle of her door. "I'll get out and cover us with my pistol, you move over Saya- chan and Yuuki-chan, get out this side as soon as the first set of tires hits the bump!"

The two girls in the center nodded to this plan and Saya moved into Takashi's lap for a moment before he slid out from under her into her spot, then did the same with Yuuki. Even with the danger all around him and the pain even this amount of movement shot through his ankle Takashi was still a guy, and the two teenage girls were incredibly attractive. The feeling of them in his arms, their bums rubbing against his lap threatened to make him react, but Kyoko was glaring back at him so intensely that it killed any enjoyment he got.

Not a moment later the Hummer hit the step of granite underneath the bridge, and Kiriko swiftly opened the door, firing her pistol up at the rooftop where people were still firing at them. She didn't hit anyone, but the people up there were already jumpy. They had taken severe casualties already, and the gunfire from below was enough to make the few of them still firing duck back under cover.

Takashi scrambled out, wincing as his sprained ankle took his weight, hobbling swiftly behind the car. He reached down, lifting the front of the boat just enough out of the water to let the Hummer start pulling it along again. He had to stand there helping it along for a second until the first few feet of the boat was up on the lip of the concrete step, then hobbled back into the car as the keel of the boat began to scarp along the concrete.

Kiriko had been using the side of the Hummer's front as cover while firing back at the people on the roof, kneeling down in the water and she ducked down as one of them shot at her. The car she was leaning against lurched into motion through the water again. She made her way along the Hummer back to her door and around it, grabbing and using the door to hold herself up out of the water before going around it and into her chair.

At any other time Takashi would have been turned on and appalled in turns by looking at Rei's mother in a wet t-shirt and jeans. But right now he merely helped her in and over him, wincing slightly as her knee found his waist right above his crotch before closing the door. "We're both in Shizuka-sensei, floor it!"

"Flooring it!" Shizuka exclaimed and the Hummer surged faster through the water, displacing a wave on either side while behind them the boat scraped and dragged along the top of the concrete block. Soon it slid easily into the deeper water on the other side however and she smiled triumphantly. "Kyoko-chan we're through!" Ahead of them by about a half mile was the open ocean. It would take them fifteen minutes or so to cover the distance through the deeper water even at full speed, but they were through the hardest part.

Kyoko saw and smiled faintly, handing the walkie-talkie she had initially taken from Saya down to Alice. "Call it in Alice-chan."

OOOOOO

Kohta scowled as he slapped another magazine into his gun, it was the last one and there were still at least 17 targets out there. The gun otaku had been having a great time, and he had even impressed himself with the number of head shots he had gotten at this range.

Asami had been having a slightly less enjoyable time. She wasn't nearly as happy as he was at the carnage, but her target rooftop was slightly closer, and she was more concerned with keeping the group there under cover than

actually killing them. Unfortunately she too was down to her last clip, and this party was going to go bad very quickly once they ran out of bullets.

With that thought Kohta retreated from his gun-induced euphoria and toggled the walkie-talkie by his head on. "This is Gun God, We're almost out of ammo over here. I think it's time to get out of here guys."

OOOOOO

Moving on was the last thing in Ranma or Rei mind. In point of fact neither of them had thought of moving on since they had heard Shido's name. Nor had Saeko, and his mother was not at present in any shape to argue with the trio.

Nodoka winced a little as Saeko pulled the sleeve of her shirt off to make a makeshift tourniquet around her upper arm where she'd been hit before getting under cover. While the bullet had missed her shoulder, it had hit Nodoka in her upper arm, and she was bleeding quite badly. More to the point, it had hit her dominant arm, which meant that she couldn't use her sword nearly as well as normal.

Ranma looked down at her with concern in his face even while his hands were busy retying his meteor hammer around his waist. "Are you going to be alright here mom?"

"I should be fine dear." she said wincing only a little when Saeko pulled the turning kept tight around her shoulder. "You three go on, get that bastard."

Ranma nodded and looked over at Saeko and Rei. "Let's go."

The two moved after him down the staircase. It was a very short walk down the stairs to another doorway which would normally open towards the stairs. Ranma kicked it off its hinges, slamming into two people on the other side who were waiting for it to open to open fire. They both fell backwards over the wooden and plastic guardrail behind them to the floor of the warehouse below, while Ranma, Saeko and Rei stormed out of the stairwell.

They found themselves on a cross between a hallway and a walkway, open-sided bar a waist-high solid security railing. The hallway led all the way around the warehouse at what Ranma guessed was the fourth story of the building. There were three doors on either side leading off it and one door on the far side from them.

Thankfully for the three invaders there was surprisingly no one down on the floor of the warehouse, but there were two with rifles on the left hallway, two more on the far side (one of whom was a black haired youth wearing the pants of a Fujimi High uniform) and six or seven on the right. All of them opened fire as soon as the three came out of the doorway.

The three martial artists ducked underneath the cover of the half size security railing, and the wood and plastic began to splinter under the fire if coming from all sides.

Saeko grinned pointing with her bloody sword down the walkway in front of her to the right of their starting point. "I'll go this way."

Ranma nodded. "I'll take the high road." With that he bunched his legs, jumping straight up passed a cloud of bullets to grab a overhanging beam the ceiling, flipping himself up into the dark recesses of the ceiling and making his way swiftly through it, drawing much of the fire from the astonished scavengers, most of whom couldn't believe what they were seeing a human being do.

"I guess I'll go this way then," said Rei, turning and racing down the opposite direction from Saeko. Both girls were attempting to get as close as possible before the shooters realized they had dangers closer to home than Ranma.

OOOOOO

Outside one of the men who had been picked up by Shido and his group the other day as it moved towards the docks shook his head, moving back into cover quickly. He had been a lawyer before all this happened, but he was also an avid hunter in his spare time so he knew his way around guns, and he had just seen a glimpse of where the fire was coming from at last. "We're done," he said shaking his head at the three other men who were sharing the relative safety of a large cooling unit. "There is no way we can fire back at that fucker from this range. Even if we have sniper rifles I doubt anyone here has the ability to shoot that far."

"Where the hell's the fire coming from?" said a young wannabe gangster, one hand ruffling through bleached blonde hair over an artificially tanned face.

"From up top on one of the huge cranes by the dockyards," the lawyer answered.

One of the other guys looked at him in shock and whistled. "Yeah we're not going anywhere." He was a relatively junior yakuza, and he was a very pragmatic fellow.

The tanned teen however was angry. "What about Shido-sama! They broke through to our main base, if they do that ...without him we've got no plans... no leader or anything!"

"This groups not staying here," said the fourth man, shaking his head. He was a dockworker who had joined them when they broke into the warehouses yesterday, having hidden up among the crates, unable to escape before they broke in. "They're just trying to get down the River."

"You heard Shido-sama, there's a nurse or something on that Hummer that we need!"

A single shot rang out, and the team fell headless to the ground. In his agitation he had stood up just a little too far, and a bullet from Kohta had found him.

The lawyer looked around at the others and said "So... we stay here right?"

They all nodded, and began to wave at the other groups still hiding on the roof, around nine or ten all told, most of whom agreed with the lawyer that trying anything at this point was a good way of getting themselves killed. Their loyalty to Shido wasn't very deep, and indeed most of them had been questioning his leadership ever since he had separated the girls from the guys.

There were four true believers who demanded the others try something but the others gunned two of them down, pushed one out to where he was swiftly hit by a sniper round, and the last was clothes-lined over the side of the roof by a very large man who looked a cross between a yakuza enforcer and a sumo, who had been sharing a radiator fan's housing with him as defense against Kohta's assault.

Whatever was going to happen, the group in the main warehouse was on their own.

OOOOOO

Rei made her way down to and around the corner of the walkway, then launched herself in a flying tackle at a man who was about to turn his rifle on her. The man went down with her on top and she slammed a hard palm shot into his genitals with her free hand, making him squeal like a pig. She swiftly rolled him over, using him as a shield to take two rounds from a man next to him. She swept her jumonji-yari out with one hand, and the man wasn't fast enough to jump over it. One of its blades caught him in the lower leg causing him to scream and fall to the ground.

She moved the body on top of her away, grabbing the man's gun before moving to her knees. Rei shot two shots into the second man's head silencing him. Once the man was dead Rei pulled her spear out from his leg and looked around.

At the same time that Rei had run into those two, Saeko closed the distance to her own targets. With her hair coming undone from its ponytail and a wild gleam in her eyes Saeko closed in so swiftly she was in among them before they could turn from firing up at Ranma.

Her smile widened slightly as her sword flashed, taking one man's arm off completely before coming back in an economical movement to open another's throat. She leaped up landing lightly on top of the solid guardrail twirling in midair to cut another one's stomach open before kicking out and sending one more flying backwards with his jaw shattered. Her sword flashed out again, catching the last man across the eyes, and he fell back screaming, dropping his rifle, his hands going up to his eyes for a moment before she sliced open his chest.

The door this group had been in front of banged open just then, and a large fat man came out his rifle already lifted but Saeko was too close. She smacked the rifle aside, her body twisting as her katana blade flipped around underneath her arm, stabbing backwards into the man's lower stomach. The man gurgled and screamed, one arm reaching forward in an attempt to choke her. Saeko easily pushed it away and turned watching as he fell to his knees before reaching down and smoothly removing her katana. She contemptuously kicked him over, watching as all of his intestines spilled out onto the floor, wincing a little as the smell hit her.

With that Saeko strode into the room, but she stopped almost immediately, a snarl on her lips. A makeshift bed had been set up here, and on the bed was a woman of around thirty or so sobbing as she clutched the remnants of her clothing to her, her eyes wide and shocked, her arms and legs bruised.

Saeko reached down and picked up the man's rifle, calmly moving over towards the woman who flinched as she came closer. She dropped the rifle on the bed and said simply. "In this world you have to protect yourself, you can't expect other people to do it for you. Learn to do so now, so that this can never happen again." It was harsh, but true, and if you wanted empathy from someone you did not come to Saeko.

The woman nodded jerkily, but didn't seem in any hurry to move so Saeko shrugged turning her back on her and moving away, running to the staircase that led from the walkway down to the floor of the warehouse. There she was rather surprised to see that someone had put up a secondary defense. There were spools of wire strung from the top of the staircase down, zigzagging and covering every step. She idly wondered how the heck the people here were supposed to get down to the floor to the supplies there, but then noticed on the ground below several mattresses had been piled up, and a rope was hanging off the security railing. Her perusal finished Saeko moved on.

On the other side of the warehouse his third floor, Rei found much the same thing except in her case there was no man inside, only three women who were huddled together on a bed. None of them seems to have been abused just yet and she sighed in relief smiling at them in what she hoped was a reassuring manner. "Don't worry, I think we've got most of the bastards."

That didn't make any of them feel better. One of them spoke up to explain their mixed feelings at that statement. "But my husband's out there! Oh Christ, I don't know what happened, we were told all the guys were sent out on to the roof to guard the area, then a few of those thugs came and shoved us in here! God-damnit, we should never have joined up with these scumbags!"

This had in fact been part of Shido's plan. First he had segregated the men from the women, then he had sent out his most dangerous internal opponents on trips into the city to grab furniture and other supplies that they didn't already have on hand. Only one such group had returned, much smaller and demoralized. Next he had separated the groups of men. He stuck one nonbeliever with every two believers or one nonbeliever with every two yakuza thugs. While the thugs were not nearly as brainwashed as his real followers, they were greedy narcissistic and completely uncaring of others plight, which made it easy to sway them with the promise of a rapine and future looting.

Most of those had died in Kohta's assault, and those that didn't had died against Saeko, Rei and Ranma.

Shido intended to use his men especially the thugs to break the women's minds, and then re-mold them to his purpose like he had the women among his true followers, but that process would be very slow for most. His power of persuasion and innate authority was not nearly as strong in them as in his already brainwashed followers, but it would get there in time.

Or it would have, if he hadn't decided to fight for the Hummer. If Shido had simply decided to hide here, pulling back his forces once they came under fire from Kota, allowing the Hummer to pass by relatively peacefully, his plans could've continued apace. Unfortunately he had gambled on taking the Hummer, and had lost big time.

Even as Rei tried to talk to the women getting them to calm down, Ranma was seeing to that very thing.

OOOOOO

When Saeko and Rei hit their disparate targets Ranma descended swiftly to the other side of the walkway, landing between two shooters on that side and swiftly slamming them both back to land headfirst down on the floor the warehouse.

Ranma kicked open the door in front of him, and scowled angrily at what he saw inside. This room had obviously been an office of some sort, probably the warehouse manager's. The Shido sets in a plush chair against the far wall behind his desk.

Five women of various ages, including two he recognized from Shido's followers from the bus, were in there. Unlike Shido, who was still dressed in a impeccably tailored suit their clothing was ragged and ripped in places. All of them were cowering back from the desk looking fearful.

It didn't take a genius to work out what had happened here, and Ranma shook his head. "Snakes can change what they are I guess."

Despite his utter terror at how swiftly this battle had gone against him the Shido still had a few cards left the play. While he had only the barest handle on Ranma's skills, he had a much better idea of what sort of man he was, and how to take advantage of that knowledge. Shido stood up and backed away, waving his hands in the air. "Now, now, I'm unarmed, you wouldn't hurt an unarmed man would you Saotome-san? No that's against your code as a martial

artist isn't it?"

"My code tells me to kill people like you," said Ranma grimly. "And that was before I heard would you try to do with my cousin. What did you think I was going to do to you if I ever heard about that you piece of shit?"

He was stopped by one of the women grabbing his waist and sobbing. He recognized her as one of the girls from his school, Tani-something or other, though her trade mark twined ponytails were loose now, she still wore her overlarge glasses. "Please, please get us out of here! He's crazy, he's always ordering us around and making us do things with him and with other men. I can't...!"

Halfway through her speech the brown haired girl Kawamoto came up from behind Ranma. Her eyes glinting with religious fervor she aimed for his kidneys from behind with a stiletto.

Ranma swiftly turned however, having heard her coming even over Taniuchi's sobs and he grabbed the knife in one hand. It drew a little blood where it cut into his palm and he growled angrily.

In another lifetime Ranma might have attempted to save these people, or would have been squeamish about fighting women at all, but this was not another lifetime. This Ranma had a sense of smell as good as any cats, and he could smell rabid madness in the air, as heavy and pungent as the smell of sex in this room. And what did you do with a mad animal? You put it down.

"You both smell of him and his insanity," he said coldly and one fist flashed out, shattering the woman's skull as her body flew to the side under the power of the blow.

Taniuchi pulled out another knife and made to stab him in the stomach but another punch straight down into her face ended that, sending her dead to the floor.

The other three women charged forward, trying to grapple with him and hold him down, while Shido, his final gambit failing miserably in the face of Ranma's ferocity, made a break for the door. His hands and feet flashed out, each blow killing a woman who had been so poisoned by the Shido as to give up everything else in order to serve him, joining the two schoolgirls on the ground.

Shido had tried to make a break for it, but before he could reach the doorway Ranma was on him, slamming him into the office wall. Shido made to cry out, but before he could a hand that felt like it was made out of iron clamped around his throat. He looked up, his eyes wide behind his glasses, his tongue lolling as he fought for breath through that implacable grip.

Rei and Saeko had moved to join him by this point, the three women Rei found going around the walkway the other way to find the woman Saeko had found. Two more women had been in another room beside that one, but while both had been tied up, they hadn't been abused just yet and were thankful for the rescue. Saeko had merely nodded, cut their bindings and left without another word.

Now Rei looked at the man who had haunted her nightmares for so long and her grip on her yari tightened enough to make the wood of its shaft creak under her hand. "Give him to me Ranma, please!"

Ranma shook his head, waving her off. "Not the sort of thing ya need on yer conscience Rei-chan. Besides, I got a much more fitting death reserved for him." With that said, and with the six women watching like hawks, he leaped down to the floor of the warehouse. He moved to the large doors at one end and, still holding the feebly protesting Shido, put his shoulder against the side of the huge metal cargo container that had been used to block the door.

While the zombies could have pushed that weight to one side, they couldn't get enough bodies on it to do so. It had taken a large forklift to lift and moved it into place. But Ranma was able to push it along from the end by himself. He had to work at it, but the cargo container moved under his power.

Almost as soon as the cargo container was out of the way the massive multitude of zombies outside began to break through the door, the wooden frame of it creaking and groaning under their weight.

Ranma backed away swiftly, picking up the knife he had stuck in the floor in the center of the open area of the warehouse. Saeko and Rei's eyes widened, then both smiled appreciatively. Both could see where this was going. It might seem cruel, but it was also poetic justice in their eyes. The women looked queasy but accepting save for the one who had been abused. She was smiling widely in vindictive pleasure

Shido too could see what Ranma was planning and, with Ranma's grip on his throat loosened he began to plead even as the door collapsed entirely. "Please Ranma, this isn't like you!"

"Oh it is definitely me," he said grimly, absentmindedly killing a zombie that had just tried to come too close. It was one of several dozen however charging toward him however, and Ranma decided to finish this up quickly and jump up to join the others.

"Mercy," Shido tried again, trying to wriggle away. "Please mercy!"

"Mercy doesn't live here anymore," Ranma growled and brought his hand down slamming the stiletto straight through Shido's foot deep into the ground. Shido shrieked, drawing the attention of all the zombies who had broken through the doorway.

Ranma released his grip on the man's throat and Shido went to his knees, trying to pull the stiletto out of his foot. Ranma knelt down, unmindful of the zombies who were even now scrambling towards the food source that had made itself known in front of them. "Die," he said softly looking at Shido, his blue eyes dark and bleak, his voice as cold as a glacier, stopping the man's screaming for a moment. "You were a user and an abuser all your life, now die like the worm you are."

With that he stood up and jumped up easily reaching the top of a pile of crates, where he balanced for a moment, dropping a makeshift sound trap before jumping up to join Saeko, Rei and the women by the doorway leading up to the roof. He nodded at all of them and with the women following they made their way up the stairs to where they had left Nodoka guarding the door out onto the roof.

Behind them Shido broke out of the strange paralysis that Ranma's stare had cast on him and began to scream again, something he would do for the rest of his very short life, while around him, the zombies closed in.

End chapter

There you go, a proper end to Shido, his clique and some signs that there are still good people surviving in the city and planning to go to ground. I could have expanded the part with Shido-shit carving out his own little empire, but he isn't worth more effort in that department. Yet at the same time, he was such a good antagonist in the original I didn't want to leave him hanging out there, I wanted him taken care of by the group and in as fitting a manner as possible, so made him rather more capable than I believe he is in the original, but not so much as to be unbelievable.

Before anyone says Ranma should be able to lift the boat much more easily, lifting and carrying something that large (large, not necessarily heavy) for a while is two different things, and he is not Ryoga.

***Chapter 10*: But First Get Rid of These Bodies**

I don't own Ranma or Highschool of the Dead, if I did, I would have Ranma with Kasumi or Nabiki from the get go rather than Akane, and Saeko would be the main female lead beyond any doubt. Rei just does not deserve the top spot in any way save on angst-y baggage, which I hate on general principle.

Some reviews I'd like to mention:

Janissa: Thank you again for reviewing. However why would it be silly to not ask the survivors to come with them? For one thing, they are complete strangers, for another Ranma and co don't know if they have any useable skills, and for another they wouldn't have enough room in the boat or hummer for more people. Kasumi and Happy will not appear in this chapter, but you're correct, kasumi is able to feel Happosai taking a little ki from her, but he can't take much without actually groping her and groping Kasumi... yeah even a full on demon would have issues with that. Glad you continue to like my story, and check out my announcement at the end. I'd be interested in what you think.

Holy Half vs Chaos Half, CJ 1of 4: agree that it was harsh, but also necessary. There have been dozens of cults in America where the followers were so corrupted and brainwashed they would do anything for the leader. This wasn't even so extreme a case in comparison to some, and neither Ranma nor anyone with him had the ability, time or patience to attempt to offset their indoctrination. And CJ, if you're interested PM me, I have exchanged a lto of ideas with *AstraJean*, and we have hammered out what I think is a fantastic story premise, and your opinion of it would be most welcome.

MilandaAnza: thank you for agreeing with me. I estimate this story will last two, maybe two and an epilogue longer. Depends on one or two factors, and what I want to do with them. However, I hate to tell you that a Fairy-Tail Ranma crossover would be huge, and I do not have the time, nor any longer the muse to write it. The accursed JErza connection has killed that muse, and it has not revived. Nor will I ever write a Naruto fic. Frankly the entire universe is beyond stupid to me, no offense if you're a fan, but none of the characters in it are of any interest to me.

Jayods: went back and changed that, thanks for spotting it. And yes to everyone who spotted it I did mean to say antagonist in my after notes.

Now on with the show!

Chapter 10: But First Get Rid of These Bodies

Nodoka slumped against the side of the stairwell, shaking her head wearily as she looked down at her dominant arm's shoulder. "Must be getting old," she muttered. "There was a time when I knew I was bulletproof." She chuckled a little. "Of course I probably wasn't, but it's the thought that counts." She sat there, her blade to one side hidden from those below by her leg covering it but otherwise simply trying to control the pain she was in.

The pain really was overwhelming, and she was fighting in and out of unconsciousness for a bit there before she could use what little ki healing she had to deaden the pain. She failed in this however, and Nodoka's breath came out in short gasps as her blood began to seep through the tourniquet and bandage Rei had made over her wound.

Nodoka looked up as the door to the bottom of the stairwell opened, hoping to see her son his lady and niece, only to see a boy with bleached blond hair making his way up the stairs holding a rifle against one shoulder.

A permanent sneer on his face coupled with an unpleasant look in his eyes told her this boy was trouble, a conclusion that proved true the moment he opened his mouth. "Shido-sama's got a little ambush ready for that Saotome asshole that led you all here, something we've been thinking of for him for a while. But you, I don't know who you are and it looks like you'll be dead soon. But at least I can give you something **nice** to remember as your last memory."

The former Saotome Matron made no reply, her head lolling back as if she was far more injured and out of it than she at first appeared to be. Nodoka knew that she had lost some blood, and it didn't take much to look as if she was on her last leg thanks to pain and blood loss. The fact the guy had a rifle meant he had to come to her rather than the other way around, and she was willing to bide her time.

Seeing the woman was unarmed, and her traditional hakama coming undone a little made him lick his lips and smile lasciviously. Walking up the stairs toward her he set his rifle down next to her, and reached forward one hand moving toward her breasts while the other pushed down his pants.

Nodoka waited until the boy was gripping her breast and his pants and underwear down by his knees before opened her eyes slowly. Before the boy could react her left hand moved like lightning, reached forward to grab his balls and squeezed. He screamed, and she shook her head sadly at the little pathetic worm in her grip. "Really, really? You think this pathetic little thing could satisfy a woman? Have you even gone through puberty yet?"

"Y-you bitch!" he shouted trying to back away but the grip on his balls held him still. One hand scramble next to him, trying to pick his rifle up again.

"That is no way to speak to a lady." So saying Nodoka removed her leg from on top of her sword reaching for it with her dominant hand. She winced as she brought it up underhanded to slice his head from his shoulders. As the head fell down the stairs she shook her head. "Sad, truly sad."

A few minutes later that she there was a scream from below, and Ranma and Saeko raced up the steps toward her. They stopped and looked at the body, with Saeko smiling approval while Ranma turned to his mother swiftly. "You okay mom?"

She nodded weakly, the movement of her shoulder having caused the bleeding to increase badly, and it was quite painful as well. Not that Nodoka was going to scream about it or anything. She was the daughter of samurai, and there was a certain amount of stoicism inherent in that. "He was a most rude little boy I'm afraid I had to chastise the most severely."

Ranma chuckled and lifted her gently into his arms. "I see ya had to hack a bit of manners into him there, but I guess he got the point of being polite in the end."

Saeko groaned. "Leave the japes to other people my love, and let's get out of here."

The older woman nodded, then looked down at where Rei was now holding onto one of her son's arms even as Ranma held Nodoka against his chest. "Is there some reason you're being so affectionate with my son Rei? Have you finally realized how manly he is and decided that the familial connection is not enough to stand in your way?"

Both of the teams blanched and Rei moved away swiftly. "It's not like that at all!" she said shaking her head and her family's jumonji-yari through the air panicking slightly. Behind her several other people came up the steps, making certain not to touch the headless corpse. "It's just that I was showing my appreciation for what he did to that son of a bitch Shido."

Nodoka looked up at her son with one eyebrow raised and he shrugged. "Made the punishment fit the crime, or in this case the punishment fit the crimes, plural."

He shook his head his eyes dark as he remembered the women that he had had to kill. Of all the things he had done since this whole disaster began that was going to haunt him, but he knew that there had been no choice. All of them had bought into what Shido-shit sold too much to be saved.

When Saeko made to open the door out to the roof one of the women from below raised her hand. "Let a few of us go first. Some of our boyfriends and husbands out there after all, or at least I hope that our men are still out there."

Ranma shrugged. "Don't know about that, but there are some rope bridges you can take to the other rooftops, they'll be safe enough, and the doors to the other warehouses are still shut and barred I guess." He was going out of his way to discourage any of them from trying to convince him and the others from taking them along. The last thing his team needed was this many hangers-on with little to no skills they could use.

The woman nodded not exactly happy about the idea, but when was the last time she had been happy about anything really? She moved to the head of the group, and opened the door out to the rooftop cautiously. When no one immediately fired her way she moved out, and was immediately hailed by her husband on the next roof over. "Shari, thank God you're all right!"

"No thanks to you," she shouted back giving him the finger though she was smiling as she did it. "And have I got a story to tell you!"

After that the other women moved out, and Ranma looks down his mother who had fallen back against his chest her breathing coming in gasps now, her bandage now almost completely dyed red with her blood. "I don't have time for this," he said to Rei and Saeko, "I'm going to head over down towards Shizuka and the others, I want her to look at my mom as fast as she can, you two follow me quick as you can but I ain't gonna slow down ta wait."

Rei nodded grimacing a little. She had twisted her ankle during the fight inside with the armed thugs, and now with

the adrenaline slowly leaving her the pain was hitting now, but other than that she was good to go. *And she chuckled a little at it. I'm sort of a pair with Takashi now aren't I?*

Saeko nodded, "I think we took out most of the group that were dedicated to Shido already, if we hadn't then the people on the other rooftops would already be shouting or at least trying shooters. I'll go and pick up Asami, I don't know if I'll be able to pick up Kohta and roof hop at the same time however."

Ranma shook his head. "Come with us anyway, they can wait out there for a few more minutes." Saeko nodded, as that was certainly true, and frowned a little, irritated that her radio had been shot up during the battle inside.

Ranma swiftly turned away moving out onto the rooftops then jumping from one to another heading down towards where he could see the Hummer already out onto the ocean faster than many of the survivors of Shido's group could follow. It didn't look as if the hummer was making much headway in the waves however.

Indeed Shizuka was not having a pleasant time trying to move the not exactly seaworthy Hummer through the waves. For now it was okay, but the Hummer was never designed to actually be a boat, it could float in a manner of speaking of course, but it couldn't make any headway without using its wheels. Even here right by the shore they were having issues, and she was struggling to move it along the wharf towards where Saya was pointing down one side of the wharf.

For the first time since leaving Rika's house, Saya had booted up her computer and was now directing them as they made their slow way through the breakers along the edge of the dockyard area to the east of the port. That area was devoted to yachting and other small private (and very expensive) ships docked in a gated area rather than cargo or the public at large.

They had not made much progress however by the time Ranma caught up with them. Ranma landed down on the dock and raced towards the hummer, jumping swiftly from next to where the river flowed into the sea onto the hummer's roof. He ripped open the hatches' top, not even caring that he had actually broken its hinges as he barked "Shizuka, my mom's been shot in the shoulder!"

Shizuka turned swiftly from the wheel, and what little headway they had made was swiftly lost as the waves pushed the Hummer backwards. Kyoko grabbed the wheel and began to turn it backwards, but Shizuka paid that no attention. "Set her down slowly on the roof up there," she said crisply, and then frowned as the Hummer moved again around her. "I don't know if I'll be able to do anything while we're still out here on the waves."

Ranma looked around and didn't see that many zombies in this area. They hadn't yet left the area around the riverhead yet, which was a small public area, not a beach per-se but a concrete boardwalk. Luckily it was a weekday when the zombie apocalypse began, so there were very few people around to be turned, and most of them had fled to die elsewhere. "Bring the Hummer back onto land." he ordered.

Shizuka nodded turned and swiftly did so, and the moment they were up onto the concrete the others piled out.

Bad ankle and all Takashi took up position slightly away from the hummer, putting his back to it, cocking the shotgun and looking around guardedly. Kiriko took up position on the other side with Kyoko while the others looked around worriedly.

Shizuka scrambled up onto the roof with Ranma's help, her breasts bouncing in a way that would normally have taken even his attention for a few minutes, but right now he was too worried about his mother to notice things like that. The nurse ripped Nodoka's hakama, pulling it back from her shoulder and frowning at the bullet wound there. She gently lifted it up slightly, looking underneath at the back of Nodoka's arm and then frowned even more. "The bullet's still in there," she reported, looking down into the Hatch at Saya who hadn't gotten out of the Hummer.

She was already reaching around behind the backseats for the medical bag, which was a slightly smaller duffel bags than the others. It was also bright pink, something that Shizuka had picked up at the mall and stuffed in another duffel for a time before they got to Saya's house where she had organized things better. Saya handed it up to Saya with difficulty, who couldn't even lift it out of the Hatch.

Seeing her problem Ranma reached over easily and pulled it out pulling Shizuka back into a hug at the same time. "Help her please," he whispered into her ear, sounding more like a little boy, more vulnerable than Shizuka had ever heard from him. "Please, s-she's my mom. I..."

Shizuka turned slightly in his arms pressing a finger to his lips. "I'll do what I can, neko-chan" she promised smiling at him. "It's not life-threatening so long as we can stop the bleeding."

The still very worried Ranma nodded and stepped back and Shizuka swiftly knelt next to his mother, pulling out her supplies as she did so. One of the first things she pulled out was a piece of wood about three fingers wide and three inches across, and she shook her head. "I can't believe I didn't think this would come in handy so fast."

Kyoko smiled thinly. She had been the one to suggest bringing along a piece of wood to bite into just in case, and it looked like it was going to come in handy faster than anyone could've hoped.

Up above Shizuka put the bit of wood into Nodoka's mouth, and then went to work on her wound. Pulling out a pair of pliers (not exactly made for this, but they could do) She probed the wound gently, and was relieved to find the bullet almost immediately. The busty nurse slowly pulled it out, wincing a little as the act caused the wound to bleed even more profusely for a moment before she threw the bullet away and went to work with antiseptic, spraying the wound.

Throughout the bit of very rough surgery Nodoka had kept silent, whimpering a little around the piece of wood in her mouth. When the antiseptic spray hit however she lost her battle to stay silent and screamed through clenched teeth, the wood in her mouth keeping her from screaming aloud.

It was still enough to draw two zombies toward them however, but Kyoko and Yuuki, armed with the crossbow and a nail gun respectively, cut them down swiftly.

Shizuka ignored the noise with difficulty, continuing to work on the wound. Once the area was clean she pulled out a suturing wire and began to suture the wound back together, something she hadn't done in a long time. It wasn't going to be the prettiest job, but it was going to work. "I'm afraid you'll scar stuck Nodoka-san" she said looking up at the woman she was operating on. The woman shook her head indicating that she didn't care and Shizuka nodded turning back to her work. "I didn't think you would."

This part of the operation took much longer, and it was about 30 nerve-racking minutes later when she finally pulled away and redid the dressing of the wound with some more of her medical supplies. She looked up at Ranma who had remained standing there throughout the operation. "Who made the tourniquet?"

"Rei," he said nodding over to where Rei was standing on guard next to Takashi, the two of them leaning on each other slightly.

Shizuka nodded approvingly. "That helped immensely. She would've lost a lot more blood without that. Nodoka-san will still be weak for some time and won't be able to use this arm for a few months, but she's in no danger now." She finished redoing the bandage on the arm, and then swiftly made a makeshift sling for her patient's arm. Actually she knew that Nodoka had been extremely lucky. While she had lost a lot of the muscle in her arm, that would hopefully come back in a few months time. If the bullet had lodged in her bone, then Shizuka might not have been able to get it out at all. As it was Nodoka would possibly never regain the former strength she had in her dominant arm given the fact they didn't have the ability to give her proper surgery.

Nodoka lifted her other hand wearily removing the bit of wood she had been clamping down on and looking at it distastefully. Her teeth had actually gouged out bits of wood, and she spat some splinters out. "It sounds like a perfect excuse to laze about while the rest of you do all the work" she said wearily.

The blonde nurse laughed slightly, and gave her several heavy duty pain killers and a bottle of water. Take these and get your butt down into the hummer she ordered. "You're not going anywhere for a while."

Ranma quickly moved to help his mother down to the ground, and then into the back, where Saya took over, gently helping the wary woman into her seat by one of the windows so her wounded shoulder couldn't get accidentally jostled by any of the other passengers. She made certain that the woman was comfortable, using one of the sleeping bags to create a makeshift pillow against the door to help protect from any jostling.

Nodoka smiled weakly at her and gently leaned forward to give her a kiss on the cheek "thank you my dear this feels lovely." She looked down at the two rather large pills and the bottle of water a little askance then drank heavily from the water bottle for a moment before popping one of the pills into her mouth and swallowing quickly.

Saya smiled at her, and when she was finished with the pills and the water bottle was empty took it from her. "You just try to get some sleep hopefully those will kick in soon enough."

The mother of her boyfriend/lover, whichever was more appropriate boyfriend seemed a little too exclusive frankly for a three-way relationship, nodded wearily and smiled at her. "You, Saeko and Ranma are good together," she said startling the younger woman. "I'm glad he found ladies like you and her. to love him"

Saya blushed bright red, turning away quickly. "Yeah well the idiot needs someone to look after him, and Saeko's too crazy herself to do the job. Someone had to step up to the plate."

She tried to not hear the chuckles this response garnered, but she couldn't quite, and she turned with a huff getting out of the car and looking around. The boat was still tied to the end of the Hummer which was stuck out into the waves, the boat moving around from side to side.

Ranma had pulled Shizuka into another hug this one fiercer as he kissed her on the cheek. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Shizuka blushed a little, her own arms going around Ranma's slightly shorter yet far more muscular frame shivering a little at the feel of his solid body against her chest. "No problem neko-chan," she said pulled away with a smirk. "its part of my job description after all."

Ranma nodded. "Still thank you. Then he turned away, looking around at Saeko and the others on guard. "You lot going to be okay here?"

The fierce swordswoman nodded. "There don't seem to be many zombies around here at the moment, so we should be fine."

Ranma nodded. "You're in charge here then, I'm going to go get the two snipers."

His lover simply nodded her head, now that they were out of the battle she had been coming down from her battle high swiftly. Her worry for her mother in law had deadened any enjoyment she had taken from the battle they had just gone through. "Go on, I'll watch for any trouble here."

Ranma nodded and zoomed off, running first down the boardwalk and then leaping up onto a cargo container by the water's edge once he reached the shipping district. From there he swiftly moved towards the two shooters stuck up on the crane in the distance.

Saya looked over at Shizuka. "You think we would move along better in the water if we had the boat push or pull us?"

"Sure, but I don't know a thing about boats. At least not ones that don't have steering wheels. Those are pretty straightforward I'd guess." Shizuka shrugged, setting her breasts to bounce in a way that took Takashi's attention away from his guard duties for just a moment, though thankfully neither Kyoko nor Rei had noticed.

"All right, in that case we should probably redo the ropes so that the boat is pulling the Hummer." Yuuki and Kyoko immediately began to work on that with Saya, with Alice coming over to help as much as she could. The little girl was surprisingly adept at undoing knots, and the group quickly undid the ropes.

Then Yuuki took over redoing them to the front of the hummer and the back of the small boat, letting enough space between so that the boat's engine, once it started up, wouldn't hit the front of the hummer. *It'll still be unpleasant, and the backwash will splash over the front of the hummer, so we'll have to go slow so as not to swamp it and send the hummer down into the water, but that should be easy enough,* Yuuki thought, as she helped redo the ropes. *Still, I'll be in the boat so at least I'll have a nice ride.*

OOOOOOO

Ranma made his way up to where the shooters were up on top of the crane, landing lightly next to them as he flipped himself over the edge the crane's arm. "How are you two doing? Ready to get out here?"

Kohta and Asami both looked over the edge of the huge crane down to the ground where almost 200 or more zombies had gathered by the foot of it. Some of them were even crawling over one another, trying to reach upwards somehow but they didn't have the dexterity to climb up anything let alone flat metal with no handholds. A few had somehow made their way onto the top of a nearby cargo ship, but even there they weren't close enough to be a real threat. Yet that didn't mean it was any creepier seeing them. "Asami um, Asami would definitely say so," said Asami chuckling a little nervously.

Kohta however had his mind on more important things. "How's your mom doing?" Saya-sama said on the radio that she was hit?"

The master martial artist nodded, his face grim. "She was, but Shizuka-chan was able to fix her right up. She won't be good for much for a few weeks, but it wasn't life-threatening."

"That's good," the gun nut sighed in relief. "Let's get the hell out of here I'm about fucking done with this damn city."

Both of the others snorted and nodded in agreement and Ranma picked up Asami into his arms easily. He also took the two rifles but figuring that would be easier and at the moment there was no one for Kohta to shoot at. They didn't have bullets to waste on the zombie horde.

He raced down, swiftly moving over the moving crates and then out towards where the hummer and boat waited. Not even questioning what the others were doing with repositioning the boat, he simply dropped the Asami and the two rifles to the ground, gently admittedly but swiftly. Then he turned and raced away again.

Ranma was soon back with Kohta, not having run into any issues again by which time the others were finished redoing all the knots, and the boat was ready to go.

Yuuki stood by the boat's outboard motor, and Kyoko, who had done a bit of boating before, stood beside her. With all the stuff they had piled on the boat there wasn't really room at the front for her there but she could at least direct where the boat was going to go from here. "So where are we going?"

Saya smirked a little as she sat down at Yuuki and Kyoko's feet on the boat. "You'll see."

Ranma, Saeko and Kohta exchanged a glance, then shrugged and piled on. For once Kohta was actually inside in the front, Alice on his lap with Zeke while Saeko Ranma and Rei decided to stay on top of the Hummer. Kiriko took up position in the gun hatch, and Takashi and Rei took up position in the back, allowing Nodoka to have a lot more space.

Once everyone was ready Yuuki started the boat's motor, and they began to slowly pull the hummer back into the water and then from there as Saya directed them to the yacht area at the far end of the port.

OOOOOO

Like many docks the world over, the docks of Tokonsou were built around a natural port, in this case a somewhat shallow c-shape. The city expanded backwards from the port at all points, with the bridge out to the airport island sticking out from one end of it. The other end was devoted to the yachts and private boating areas, while the shipping area dominated the center of it with some public areas like the concrete boardwalk where the river fed into the ocean.

With the need to not flood the front of the hummer and the ocean waves the trip took about forty minutes out to the yachting area. Once there they saw several dead bodies floating in the ocean and several zombies scattered on the boats they passed.

Some boats were gone, others had put out to sea only to stop as someone aboard succumbed to the zombie disease. There were also several that had smashed into each other and sunk, and one or two that had blown up, scattering bits and pieces everywhere. Saya however kept directing them to the far end of the area to the most private wharfs. This part was so upper-class it even had a gate on the area the group could see separating it from the rest of the personal boating area.

"Are we looking for something special Saya-chan?" Yuuki asked, looking down at the pinkette sitting at her feet, smiling appreciatively at the view down the other girl's shirt. *Those are much larger than they look.*

Saya shivered a little wondering why she felt someone was groping her with her eyes, but answered easily. "You might say that, a bit of poetic justice mixed with possibly the best choice here. I just hope no one else tried to take it since I saw it was here back at Rika-san's place."

Surprisingly the ship was there, and they all gaped in shock at the large, sleek vessel. It was painted a dark green color, which seemed to shimmer in the light, and looked like a cross between a regular yacht, a dagger, and a racing boat. The front rose about a story out of the water sitting there, while above that rose the central tower, like the top of some kind of Aztec pyramid. All in all, the thing stood out from all the other yachts like a wolf among sheep.

"What is that?" asked Ranma, his eyes wide.

"This," Saya said with a smirk, reciting the information from memory, "is a 118 WallyPower. It has a solid fiberglass hull under the water, while above it's a hybrid fiberglass/carbon composite with balsa core, everything aboard is a cross between that kind of thing for saving weight and comfort. It has a saloon, a dining area a stateroom forward, two guest rooms with queen size beds each, a kitchen with many different appliances, all of which should still be fine so long as the main engines weren't on during the EMP blast. And it was owned by a certain Ichirou Shido, who was here in town for a business meeting." She said this last bit looking over at Rei who blinked in astonishment. "I thought

that was a little poetic myself."

"Oh it is," Rei purred reaching down and picking up her jumonji-yari, her eyes flashing with eagerness. "It so is."

Ranma nodded. "Right, enclosed spaces means hand to hand weapons only. Kohta, Asami, Auntie, you three stay here." Kohta nodded. During the trip over he and Asami had both reloaded their rifles of course, but they had gone through a full third of the load they had taken from the Takagi mansion. "Oh and I call dibs on the stateroom."

The others save Saeko, Saya and Yuuki all made token protests for a moment, then Ranma led the way onto the larger boat, jumping easily up to land on the open area along the front of the boat slaying two zombies who were standing there with a swift punch and kick. Saeko quickly joined him, before reaching back over and helping Rei up who had misjudged her leap again slightly, having wanted to land on the tip of the boat and missing her footing.

Ranma looked around at the pyramid main section of the ship rising above the rest, and through the glass which composed its front section, providing a window for the steersman he could see seven, maybe eight zombies moving around. "Rei take the side closest to our boat, Saeko the other, I'll jump up and take the middle. I don't think there's any zombies outside besides the two I just killed, but be careful. There are glass doors on the other side leading into the boat, can't tell if they're open, so once we get there I'll charge in first."

The two women nodded and the trio swiftly split up, Ranma jumping up to land easily on top of the pyramid main section, while the two girls moved to either side of it.

Saeko did in fact meet a zombie on her side. The zombie in question had been a woman who was wearing clothing fitting a 'party girl' and had lost her legs at some point, but that wasn't enough to stop a zombie. With a flash of her blade Saeko ended the creature's un-life, moving swiftly to join Ranma at the back of the yacht.

This area was designed as either a jumping off point for diving into the water at the back, or a sunning area, neither of the three were sure. The walls on either side came up to their waists while the back facing the engines was free of obstruction. There were glass panels on the interior side, as well as a closed glass door. The interior from what they could see was sumptuous, with two long sofas composed of soft pillows and two smaller love seats set against steps leading up to wooden cabinets on either side, and a walkway leading down underneath the raised area into the ship. Above the walkway was what looked like a dining area, which had the refuse of a large meal lead out on it with two dead bodies slumped in their chairs.

There were indeed seven zombies walking around, a few of whom looked as if they had been shot already, but none in the head or heart, the only places where you could hit a zombie and put it down for good.

Ranma motioned to Rei, pointing at the walkway leading down, and she nodded but added a word of caution. "Try to keep the mess to a minimum, we're going to be living on this boat for a few days after all."

"Lure them out here," Saeko suggested. "If we open the door and make some noise they'll all rush out here, and we can clean up the wood much easier out here than we could the interior and those pillows in there." She looked at them rather possessively, they looked furry and soft and she was wondering what it would be like to make love to Ranma on them, ignoring the threat of the zombies for a moment.

The pigtailed marital artist saw the look in his lady's eyes and growled deep in his throat, eyes tracing her body in turn for a moment before he got himself back under control. "THhhatts, I mean that's a good idea, I'll open the door then move back and make some noise, you two wait on either side."

Rei and Saeko both nodded and backed away, readying themselves. Ranma immediately moved forward, pulling open the door and shouting "Who wants dinner? Come and get me you undead bastards!"

Saeko palmed her face while Rei was caught somewhere between giggling and groaning. "Not exactly subtle my love."

"Feh, subtlety is overrated," Ranma laughed, moving back swiftly to the back of the boat. The shout had done the trick however, and all seven of the zombies they had seen inside, along with one more from the passageway leading down into the ship, came out towards them moving as fast as they could now that prey was near.

The first two charged right toward Ranma and Saeko and Rei let them go. Ranma killed them both easily taking to the air and doing a double kick that caught them both in the head, crushing their skulls and sending them flying backward into a third which fell to the floor of the sunning area.

The next two out of the door died, their bodies falling to the ground headless, their heads struck from their bodies by a

single fluid strike from Saeko. Rei took out two more then stabbed down finishing the third one that had fallen under Ranma's first two victims. The last fell just as quickly as the two girls moved inward, slicing it to pieces.

Rei shook her head, pulling her naginata out of her last victim's skull. "That was almost too easy."

"Yes, now we have to clear the interior of the boat. That is not going to be pleasant." Saeko replied.

"That means me first. I use my fists and feet, I don't need as much space to maneuver as you two do."

Let us clear out this section first, you get the others to bring around the boat to the back of this ship. But first get rid of these bodies."

Hai, hai, bossy-chan," Ranma caroled eliciting twin chuckles as he reached down for the first body. "But if ya want me to clean up after our fun like this in the future could ya take a little more care with yer playmates?"

"How so?" Saeko asked, one eyebrow raised in sardonic amusement.

Ranma reached down and picked up one of the heads Saeko had sliced off. "Well if ya do this all the time it means more trips for me."

The two girls laughed, then moved into the yacht's upper deck, weapons at the ready while behind them Ranma continued to toss the bodies of the dead zombies overboard.

He noticed idly that the three women were all dressed up like the whores he had seen many a time following Genma around. Two of the men wore business suits. One of the other man looked like a dock worker of some kind, while the last two both wore what looked like a ship's uniform of some kind.

While this was going on Rei and Saeko had moved through the sitting area, with Rei taking up position in front of the walkway leading down to the lower deck while Saeko moved around her.

The swordswoman made certain the two bodies at the table were dead by the simple expedient of stabbing them with her blade. Both of them were very dead however, with several chunks missing. So too was the man slumped out of the steersman's chair.

Behind Saeko however Rei found herself under attack from two zombies below. The woman was another 'lady of the night, with no visible bite mark as she charged up toward the upper deck from below. The man however, looked so much like a older and fatter Shido (excluding the whole zombie-ness) that Rei actually backed up in shock for a moment. The man had the same narrow foxy face, the same taste in clothes and the same hair style.

Rei got over her shock quickly, a wide, venomous smirk moving across her face before she rushed forward, her jumonji-yari flashing. She took the man in the throat, moving up into his skull before falling back, letting his dead body tangle up the next zombie's legs before she stabbed forward into the back of the woman's head. She noticed then that the woman had been biting on the back of the shoulder, a small bite that had removed a chunk of her shoulder and that was enough.

She looked down at the man's body for a moment, feeling a sense of accomplishment that she had never felt before despite all the zombies she had killed. But this was the man who had been the mastermind behind what had happened to her at his son's hands, and the one to threaten her father's life. "Rot in fucking hell you son-of-a-bitch. The world's a better place without you and your shit-stained spawn in it."

She looked up at Saeko who had come back toward her. "I think we're at the point where Ranma will have to go down there and clear it out."

Saeko nodded somewhat irritably. "You know what that means don't you? We have to start cleaning up." The brunette groaned, but reached down and with Saeko's help dragged the bodies out one at a time.

Outside, Ranma had finished up with the initial group of bodies, tossing them negligently into the sea. He looked up from kicking the last severed head over the edge, nodding at them. "You two done with the upper deck?"

Rei nodded from where she was holding one of the bodies by the arms while Saeko followed her out carrying the body from the feet. Neither of them were pleased with this task to say the least. "Yeah we're done, two more zombies came up from below, but there could still be more down there behind closed doors."

"No worries, I'll get 'em clearin' them out now. After yer done cleanin' up two tell the others to bring the hummer and the

boat around to the back, it'll be easier ta unload them from back here."

Both of the women nodded, and Ranma moved inside, making his way down do the living quarters. Here he ran into one more zombie in the engine room, which was set at the far end of the hallway, but that was all. He searched the crew quarters which was along one side of the hallway across from the kitchen past the two guest quarters and found two more dead bodies, badly chewed up, lying in extremely bloody sheets on the small, very thin beds. The kitchen held one zombie, who must have locked herself in here only after she had been bitten. The stateroom was empty, as were the bathrooms.

He looked around a bit whistling. "Yeah, I've heard the phrase that crime don't pay? This yacht sort of argues against that." The massive king sized bed, which was done in white and brown sheets, was very nice looking indeed. Thankfully the older Shido didn't seem to go into ostentatious furniture or signs of wealth, so the furniture in here matched the furniture above and in the two guest rooms in being very nice without being ugly or too colorful. After a final check through all the rooms again Ranma made his way back upstairs.

OOOOOOO

While the three martial artists were clearing the ship, the people left behind in the hummer and the boat were not having fun. The water of the port was deep here, and the hummer's wheels could not touch the ground, which made it waddle around in the water like a metal box, which was what it was really. What was worse it was so heavy in the water that it was in danger of sinking if the front nose went into the water more than an inch or two.

So it was with a certain amount of relief that Yuuki and Kyoko responded to Rei's orders. Of course the hummer wasn't made to make tight turns in the water, so they had to go out a ways before coming back in at a very slow speed. This and the effect of the waves had a deleterious effect on Alice and Takashi's stomachs, and both of them were looking decidedly green by the time the hummer was close enough to the back of the yacht for Kiriko, who was standing in the gun port, toss Saeko one of the ropes they had been using to tie the boat to the hummer.

The swordswoman and Rei pulled the hummer in by its side until the side of it bumped against the back of the yacht. Once there Kiriko tied the rope to the far side of the roof, looping it around the metal between the two open windows on that side. Once that was done, she lifted Alice (and Zeke) out and got her onto the boat, before following her with Shizuka following her quickly. Behind the nurse came Nodoka, moving very gingerly indeed.

The two younger women immediately went to work with Takashi and Saya, emptying the back of the Hummer onto the deck. Kiriko, Shizuka and Alice however moved inside and began to clean up the blood and the rest of the mess inside along with the mess of the meal that had been left out on the table.

At this point Ranma came up, and he ruffled Alice's hair in passing before whispering to his aunt. "Don't let Alice explore downstairs, the crew quarters are a bloody mess, and I don't think she should see that."

"I understand, we'll keep her busy up here, not that it will take much those sofa's look very comfortable."

Ranma nodded agreement, and moved to help the others. Even with his help it took them a few hours to move all of the stuff from the mummer and the smaller boat up onto their new ship.

With Saya directing them most of the stuff went down into the hold, small though it was it would be able to hold all of the stuff that they couldn't afford to be damaged by wave and water. With the help of the engine room and the area that held the small emergency boat at the front of the yacht they were able to store everything in the lower deck. The kitchen held the foodstuffs they had grabbed, though many of the bags of rice and other things had been shot full of holes during their final trip down the river. However the kitchen had several containers they could use instead.

Ranma shook his head looking around at the upper deck, while Kiriko and Kyoko had gone downstairs to see what they could do for dinner Nodoka was laid out in one of the loveseats, the painkillers having finally kicked in enough to put her to sleep. "This is one hell of a find, but why the hell didn't someone else try to steal it?"

Saya had just sprawled out on a sofa, while Kohta and Asami stood outside looking at the wharf. The pinkette snorted. "Idiot, they first have to get past the security for this section of the port, which is pretty high. Electric fences and everything else would've kept them out before the power went out, then they would've had to get past the zombies which as you can see," she motioned out of the window to the wharf, where they were over a dozen zombies in sight, though she didn't notice they were moving down the wharf towards them. "That would've been tough, then they would've had to know it was here in the first place, and then clear it, an enclosed space like this boat? I bet a lot of the yachts that are still here have zombies on them."

"Gotcha," said Ranma nodding his head, not noticing the movement of the zombies either. He moved back down into the hummer, grabbing the last load that Saeko handed up through the Hatch, which was the last of the two portable solar energy generators, which would join its fellow down in the small hold.

When he came back Ranma flushed a little looking over at where Yuuki had claimed one of the long sofas. Her legs pointed towards him spread apart, one up on the soft pillow that was the back of the sofa while the other touched the ground. From this point and thanks to her very short shorts Ranma could see that Yuuki still did not believe in wearing underwear. The side of her pussy winked at him as she moved one of her legs. Beyond them he could see under the tight t-shirt she had changed into, showing that she was also not wearing a bra.

By the glint in her eyes she knew he had seen, and Ranma again had to fight his inner tomcat for control. If there weren't other people around he probably wouldn't have even bothered and taken the teasing little witch right there, but there were, and they still weren't exactly safe. "Everyone ready to go?" he asked, turning his head away from the tantalizing view.

Saeko giggled a little, always enjoying watching Ranma get teased like that but she nodded as well. Takashi and Rei sat down on the sofa with Saya, and Kohta and Asami came in from outside on the sunning deck. "We should get going, there are some more zombies heading towards us down the wharf now." The gun nut reported.

Saya ground her teeth a little. "How the hell do they know we're here?! There wasn't a single one of them near the boat that wasn't already on the boat before we began, now they know we're here!?! I would've had trouble hearing us from that far away."

"Heh, no ya don't Saya-chan," Ranma said, moving over to her and putting a hand around her waist where she sat at the end of the sofa. "Yah just don't like mysteries ya can't solve." Saya blushed at the hug, but pouted at his words and the others all laughed. "Put it down to the mysteries of the undead," Ranma said, still chuckling.

Kohta raised his hand looking a little quizzical. "Does anyone here know how to pilot a boat?"

They all looked at one another then as one the group turned to stare at Shizuka who was sprawled out on the loveseat opposite Nodoka. The blonde bombshell blinked. "Er, I guess I could try," she said meekly poking her fingers together.

Yuuki grinned at her. "Look at it this way sensei, at least out on the water there isn't much to run into, and no driving laws either."

That seemed to perk Shizuka up, and they all laughed then moved around sitting down at different places while she and her friend moved up to this front of the boat. Ranma joined Yuuki on the sofa, while Saeko laid out on the row of pillows set behind the sofa on the ledge that doubled as the sofa's back.

Alice eagerly went with the busty nurse as she moved through the dining area into the small open cockpit of the yacht. Kyoko, who had just come up having left Kiriko to finish up dinner, swiftly joined them.

Just head us away from the wharf for now, maybe head across the bridge and then we'll head out and go around the airport island. Then we can figure out a way to contact your friend sensei," said Saeko, before closing her eyes blissfully. The pillows underneath were really damn comfortable.

The trio nodded and continued on their way however that brought another problem to Saya's mind. She looked over at Yuuki scowling only a little at how she was laid out, her bare legs in Ranma's lap and showing far too much skin. Saya was also surprised to find a bit of desire as well, but put it down to lingering adrenaline, not the memory of having the other girl's mouth on her mouth that one time as they were sleeping, nor the wetness it had caused down below when Yuuki's knee was in between her legs while they slept. "How are we good for fuel?"

"I checked, we're good to go for now. And the gasoline we grabbed for the hummer should work for the boat as well. Not as well," the grease monkey cautioned, "but we should be good for at least a week of normal use, just don't try to race or anything and we're good. I'm just glad this thing wasn't on when the EMP hit. It's a well defended yacht, but that would've still fried some systems."

"I think we were all lucky," Ranma said shaking his head and looking over to where his mother lay on the love seat. "So, first over to the bridge, then follow it out ta the island where Shizuka-chan's friend is right?"

Saya nodded. "We might want to circle around the island first, we've got binoculars and we should scout it out before landing. But I think the docking area for boats is right by the place where the bridge meets the island. That's what I've

heard a time or two anyway, I've never been out there and it didn't occur to me to download a map of the island or anything like that back when we were at Rika's place. Plus doing that will let Shizuka-sensei and Kyoko-sensei get used to piloting this ship while we're still in sight of land just in case."

The ship shuddered a little as it began to pick up speed, pulling away from the dock quickly. This made the zombies that were already reacting to the noise of the group moving onto the boat speed up, trying to chase after them. They all stopped at the end of the wharf however, not even trying to cross the intervening ocean. Something about the noise of the waves or something else told the zombies where the water was, and none of the zombies they had seen seemed able to enter the water.

Behind them they left behind the hummer and the small boat they had commandeered. Moments after they left the hummer began to sink, going to its watery grave after having served Ranma and the others as well as it could, seeing them through many a crisis.

Ranma Saeko and Saya all went outside. Saya wanted to see one last view of the city that had been her home for her entire life. Saeko merely went out to feel the wind a bit as their speed picked up. Ranma however went out for a different reason and Saya gasped a little when Ranma took her in her his arms and kissed her out of nowhere. She whimpered a little as she felt herself picked up, her arms going around Ranma's shoulders as her toes began to curl at the intensity of the kiss while standing next to the two Saeko giggled, her eyes starting to smolder lustily at the sight.

After a few minutes Ranma pulled back, licking up the bit of saliva that connected their mouths before putting his forehead against Saya's. "I know leavin' your' parent's behind was hard Saya-chan, but we wouldn't be here without you, you know?" He murmured against her lips then moved down to sensitive portion of her neck causing her to moan a little for pushing them away. "You found us this boat, you came up with the plan we're followin', without you pushin' the rest of us would still be stuck in the city fearing for our lives 24/7, so thank you."

Saya stuttered and shuddered a little as she pulled her own hormones back into control. "T-time enough for that later," she admonished, breathing heavily.

Behind her Saeko reached around Saya, her hands falling to the pinkette's hips as she leaned over her, the swordswoman's bust pressing into her back. "Ranma is right Saya-chan, without you we would still be stumbling around back there." Admittedly Ranma and Saeko would probably have been fine even so, but this was much nicer. Saeko gently moved one of Saya's ponytails to the side and began to nibble on her ear, while Ranma grinned and began to work on her neck, collarbone and shoulder.

Saya whimpered as the two went to work on her. One hand fisted in Ranma's shirt, either to push him away or pull him closer, even Saya couldn't tell you since at that moment Saeko began to work on the back of her neck, and that caused Saya to lose control of her body for a second. She didn't resist when Ranma moved his mouth up to hers again, kissing her deeply.

Inside Yuuki had turned her body around so she could stare out of the glass separating the interior from the sunning area at them. Asami and Kohta had gone down to stow their rifles away and check on Rei and Takashi, who had taken over one of the guest rooms, intending to lay out and get off their battered ankles as much as possible. Kiriko was still below cooking dinner and Alice was with her with Zeke, or maybe given the shouts she was hearing Alice had decided to see how bouncy the beds were. With Nodoka out of it and the two former teachers up front that meant no one was here.

Yuuki watched as Saeko began to play with Saya's breasts through her shirt from behind, and Yuuki's hands slowly crept down her body. After a few minutes of fondling her breasts one hand moved down her body to her short shorts, where she could feel herself already somewhat drenched.

Before it could reach however a voice from down below stopped her. "Guys, Kiriko-ba-san says that dinner's ready!"

Yuuki muttered a curse as the show outside broke up and she shouted back "We'll be down in a few minutes chibi, make up a plate for Shizuka and Kyoko would you?"

The three outside took a minute to compose themselves, not an easy task in Saya's case given how worked up she had gotten at the hands of the other two. Ranma too had a tough time, trying to make his erection go down before heading inside.

He stepped in and stopped sniffing the air a little and growling as his eyes latched onto Yuuki, his blue eyes almost glowing with the desire to mate before he shook it off and once more beat back his inner tomcat. His voice was still

deep and thrumming with pent up desire however as he said "RRRRRrrrr...L-lets go get some food huh gals?"

Throughout dinner, which was eaten at the dining table set behind the cockpit and consisted of sandwiches, some fruit Kiriko had found was still good from the galley and miso soup, the ship zoomed along. They moved through the water of the port towards the bridge, the ride actually quite nice despite the waves hitting them from the side. The ship was moving slowly but surely while Shizuka and Kyoko got to grips with the controls. Rei and Takashi both volunteered to learn how to steer the yacht so the two teachers could get some rest eventually, but for now Shizuka was still at the controls.

They soon came to the island bridge which stuck out from one side of the ports entrance and out into the ocean, towards the distance airport island.

After they were done eating, Ranma and Saeko had both gone outside again wanting some alone time. The two jumped onto the top of the pyramid, where Ranma pulled Saeko into his lap and the swordswoman responded by kissing him fiercely, her tongue thrusting into his mouth to dance with his own.

Almost immediately however something intruded. Ranma frowned suddenly, pulling away from Saeko's questioning mouth causing a popping noise to sound as he cocked his head to one side. "You hear that?"

Saeko took a moment to compose herself, listening intently then said, "I don't hear anything my love, but you have better hearing and senses than the rest of us do. If you heard something I'll take your word for it."

Ranma frowned, cocking his head again. "Tell Shizuka-chan to lower the volume on the engine somehow, I'm hearing something."

Saeko leaped down and shouted inside to Yuuki, who passed the word on while the others, who had been enjoying their down time in various ways, looked up curiously. Almost immediately upon rejoining Ranma Saeko could hear what had grabbed his attention: the swift staccato bang of bullets being fired in the distance.

"it's coming from somewhere on the bridge," Ranma muttered, "I think we just found where Shizuka's friend is or maybe some other survivors."

"I'm not certain we should trust other survivors," Saeko replied shaking her head and setting her long purple hair to swish from side to side behind her. They had gotten lucky so far, and been able to fight through the problems they had run into with other groups, and she had no doubt they could do so again yet why waste the time?

"Yeah but remember what Shizuka said about her friend, she's one of those hot ass SAT guys. And that sound..." He jumped down and called for Kohta to come out, which the gun nut did with alacrity. The moment the glass door opened the gun nut immediately heard the noise of the gunfire and after a few seconds of silence he whistled appreciatively. "Is that as good as I think it is?" Ranma asked.

"Oh yeah," said Kohta, "that's controlled, aimed fire, not wild or sporadic and yet it's still coming out that fast? Sounds almost like pistol fire, but that fast and controlled? Are we going to go see whoever the hell it is?"

"Yeah I think we are, tell the girls to keep the boat moving alongside the bridge, but move it along a little faster."

Saeko nodded, and moved inside to grab her sword, while Ranma continued to stare up at the bridge as it past, making certain that they didn't go past the point where the noise was coming from.

OOOOOOO

Rika had been having an easy time of it crossing the bridge as soon as the sun came up. Oh she had to go really slowly to avoid the sound of her footfalls attracting the zombies that were covering the bridge. She estimated she had passed around four hundred of the things since she first started this trek.

She had only had to shoot a few zombies who had been close enough to hear her slow and methodical movement, but the silencers on her SIG Sauer P226 pistols were up to the task. Thanks to them Rika moved forward without any further incident both times. Then she had made a mistake, one she viciously castigated herself for later.

Rika had moved about two-thirds of the way along the bridge toward the city when she saw a toddler left behind in the back of the van. The toddler was in the back of a car in a baby carriage, covered by a blanket under which it was moving feebly. There was no damage to the rest of the car and all the doors were closed, and there were no blood stains or splashes showing anywhere. It just looked as if the parents had jumped out of the car locked it behind them and run off leaving the toddler in his cradle behind.

The child seemed to be moving normally from what she could see under the blanket that covered him head to toe.

Rika knew it was a mistake, the baby was probably either dead or bitten and unable to get out of its fastenings. Yet her feminine instincts cried out to her to save the baby and she stood there looking through the window from two yards away, her body frozen with indecision. After a moment she moved forward swiftly only to find that the doors were locked. Rika cursed briefly under her breath then used the butt of one pistol to break the glass of the driver's side door. She reached in quickly, unlocking all the doors and moved rapidly around the car to where the baby was in the back.

Of course this noise had drawn zombies from all around, but that wasn't the major problem. The major problem was that the baby despite still being in its cradle was very much dead. The culprit turned out to be a little boy who had been down in the foot area of the car directly beneath the baby, unable to get out of the car once it had been locked. As soon as Rika opened the door he sprang out towards her, and it was only Rika's reflexes and training that enabled her to shoot the boy dead before he could take a bite out of her.

Unfortunately the noise of breaking the glass and the subsequent shot had attracted over a dozen zombies, and all of them were too close for her to evade without shooting even more which in turn brought in even more zombies in a never ending tide.

Realizing that stealth could no longer serve Rika began to shoot them down quickly, moving around the bridge and trying to use the cars and trucks as cover so that she could get away, but the sound of her continued firing at zombies and her now rapid footsteps brought in more zombies who were no longer in their semi quiescent state but were actively hunting her now.

She eventually was forced to retreat back the way she came, but the zombies in that direction were also roused and moving towards the sound of her shooting. She'd also been forced to drop her rifle behind to move faster and avoid being grabbed, something she was **not(!)** happy about.

Rika ran out of rounds in her left most gun and quickly dropped one pistol down into her holster, bringing out a clip, unloading the other letting its clip fall to the concrete loading it before dropping that SIG into her holster before doing the same to the other one.

Then she began to fire even faster, one pistol after another '**blam, blam, blam!**' taking out zombies as fast as she could while still moving along trying to find a place where she could either hide and wait out the zombies interest (a forlorn hope at best) or possibly even get down to the water.

At that point she began to hear a noise in the distance coming closer. Rika chanced a brief look down at the ocean where she saw an extremely expensive looking ship coming towards her. With the light now slowly fading into evening it was hard to make out against the ocean's backdrop, but it looked as if it was painted green. It looked like one of those midsize cruiser vessels, and she thought the shape of it looked familiar, maybe something she had seen in a report at some point, but right now that wasn't important, what was important was heading down towards her along the side of the bridge.

She cursed again as a zombie came too close, reaching forward to grab and bite. Moving back quickly she hopped away while raising one pistol shooting directly into its mouth blowing its head into bits and pieces of grey brain matter and other fluids.

I just hope whoever the hell is on there is willing to let me on, because I am about two minutes away from trying to see if a dive from this height is survivable. Better a broken body or even a clean death drowning than being turned into a zombie.

To Rika's relief the ship came to a stop, the waves pushing it around, but it was right behind her and then suddenly two people actually jumped from the top of the back of the ship onto the bridge, something that had Rika gaping in astonishment despite the horde of zombies advancing toward her from all sides.

One of two jumpers cleared the side of the bridge easily, landing on his feet and moving forward quickly, a very odd chain based weapon that's Rika thought she recognized from a few ninja movies in his hand. The blade of one end danced around slicing into the zombies, the other end crushed skulls and shattered limbs as the young man slaughtered anything that got into range swiftly taking a place beside her.

The other one hadn't cleared the bridge quite as gracefully, but this one, a woman with long purple hair in a skirt and blouse combination wielding a katana grabbed the side of the wall along the side of the bridge with one hand and flipped herself up. Her blade came out in the same motion decapitating three zombies before she twirled around to

take another in the chest slicing it quickly in twain and moving on.

"Names Ranma," the pigtailed boy said in an almost blasé tone as he pulled in beside her. His odd weapon continued to whirl and spin around taking zombies out in threes and fours as they continued to pile forward over the bodies of their fellows that and the surrounding cars and trucks. "Ya wouldn't happen to be named Rika would you?"

"That's me," Rika grunted taking out two more zombies with a single round from one pistol, the bullet going straight through one head to impact the other. "You must be Ranma right, Shizuka's told me a lot about you." In fact her lover had sounded rather besotted by the boy which was very odd for Shizuka to say the least. Looking at him now thought, the light of battle shining in his eyes, the way he moved like his whole body was under perfect and total control, Rika could see the attraction. She wasn't big on guys in general but for Ranma she might make an exception.

Saeko chuckled, moving forward to take her place alongside Rika's other side, her blade weaving a dance of death that none of the zombies could force their way through. She killed seven more as they stood there moving back towards the bridge's railing. "She's told us some about you as well, happy to have you with us. You'll fit right in with this crazy crew."

By this time they had reached the side of the bridge. Rika gasped as Ranma suddenly twirled his weapon around his chest and picked her up in his arms turning and jumping over the side of the bridge in one fluid motion. Behind him Saeko swiftly joined them, and the two of them fell through the air briefly before they landed lightly for Ranma and slightly more heavily for Saeko on the sunning area at the back of the ship.

"Get us out of here Shizuka!" Ranma ordered even as he set Rika down. Above them three zombies had been so close they had been reaching forward as they jumped, and as the boat began to move all three of them overbalanced, falling into the water and sinking like stones.

Saya held the door open for her two lovers and the newcomer, idly noting that whatever was done to the zombies in their dead state seemed to have taken away the human body's natural buoyancy somehow. *Maybe that's why they are all instinctually afraid of water?* She mused. *Not like it matters I suppose, its just an odd little tidbit.*

As soon as the boat was moving however Shizuka left the controls to Kyoko, who grabbed at them wildly before glaring at Shizuka who in her opinion was picking up a dangerous habit of not concentrating on the steering wheel.

The busty nurse didn't even notice her fellow teacher's glare however racing through the boat and throwing herself at her friend. "Rika-chan!" she shouted her arms going around her in a hug that was so exuberant it brought them both down to the ground between the sofas with a thump.

Rika grinned as her own arms went around her friend and lover, then pulled her into a heated kiss, her hands going down **her** Shizuka's back to her hips holding her against her own body. Their breasts pressed together in a way they had done many a time before, and both women moaned aloud, their tongues already snaking around one another as they tried to press their bodies together even more tightly.

Takashi, Kohta and Ranma all gaped, and the first two began to bleed profusely from their noses at the hot scene. Ranma was now sporting quite a large tent in his pants from the show where he was now sitting next to Yuuki and Saeko. Saeko giggled at the show the two older women were providing, sharing a glance across Ranma's chest with Yuuki who grinned back at her saucily. Saya too stared, torn between anger at the impropriety and a growing heat building within her at the erotic scene.

Nodoka was still asleep, but Kiriko had grabbed Alice and turned her away from the sight forcefully, turning herself away too. She had experimented in college a time or two, but she wasn't really at home with looking at two other admittedly attractive women making out like that.

Kyoko simply rolled her eyes while Rei tried in vain to cover Takashi's eyes. Asami would have done the same if she hadn't noted how busty the newcomer was and how well she filled out the official SAT uniform. She was curled up on the row of pillows behind the sofa where Kohta was sitting, an almost palpable aura of gloom hovering about her.

It was only when they ran out of air that the two were forced to break their liplock. "Missed you," Rika said, her words coming out in gasps, her clouded with lust as she stared at her lover.

Shizuka nodded her eyes glowing with love and quite a bit of pent up frustration as well. "Missed you too."

Rika looked around at their audience, blushing as she saw their varied reactions to the bit of show she and Shizuka had just put on. "Er, permission to come aboard?"

End chapter

A bit of a short chapter admittedly, but it was honestly the best place for the story to get cut off. I estimate another two chapters and an epilogue, maybe just two chapters, we'll see. Oh and many of you might have noticed the amount of romantic/physical stuff that went on once they reached the boat. This is deliberate and a sign of things to come. Now that they are safe, away from any visible danger, the tension will be dropping and people will be looking for an outlet and relationships that haven't gone very far can no develop without the danger of the zombies looming in the background.

In other news, I got to say I have sort of lost my interest in my Effect of a Horse and a Dragon story lately. Haven't really read any good, still ongoing Mass Effect stories, which really helps usually, and I am running into the problem of what to do with their ship.

I also recently have gotten into, don't mob me, fanfiction for the series A Song of Ice and Fire (game of thrones for you TV-viewers). Now, why am I mentioning this? Well, I could see my way to starting a Ranma/ASoIaF cross.... For one thing, most of the stories I've read don't really change enough. Oh, there are many that change certain things, but not enough or not quickly enough or they don't give enough details or are just too short. For most of the stories for example, the battles remain the same with the same outcome, without going into much detail. And then there are the O.C. stories, mostly female O.C.'s who concentrate on her character to the exclusion of everything else. It's funny, but I've looked and there aren't a lot of stories where, rather than merely adding a crossover character, having a crossover character take the place of a current character. If I wrote this I would have Ranma take the place of Robb Stark.

Just imagining the kind of carnage and chaos Ranma could bring to the serious, dark and bloody story makes me want to grin like a madman. Which would win, the chaos or the dark dealings and the betrayals and the rest?

Pairings would be harem of course, which would be hard to do but fun – Ranma/Daynaereys/Margaery/Adrienne. And to say **a lot** would change is an understatement of gross proportions. I think it would be fun to do, so I might have a poll if people want to exchange Pm's with me on this idea between this story and my Highschool DxD/Ranma idea. And yes, either story would continue to be a guilty pleasure, thought admittedly in very different ways. Heh. Winter is coming!

Chapter 11: A woman, a kid, and um, an Oompa Loopa?

I do not own Ranma or High School of the Dead. Can't think of anything silly to say, sorry.

Warning this is the first voyage (well not really) of the JS Lemon. There are lemons in this chapter and quite a bit of limish goodness as well. I marked the lemony section so you can avoid it, but if you do you will miss a lot of character/romantic development and more than a bit of the comedy.

Since the majority of the reviews for this chapter mentioned my ideas for my next works, I will just say thank you all for your interest, and hope you all enjoyed the preview chapters I put out for them.

On top of that I would like to thank all of the readers who have read this and all of my other stories. It is really fun to see that my stories have been read by people around the world, China, Russia, the Middle East, India, dozens of European countries, including a few readers from Europe (just Europe, I'm guessing that means it was looked at in flight or international waters, no idea really) and anonymous proxy. That last one was kind of worrying when I saw it the first time really...

Anyway, this is going to be the last real chapter for this story, so without further ado, here we go!

Chapter 11 One woman, one kid, and um, an Oompa Loompa?

At Rika's rather tongue in cheek question, Ranma shook himself and smirked at the embarrassed policewoman. "Yeah, welcome aboard and all that. Rika's told us a lot about you y'know, but it didn't do ya justice."

"All good stuff I hope," Rika asked looking a little amused, her arms tightening around Shizuka where the nurse sat in her lap, both of them still on the floor. After so much danger and tension now that she was safe and with Shizuka once more in her arms, it was all that Rika could do to keep herself under control. Even so her hands twitched occasionally, wanting to move from around Shizuka's waist to her massive mammaries. There was a kind of gravity to them that she very rarely made an attempt to fight against, but at the moment it would not have been appropriate.

"Mostly good," Ranma shrugged. "She didn't say anythin' about the two of ya bein' a couple though. Ain't judging, just sayin'." He reached out with a hand and helped both women to their feet, then sat down next Saeko and Saya.

Saeko immediately moved into his lap, leaning back against his shoulder. She smirked a little as she exchanged a glance with Yuuki across from her, and wiggled her rear on his lap just a bit to get him to groan aloud, his reaction from watching the two hot older women make out still very much in evidence.

Rika chuckled a little, but mostly she was still very embarrassed by the show she had put on. Shizuka wasn't of course, but she had never been gifted with much in the way of modesty. *Of course with her body that was probably a good thing*, Rika thought to herself then shook that thought off while putting one arm around her lover again and looking around at the others. "This is a fantastic boat, but how the heck did you guys find it?"

"You will have to thank Saya-chan here for that," Saeko said resting one hand lightly on the other girl's thigh. "She found it for us, and getting away with it was the end result of several days' worth of adventures."

Asami raised her hand. "Asami thinks that the adventures we've had in the past few days would be the equivalent of a normal person's whole life, and Asami hopes that we don't have any more."

"Too true," said Rei, a thought echoed by Saya, Shizuka, Kyoko, Kohta and Yuuki. Nodoka would also have agreed if she weren't still asleep on one of the smaller couches. She had not woken up since falling asleep, and Shizuka had estimated that she would probably remain asleep for several more hours. She had given Nodoka a double dose of the most powerful painkiller they had in their limited resources, which would keep even a woman of Nodoka's constitution out for at least eight or nine hours.

Rika noticed who didn't join in with that sentiment, but didn't comment. She knew quite a few combat junkies among the SAT, and even more among a few JSDF companies she'd dealt with a time or two. Ranma was better at hiding it than Saeko, but that didn't mean he was actually **good** at it. She didn't know about the other boy though, but the fact he had one of her standby rifles by him was a little worrying. "It must have been tough in the city, hell it was tough at the airport, and we didn't even try to clear out the majority of it, simply barricading different areas."

After that they all clambered into explained to the newcomer how they had spent the last few days. They covered how

much trouble they had run into from other survivors, how they had met a few groups that were still alive in the city but hadn't wanted join up with any of them. How Saya's parents were still alive and that their group might be able to hammer some kind of order out of the city, but that Saya and the others doubted it. The battle against Shido and his expanded cult was one of the highlights, and of course the all-pervading danger of the zombies which were everywhere.

Through it all Rika watched Ranma and then, as the story unfolded, switched her gaze to the boy introduced as Kohta and Saeko. It was obvious that the group's survival had rested on their shoulders and Ranma's in particular. It was equally clear that he was the leader, and his strength of personality along with the ability to take advice and to act on said advice without being irritated by it was obviously the driving force here.

Saeko was definitely his second-in-command, even in a simple conversation that could be seen since everyone else seems to differ to her when she began to talk. Outside of that the command structure, if that was what it could be called, of this group was much more fluid than a military or police unit and that was probably all to the good. It made them all closer to equals, and more flexible as well.

She looked around again, amused that she had in fact known this ship before. It had been one of several that had been marked out as possible ships being used to ferry into weapons Japan as well as around the islands. The higher-ups had discounted it considering the fact that it's carrying capacity was so limited in comparison to the others on the list, but because Shido the elder was a 'person of interest' it had remained on their watch list. The news that Rei had killed the older Shido, or at least his zombie pleased Rika. She had heard about the shit that the man had been involved in, none of it proven alas before this, and his death was poetic in the extreme. "Still, now that you have this ship what are your long-term plans?"

Ranma looked over at Saya rubbing her pink hair affectionately. "Well Saya-chan thinks that we should fort up on a small island somewhere, so that's what we're goin' ta do. We haven't decided which island yet, we were waiting until we got out onto the open ocean before we decide."

"Can I make a suggestion then?" Rika asked, rubbing at a small scar she had on the back of her left wrist thoughtfully. It was something she did when thinking she had picked up a while after she had gotten that scar. Though unlike most of her other scars this one preceded her time in the SAT. It was simply a reminder of a childhood mishap, marking the first time she ever had to get stitches. "I left the airport before the last group of survivors was carted out. I know the ground crew there was able to swap out parts enough to get one last plane up into the air despite the EMP pulse, but they couldn't have carted out much stuff with them. Airport security kept a surprisingly large cache of weapons, and I bet they had to leave most of it behind. We expended a lot of their larger caliber bullets, but they still had a lot of guns and ammo left when I was sent out on my last mission. They wanted to see if we could use fire to kill a large amount of the zombies that had congregated on the airstrip, but it didn't work. I left right after."

Ranma looked around at the others, smirking at Kohta nearly salivating look of interest. "Debate guys, pros and cons, and Kohta you can't take part, there's no way you'll be objective about this."

Kohta pouted but couldn't argue. Asami patted his thigh companionably, and the debate began. Ranma listened to everyone's points of view as they quickly the forms into two camps. One of them led by Kiriko basically said that they didn't need any more weapons at the present time, and that the dangers of heading into a place like an airport which was infested by zombies outweighed any positives.

The other camp was surprisingly led by Saya who said that they would need the weapons, so long as they had bullets to go with them. There was no way they would be able to figure out how to make more bullets, no way they could power the industry, and where would they get the resources? But even with that any weapons that they grabbed would be useful later, even if they didn't use them, as bargaining chips with other groups. She could see any surviving fishermen who had been out at sea being very interested in them, and trading food or other supplies for working guns.

It was Yuuki however who convinced Ranma. She had gone up front to join Kyoko in the cockpit to take a look at the fuel indicator. She came back shaking her head a little. "Would the airport also have supplies of gasoline on hand?"

Rika thought for a moment then nodded. "I think that the shipping area certainly would. They used ships to bring in bulk supplies, and there's a loading and distribution center set up on the far side of the airport from where the bridge meets the island. We used a airport fuel truck full of gas to try and burn the zombies, but I doubt that was all there was."

Yuuki looked around the others. "This ship wasn't full up when we took it, it's about a quarter of a tank at the moment.

I don't know how much distance that would equate to," she shrugged. Ships had never really interested her, so she didn't even know if they ran on the same mix of petrol that a Hummer or any other car ran on. "I don't even know where to put more fuel in, I haven't looked around yet, but it might be exterior which could pose another issue. And the electrical generator runs from another engine, which would also need fuel."

She had noticed that in her initial perusal of the engine room. There were two generators as well as the engine in there in point of fact, both of them very high tech which was probably why they had survived the EMP pulse. That and the walls of the ship itself of course, which were made of some high-tech fiberglass carbon composite or something. "I don't know about everyone else but I like having power, so we need more fuel."

"Then I think the ayes have it," Ranma said shaking his head. "If we're going to have to go there for fuel anyway, we might as well hit up the guns as well." He looked over at Rika. "Before we go I want ya ta make a map of the place, if you can remember enough. Saya has a computer, see if you can use it to make some maps somehow. For now Kyoko," he said in a louder voice, "get us away from anything, then we'll anchor for the evening."

Kyoko nodded. They were already well away from where nearly everything, having moved away from the bridge out to the sea while the debate was going on. After that she turned off the engines, and made her way back to the others. "Done, though I suggest we have someone on guard possibly two up top just in case. I don't think we're in danger, but better safe than sorry."

"I'll take first watch then," Ranma said but before he could finish Saeko shook her head sharply, looking at him with a certain glint in her eye that made him gulp and blush. "Or not..."

The others all laughed, but shortly after that group broke up, with Kohta and Asami volunteering to take first watch, and Shizuka and Rika following Ranma and Saeko down the ramp into the bowel of the yacht. Takashi looked askance at Rei who had just rushed after them, wondering what she was up to.

Rei however was a woman on a mission. Before the two lovers could close the door behind them she barged in, her eyes narrowed as she looked around.

Saeko raised an eyebrow. "Yes, can we help you with something Rei-san?" she said pointedly, trying to indicate that her presence was not welcome.

"I want to check something first before you two... do anything in here." She blushed, refusing to look Ranma in the eye. Rei remembered all too well how she had overheard them the previous evening in the Takagi estate, and she did not want to go through that again. "You," she ordered, pointing at Ranma, "Go into one of the guest rooms next-door and listen. I'll shout as loud as I can."

Ranma shrugged looked at Saeko who nodded, a small but amused smile on her face and complied. Once he was gone Rei began to shout at the top of her voice, and a moment later Ranma came back. "Once I closed the door I couldn't hear you."

"Good," Rei breathed deeply in relief.

Saeko laughed. "And if that is all Rei-san," she said taking the woman's hand gently but firmly and pushing her out the door. "Have a nice night," she said before immediately closing the door. She didn't bother locking it, not at the moment at any rate. After all everyone on board knew what they were going to be doing (except for Alice and Nodoka, neither of whom would bother them, albeit for vastly different reasons) and Saya might join them momentarily. She turned back to Ranma. "Now let's get go get clean."

Ranma looked down at himself shaking his head. "I hadn't even noticed," he said stripping his clothing off. "What does that say about me that I'm so used to having gore and blood splattered all over my clothing?"

Saeko shrugged. "Simply a sign of the times my love."

OOO Warning Lime/lemony goodness starts here OOO

Ranma paused, his pants halfway down his leg, staring as Saeko began to undress. Despite the fact that he had seen her body several times in both good and bad light he was once again struck by how beautiful she truly was. Her large, yet perky breasts with dark pink nipples that were outlined against her frilly white bra, a thin waist and washboard stomach, athletic and yet girlish thighs. Her dark purple hair cascaded around her shoulders as she unclasped her bra, and Ranma had to look away to keep from pouncing on her when they began to bounce free.

Saeko chuckled, reaching out with one hand after she finished undressing to take his own. "Let's go have a shower."

She led the way into the master bedroom's bathroom, looking around in amused surprise. Like the rest of the ship there was no expense spared in here, everything was very ritzy, and the bath was as large as the one back at Rika's house. It was set up more European than Japanese, with no spouts for anyone to wash themselves before getting into the bath. But there was a large shower next to the bathtub, shaped like a triangle, following the angle of the exterior hull, with three sides the open side being the glass door. It had two shower nozzles, one handheld and one fixed.

Reaching in Saeko turned on the water, turning back to smile at Ranma who had been staring at her rear, his obvious reaction now making a visible tent in his boxers. She licked her lips at the sight but stood back, moving slightly under the spray from the showerhead as the water began to steam. "Why don't you take those off and join me?"

The tone she used when she said that was possibly the sexiest thing Ranma had ever heard, and he quickly pulled down his boxers letting his large erection spring free. Saeko, who had dipped her head into the water and was now standing there her head bowed forward as she began to run her fingers through her hair smiled at the sight, her eyes burning with desire.

Ranma stepped in to join her quickly, his dick pressing into her rear for a moment before she turned away. As the water began to hit him as well she reached up and pulled him into a kiss that quickly became as steamy as the water.

He pulled back after a moment reaching around her to grab the bottle of liquid soap, spritzing some onto his hands. Saeko shuddered as he began to work the soap into her body, first her shoulders then her arms and back moving down to her rear. Ranma went to his knees for a moment and began to kiss her rear before moving onto her legs. She inhaled sharply when he breathed lightly on her cleft between her legs but didn't actually touch it, and Saeko could feel herself becoming wetter in a way that had nothing to do with the shower.

She turned around and Ranma moved back up her body with a new allocation of soap in his hands, only cleaning her not actually fondling her, which somehow did not take away from the sensuality of the act. He finished with Saeko's neck, kissing her on the ear and then reaching over for the shampoo, beginning to do her hair in turn.

"Ahh..." Saeko actually moaned aloud as he began to work his fingers into her hair, then moaned again as one of Ranma's hands reached around her, hugging her to him. At his command Saeko leaned forward again, and he turned the handheld nozzle onto her head, washing out the shampoo thoroughly.

Once he was done he stepped back murmuring, "All clean Saeko-chan," in a deep rumbling voice that sent another shudder through Saeko. She was almost tempted to simply tell him to take her right then and there, but that large bed was beckoning, and instead she merely squirted more soap on her hands. She ran her hands along his thin yet powerfully muscled chest, down to his six-pack abs and further down. Once she was kneeling however she couldn't stop herself and she leaned forward t, causing him to throw back his head and moan when she slowly took the head of his cock into her mouth. "F-fuuuuck Saeko-chan, feels so goooooood...."

She let the head of his dick rest in her mouth for a moment before moving back, his cock making an audible popping noise as she pulled away, her tongue licking away a bit of pre-cum. "Hmmm, you taste a little tarter today for some reason my love."

Finishing the front of his legs Saeko then ordered Ranma to turn around. One hand remained stroking his shaft however, as she did the back of his legs and up his back before standing up again. Before she could speak however Ranma's mouth found hers and she whined. "Mmm...." The two of them stood in the water, making out heavily, their hands roaming.

After a moment however Saeko stood back and turned around turning off the water. "Can't use all the hot water after all," she muttered, and took Ranma's hand pulling him out into the master bedroom again. She took a look at the rather rumpled bed and shook her head. "I think we need to strip that, I really don't want to think about what that those sheets have seen."

Ranma blanched, and his cock actually wilted a little as that thought hit him, and the two went to work swiftly pulling off the sheets. Almost immediately however they ran into surprises that he really could've done without. "What," Ranma said poking the odd looking device gingerly, "is that?"

"I believe those are anal beads," Saeko said pulling out a tissue from a convenient tissue box and lifting it up fastidiously. The beads in question were about five inches long ending with a plug of some kind, each bead in turn slightly larger than the one before it. It was also colored in all the colors of the rainbow for some reason.

Ranma actually shuddered a little. "Yeah no, burn it or destroy it somehow, the ass is not a play area."

"I certainly agree with you on that one," Saeko answered with revulsion clear in her voice, and she began to open up one of the drawers alongside the bed table. Inside however she found other devices and she backed away chuckling a little. "I think that this is telling me a little too much about Shido the elder and his interests."

Ranma moved around the bed to join her and shook his head at what was revealed. In the top drawer were several toys, ranging from small to large in various shapes and sizes. They ranged from simple dildos to a small vibrator and everything in between, including one that looked as if whoever had made it was inspired by anime tentacle porn flicks. If not for the fact that Saeko had been bending over when he came up behind her and her rear was now pressing back into his erection Ranma probably would have lost said erection quickly at the sight.

However two things grabbed his attention, small packages of some kind and he pointed down at them, "What are those?"

Saeko reached in gingerly, not really wishing to touch any of the toys despite the fact that they looked rather clean, and picked up one of the two items that had caught Rama's attention. She opened it quickly and looked inside snorting after a moment. "Some kind of European brand of condoms think."

Ranma took the package from her as she reached inside to pick up the second item pulling out one of the condoms and looking at it quizzically. He ripped open the package, opened it then laughed. Saeko looked back at him and he shook his hand in her face. On one of his fingers was one of the condoms. "I believe this'd be an extra small? Not exactly useful for us." He quickly discarded the small finger condom, shaking his head.

Saeko laughed, as well, seeing it would barely fit over his tip, let alone the rest of his cock. "Indeed not," she said and held up the bottle that she had just pulled out. "Nor would we need this."

"What is it?" Ranma asked not recognizing it.

"It's called Viagra, it's a drug for men who can no longer perform." At his blank look she laughed again, "I mean that they can no longer get it up as it were," she said reaching down and lovingly caressing his cock. His cock had actually flagged because of all the odd findings, but at her gentle touch it rose swiftly to attention. "MMmmm, definitely not..."

"EEEEP!" Saeko squealed when Ranma suddenly picked her up kissing her hard on the lips before throwing her onto the bed. She laughed as she bounced, and then Ranma pounced on her, capturing her lips again as his arms went around her.

OOO A brief non-lemon interlude OOO

Yuuki looked over at Saya, smiling faintly. "Not joining them?"

Saya scowled huffily. She knew that Yuuki had known since that time at her parent's place that she had joined Saeko and Ranma's relationship, but she didn't like it pointed out to her in public like this. *I suppose I'll get over it eventually, but dammit Alice is still here, and she shouldn't be subjected to that kind of thing.*

"If you must know," she hissed at the other girl, "I'm busy. After all someone has to take an inventory of what we've got aboard the ship. No one has yet except for the foodstuffs, but we need to know what we have here. Is there any hidden weapons cache or something, that would allow us to simply pick up gas from the port area of the airport rather than head deeper inside. How about utensils, cooking gear, clothing, anything the boys at least could use? Medical supplies, anything we can add to the stuff we've brought with us? Can we set up one of the two electrical generators you mentioned so it runs off solar power?"

That last part made Yuuki pause momentarily, since it was actually a good idea, but she still laughed seeing straight through Saya. "More like you're too embarrassed everyone else might hear you. From what I heard the other night you're quite the screamer, makes me wonder what you looked like." She looked Saya, licking her lips lightly. "I'm looking forward to seeing that in person."

The pinkette blushed, and was about to respond hotly when Rei came up the ramp from below rather huffily. "No need to worry about that," she muttered sitting down next to Takashi, who had been listening in on the conversation with a deep blush on his face. "Everything down there is soundproof. She blushed as Takashi took her hand, and looked at him shyly, as what that could mean for them suddenly hit her.

Yuuki chuckled at the two virginal lovebirds. "You may want to book your room now you know, or else I'll be moving downstairs instead. Those queen-size beds in the guestrooms looked fantastic."

No one was interested at all in taking the crew quarters, which had been the site of a lot of violence when the ship fell to the zombie infestation. Despite Kiriko's best attempts, it still smelled of blood and had more than a few red spots on the walls and beds. And besides, the sofas were just as comfy if one could deal with the fact that there were windows all around you and the blinds didn't really block out all that much light.

Rei and Takashi shared a glance full of emotion, both of them blushing red now, and Takashi eventually stood up. "Co-come on" he whispered into Rei's ear, "w-we don't have to do anything but those beds do, do look even more comfortable than the sofas, and um, I know I toss and turn when I sleep, s-so..."

Rei blushed even further, now resembling a tomato in color, but meekly let Takashi lead her down the ramp deeper into the boat.

Saya however didn't notice, too busy wondering about the implications of soundproof walls. The memory of what Saeko and Ranma had done to her a few hours ago coupled with the memory of last night at her parent's house was getting to her. About five minutes later, which she spent simply sitting there blushing and failing to take her mind off it, Saya stood up. "I'll, I'll just um go down I mean downstairs and I'll just go...." She stuttered, turning away from Yuuki's knowing stare and swiftly walked down the ramp.

Kiriko and Alice passed Saya going up the ramp along with Zeke. Alice was nearly dead on her feet, yawning and rubbing at her eyes with her free hand while the older Miyamoto sister led her along with the other. The older woman looked around at Yuuki and Kyoko already bedding down on two of the sofas and then moved Alice gently towards the small sofa by the steps up to the dining area alongside the ramp across from Nodoka. Kiriko gently helped the young girl change, batting aside Zeke when he tried to interrupt them, then tucked her in with one of the blankets they had found in a closet down below.

"Thank you, obaa-san" Alice murmured.

Kiriko laughed quietly, leaning down and kissing her on the forehead. "It's been a while since I had to tuck my daughter in, but I still remember how to do it Alice-chan." She leaned down and picked up Zeke, putting him in the cleft between the back of the sofa which led up to the eating area and Alice's head. The dog snuffled gently, and then laid down without protest leaning his head against his mistress's neck. "Sleep well you two."

With that done Kiriko turned away, moving over to claim a line of pillows behind Kyoko's sofa, chuckling quietly at once more mothering a young girl.

Yuuki watched this, her face showing conflicting emotions at the scene. Her mother had **very** rarely tucked her in like that. She wondered if they would have been closer if her mother had bothered to do the little things that parents are supposed to do for their children rather than simply send her a check every week and checking up on her once every few months. She hadn't even bothered to talk to her much outside of necessity when she was a little girl. Her father had tucked her in like that, but then he had run away leaving her with only memories to remember him by.

She shook the sad thoughts off quickly however looking over at Kyoko, whispering now so as not to disturb Alice. "Not going to try and join Rei and Takashi? I've seen the looks you give Takashi a few times."

Kyoko chuckled quietly, stretching her arms above her head thrusting her considerable chest forward for a moment.

Kohta gaped then blushed looking away quickly but Asami had still noticed and became depressed again, looking down at her own very modest chest.

"I won't deny I'm tempted," Kyoko said, smirking a little at the young man who had turned away so abruptly. He wasn't the type that she would generally bother teasing, but it was still nice to get a reaction out of young men like that. It had been her dirty pleasure through most of her teaching career, especially after she broke up with her long-standing boyfriend. There was just something amusing to the thought that all those boys would have hard-ons caused by her and rush off to their girlfriends, who would never know that their reactions were because of Kyoko rather than them.

She smiled over at Yuuki, who among all the women here (save possibly Nodoka) would understand that thought. "But first times should be with other people who are also learning, especially if you're in love. Those two have been pussyfooting around each other for years, and beyond that crap with Rei and Hizashi they were a rather sweet couple as long as I have known them. Pity that Rei never saw how lucky she was, but it was true."

"And besides it will make it much better for you if he already knows what he's doing," Yuuki said dryly.

"That too," Kyoko chirped, taking off her glasses and setting them on the floor by the sofa. She laid down smiling

faintly as she looked over at where Kohta was now trying desperately to convince Asami that he likes her breasts just as much as large ones.

"I mean come on," he said desperately waving his hands as he stood in front of her "size isn't everything, um it's what you do with it. After all a-a person with a handgun is just as dangerous if not more than a person with a rifle, especially if he knows what he's doing and the rifleman doesn't! Er, and um I-I've always heard that small ones are better because they're much more responsive and..." he stammered to a stop, blushing.

Asami finally broke out of her stupor, laughing a little and touching his cheek fondly. She leaned in kissing him on the lips, then moved to his ear and said, "Tomorrow night it's our turn to have one of the guestrooms, and just for that Asami's going to rock your world."

Her tone of voice gave her words even more impact and the feel of her against his chest her arms around her and her admittedly small breasts pressing in on his chest caused Kohta to shoot backward blood spurting out of his nose like a fountain.

She chuckled, and took one of his arms dragging his almost comatose body out of the sitting area and out onto the sunning area at the back of the boat, closing the glass door behind them. "Goodnight everybody, don't worry, Asami will wake this one up when they get up there."

The ones left inside chuckled, though even Kyoko didn't really think that a guard was necessary out here on the ocean. They didn't see any other boats in the vicinity moving around before the sun went down, nor had any of them spotted any lights moving around afterward.

"What about you?" Kyoko asked reaching for the controller that she had found that controlled the lights of the area and the blinds, which would could be set at three different levels, which was simply fantastical. The accoutrements on this boat were beyond anything Kyoko had ever seen before. "You're not going to join Ranma and the other two?"

Yuuki smiled. "I don't want to be tempted. I want my first time with Ranma to be just two of us. That way I'll have his full undivided attention. From the look I've seen in Saeko's eyes a few times it's quite a treat..." Yuuki shivered a little in anticipation. It had been weeks since she last had sex, and she knew that being with Ranma would blow away anything she'd ever had before, if only in endurance wise.

Kiriko shuddered a little where she was laying down on the pillows behind Kyoko's sofa, not really wanting to think about her nephew like that. It also brought to mind too many memories of her husband, and she sighed sadly, remembering. Gut shot wounds like he had taken would have been tough to heal even if he had been immediately taken to a hospital, under the current circumstances she held out no hope that he was still alive.

Kyoko laughed, one hand over her mouth to muffle the sound. One part of her still wondered what it would've been like to be with Ranma, but she reminded herself that his personality just wasn't one she could see herself happy with. *And besides Takashi is a very nice young man, handsome and strong. Let him have of a bit of seasoning, a bit of experience and he'll probably become just as good a lover as Ranma seems to be even if he doesn't have a martial artist's endurance.* With a final sigh she snuggled into the almost sinfully comfy couch, pressing the button on the remote that turned out all the lights on the first floor of the boat. It still retained a few running lights, but that was all. "Goodnight everybody."

In the dark all three women began to fall asleep quickly, exhausted by the day and lulled by the fact that they were safe, free of any worry about the zombie peril for the moment. Tomorrow would be another day, and would again bring to mind the fact that their world had changed irrevocably, but for now in the dark of night on this boat they could forget that.

OOO we now return to the limey/lemony goodness OOO

Saya swiftly made her way through the corridor to the master bedroom, and steeled herself for a moment before opening it. She was rather surprised that it wasn't locked, yet also grateful. It would have hurt her feelings more than Saya cared to admit if Saeko had locked her out. And she knew it would have been Saeko, Ranma wasn't the kind to remember about doors and locks especially not when he was dealing with a passionate girlfriend. She made her way inside quickly, closing and locking the door behind her.

At the click of the lock the two lovers looked up from their passionate make out session and Saeko smiled. "You're just in time, Saya-chan." Her hand reached between them and she grabbed Ranma's cock with one hand as she moved to the side letting Saeko see it. "See?"

Saya laughed a little weakly, but her eyes remained locked on the two of them, taking in their naked forms. She moved toward the bed quickly, divesting herself of her clothing under the two lovers' appreciative gazes, but she didn't want to admit that she hadn't wanted to join them if the others could hear her. "I was waiting um, I mean I was waiting for you guys to have a shower. Blood and gore is not attractive. I...EEP!"

She squeaked suddenly as Ranma reached out quickly grabbing her arm in a gentle yet firm grip and pulling her down onto the bed where he captured her lips. Saya tried to fight back for a few seconds, then submitted almost entirely, letting Ranma pull her body down on top of him as their tongues began to swirl around one another in her mouth. She began to make noises deep in her throat then shuddered a little when Saeko ran one hand from her neck down to her rear fondling it and pulling her panties down her legs.

After a few minutes she leaned back, breathing heavily as Ranma at last relinquished his grip on the back of her head and her mouth. Both Saeko and Ranma immediately began to work on Saya's breasts, which were fuller and two sizes larger than Saeko's. "Ooooh God," Saya moaned. "That feels so good, ahhhh.... Why didn't we get together before all this crap happened?"

Ranma chuckled a little around her nipple before licking it one last time, then moving down the curve of her breasts to her belly button where he began lay little kisses all around her decently flat but not toned stomach. "Maybe because we'd only known each other for a few months? Maybe we just needed a push?"

"Or," Saeko put in, moving back from the nipple that she had been sucking on to tenderly run her tongue around Saya's areole and the rest of her breast before moving onto the one that Ranma had vacated. "It could be because society would've frowned upon a threesome like ours?"

"Fuuckkk society," Saya groaned, "Ooooh my god, s-sometimes you just have to do what feels good, and thisSSS, this feels way too damn gooo-EEK!" She squeaked as Ranma grabbed her hips, lifting her easily into the air a few inches before pulling her forward over his body and up as he turned onto his back. Saya wound up with her pussy directly above his face, her knees on either side of his head.

From this angle he could stare upward directly at her pussy, which was glistening with her arousal. Saya's pussy was slightly larger than Saeko's. Saya's pussy had lips to it and was slightly larger overall, whereas Saeko had a very small pussy no lips, but simply a slit. Saya's was also a darker color for some reason, and Ranma wondered why that was for a moment but decided that it didn't matter.

With both of his hands on her rear Ranma urged Saya down towards him, and Saya complied eagerly nearly screaming when Ranma ran his tongue from the bottom of her pussy to the top, taking care of the little nub he found there before doing it again then swirling his tongue around her pussy lips. "AHHH... soooo good... god Ranma!"

She nearly collapsed at that point and it was only because Saeko was pushing her from behind that she fell forward rather than backward pulling herself away from Ranma's questing mouth. Saeko gently turned the girl around, hearing the wordless growl of protest from below as she momentarily removed his feast from Ranma but he quickly went back to work when Saya took up her new position facing down towards his legs.

"MMMM...AAHHHH...EEEEEE!" Saya's eyes were half lidded with pleasure and she was now moaning almost constantly as Ranma worked on her, and her moans rose into a shriek when he began to use his fingers on her, first one then two entering her. Saya was tighter than Saeko was during their first time, and it was all he could do to get two fingers inside of her.

Saya had experimented with herself a few times and broken her hymen with a vibrator she had bought with her mother's connivance after a conversation that had embarrassed the young Saya immensely at the time but for which she was strangely grateful now. But she had bought a small thin one (being sold by the door, faster to get in and out of the store that way) and that had been a while ago. While Saya had her privacy at her parent's house for the last few years, she had never been really inclined to try anything, so her sessions were few and far between.

Saeko moved from next to her down to where Ranma's cock was standing at attention pointing straight up at the ceiling. Saeko threw her leg up over Ranma's chest, moving down her his chest slowly, her now drenched pussy grinding against his hard muscles before her rear bumped into his cock. Her smile of pleasure widened and she reached back and with one hand, lifting herself up and moving back further before slowly guiding Ranma's large cock into her. Every inch brought her further pleasure and she moaned aloud. "Ohh, my god, can't get used to your size, koi. Soooo good!"

Saya rocked to the first of what would be many orgasms that evening as she looked at the blissed out expression on Saeko's face when she began to move up and down on Ranma's cock.

The purple haired girl reached forward, grasping the other woman by the back of the neck to pull her into a kiss. The two women began to make out while Saeko rode Ranma and Saya ground herself into his face. They continued in this position for a while, the two girls pulling back occasionally to breath or scream out their pleasure and also taking time to latch onto one another's breasts.

"AHHHH!" Her second orgasm had Saya fall to her side, pulling her nipple out of Saeko's mouth and falling away from Ranma's mouth. She was almost out of it again like she was in her room back home but not quite. Her eyes were still open and she was still watching the action as Saeko really went to town on Ranma, riding him even harder and faster.

Ranma reached up with both hands, one hand beginning to grip Saeko's thigh, helping her along as he thrust up against her. His other hand began to tweak and play with her nipples, pulling them and rubbing them gently in turns, trying to create a sensation of both hard and soft.

That did the trick and Ranma groaned as Saeko's pussy clamped out them around him like a vice as she came once again. "FUuuccckkkk Saeko-chan, so tight!" Ranma grunted, his hands now clenching the mattress underneath him as he attempted to stop himself from cuming right there.

Saeko came down from her own high and noticed this. She leaned down, pushing her breasts against his chest as her hips once again began to move up and down. She whispered into his ear. "Cum for me Ranma!"

Ranma pulled back, his eyes slits, "Going to cum soon Saeko-chan!"

Saeko giggled in reply, her hips doing all the work now, the rest of her body lying boneless on his own.

Ranma captured her lips in a searing kiss. His hands went from their present position to her rear, and he began to thrust up into her even faster and harder. Saeko moaned into his mouth, but Ranma refused to relinquish the kiss as his hips began to thrust erratically, his own end coming at the same time as her third peak of the evening.

Saeko finally pulled away to scream her orgasm to the rest of the room. She barely removed herself barely in time as Ranma bellowed her name as he shot off like a geyser into the air and over her thighs. A few spurts even hit the underside of her breasts.

OOOOOOO

Above them on the top floor of the yacht, Nodoka moaned and muttered in her sleep, turning to one side, a victory fan falling out of the sleeve of her uninjured arm.

OOOOOOO

Saya gaped at the amount of cum Ranma had pumped out, and the fact it looked immensely thick as well. "Good god, I, I hope we have the morning-after pill somewhere, if even I little of that gets inside us..." she said shaking her head, not knowing that Ranma had cum in Saeko during their time at the mansion since she had been so out of it.

"We do," Saeko sighed, looking down at where Ranma's cum covered her lower body, dribbling down from her breasts, and moving back a bit, allowing Ranma's cock to be seen from between her thighs.

The pinkette gulped seeing that Ranma's erection had not gone down despite the amount of cum he had pumped out. She tentatively reached out her hand, gathering some of his cum off Saeko's thighs and bringing a dollop up to her mouth. Surprisingly the taste was like a mix of saltiness and oranges for some reason. With that worry assuaged she then leaned forward, placing her head between Saeko's thighs. She slowly began to work her mouth along the bulbous head of Ranma's cock, and Saeko moved back off Ranma, letting Saya have more room to work with.

"SSSSaaaaya," Ranma groaned with delight at the feeling. With one hand he gently pushed her way however, raising her up to kiss her on the lips, not even noticing the slight taste of himself on her lips before it swiftly turning them around so that she was laying down and he was hovering over her.

Ranma spent several minutes working on her lips neck and breasts again, his hands slowly caressing her, working on her pussy and clit occasionally. It wasn't long until she was once again dripping, mewling and panting with desire.

He soon positioned himself between her legs looking down at her his head cocked to one side.

Saya nodded slowly, looking torn between anticipation and concern as Ranma prepared to enter her. "Go slow okay, I've never used any toy that big, and I know first times are supposed to hurt but..."

This proved a prophetic statement as Saya winced in pain as Ranma's head began to push into her pussy. Her teeth clenched as he pushed even deeper, inch by inch and her hands on the mattress became curled and she was literally fighting herself to not yell that he needed to pull back out.

Ranma however saw this and slid slowly back out. "We can stop if you want?" he said compassionately leaning down and kissing away her tears. "I don't want to hurt you Saya-chan."

"It's fine," Saya said, still wincing slightly as she got used to the first few inches. She was dismayed however at how much of him was still left over, but hopefully it would get better soon.

Saeko reached over and began to play with Saya's breasts. One hand ran down to the pinkette's pussy running one finger along the edge of where she and Ranma were now connected, playing with her clit. Her mouth latched onto one of Saya's nipples again, further increasing the sensations Saya was feeling.

After a few moments Saya nodded, and Ranma eased forwards again sliding a few more inches into her. He stopped again, showing amazing self-control, when she winced and groaned, her hands once more clenched on the mattress beneath her. "Good, that hurts..." She opened one eye however when Ranma tried to pull all the way out. "Don't you fucking dare! I can do this!" Ranma winced, but nodded.

This process continued for a time, but Saya refused to let Ranma pull back out, and despite the pain of his cock entering her for the first time she had a small orgasm somewhere in there when it rubbed against a small nub of nerves somewhere in her. Finally Ranma was bottomed out in her, and simply remained there, letting Saya get used to him. This took several minutes even with Saeko encouraging Saya with nips at her nipples, neck and lips.

Eventually Saya nodded up at him and Ranma began to move slowly, so slowly out of her then back in slightly, out, then back in some more, alternating the amount he thrust into her at any one time, and it wasn't long before Saya now felt only pleasure, and urged him on. "H-Harder Ranma, I can take it now!"

Ranma obliged, piston being in and out of her full-length for a moment watching her reaction before going even faster at it. Saya shrieked "AIEEEE!" She actually thrust back for the first time, coming off the bed, her back arching with another orgasm. Saya looked up then as Saeko rearranged herself to be kneeling over her head. Her pussy was dripping again, her thighs still sticky with Ranma's cum.

Saya tentatively reached up and began to finger and tongue at the other girl's pussy. Saeko tasted like nothing she had ever tasted before, it was okay but not great, and she strangely wondered if the old wives tale about oranges making your lover's juices taste better was true and if so where they could get some. That was her final rational coherent thought for a while as she lost her self in the pleasure of the moment.

Saya was tighter than Saeko had been, and she had taken much longer to get used to him but she was now and Ranma was pistoning in and out of her. He leaned down taking one of Saya's nipples in his mouth as his hands rested on her thighs helping him to change up his assault, adding different speeds and slight angle changes to it. "EEEE!" Saya squealed into Saeko's pussy, causing the other girl to moan at the sensation.

At that point Saeko reached down, pulling Ranma up into a kiss that lasted until they had to break off to breathe. When they did Ranma moved down, licking and sucking at her nipples, alternating one to another. "God you taste so good Saeko-chan, could do this all day. Just like Saya-chan's pussy it's soooo tight, I might never want to leave!"

Saeko laughed, throwing her head back. "Thaaat, that sounds like a lovely idea, maaaybe oh right there, maybe some other timEEEE!"

Ranma chuckled deep in his throat, and the lovemaking session continued. Saya stayed docilely on the bottom, having two more orgasms before Ranma's thrusts became more frenzied and erratic. "Saya-chan, I, I'm gonna....!"

That caused Saya to panic for a moment, and she quickly pushed Saeko off her face. "Pull out! I don't want to chance iTTTT!" Her voice ended in another squeal as Ranma changed the angle of his thrusts, slamming into her g-spot again.

He nodded agreement however, thrusting a few more times, sending her once more over the edge before pulling out, his cum launching from his cock to cover Saya's stomach and chest. Spent for the moment Ranma crashed down onto the bed next to his two lovers, pulling them both into a hug, crushing Saeko against Saya's back.

"That," Saya said gasping from her own aftereffects, "was fantastic, even better than back at the mansion."

Ranma smiled happily, while Saeko simply raised one eyebrow as if to say 'and you were thinking it wouldn't be?'

The trio cuddled for a time, but soon enough Ranma was once again standing at attention, and Saeko eagerly began round three. Saya on the other hand, not being a martial artist, any kind of athlete or even owning a high pain threshold was sore now that the endorphins had fallen to a normal level. But she watched avidly as her two lovers went to work on one another again, positioning herself at the head of the bed once Ranma began to take Saeko from behind doggy style, letting the other woman return the favor Saya had done her earlier. Soon however all three were spent, and they curled up in the bed, turning out the lights and collapsing into a deep sleep.

OOOOOO

In one of the guestrooms Rei and Takashi lay out on the bed occasionally looking at one another and then away, their hands briefly touching then away. Neither one of them was willing to take that first step, though both of them wanted to.

That was until a particularly loud moan got through from the master bedroom just enough to be heard as a low mumble in their room and both of them blushed. Rei began to curse, hoping that that didn't mean that the soundproofing wasn't enough. However the jolt from the noise had given Takashi enough impetus to reach out and turn her head towards him.

Rei's eyes widened briefly as he leaned in for a kiss. Rei had to fight with herself not to flinch away, and was thankful for it when their lips met. It was soft, it was tentative, as if Takashi hadn't kissed anyone before, yet it was above all tender, and he made no move to deepen it. He simply kissed her, not attempting to open his mouth or lean further in or try to control the kiss, just kissing her, and Rei finally relaxed, responding to it.

After a moment Takashi pulled back smiling at her. "Even now that we're safe, who knows what tomorrow will bring? I-I wouldn't want us to, you know, run into more trouble or anything before telling you how much I cared for you." Even now he couldn't quite bring himself to say the word love it was just too damn embarrassing, but he hoped Rei understood.

Rei nodded and then blurted out "I'm sorry!"

Takashi cocked his head and she went on quickly "I mean, I'm sorry I went out with Hizashi. I wouldn't have done it, I mean I like him well enough but I didn't **like** him that way but then he asked right after all that shit with Shido happened and he was always there, always willing to make me the center of his world and that was what I needed at the time. I know it was bad looking back on it but at the time I was just too hurt and too scared. I needed that support."

"If you had asked, or even said anything," Takashi replied, running his fingers down the side of her head to her neck and then up again. "I could've been your support too."

"But you wouldn't have made me the center of your world, you never were willing to do that," she replied taking his hand and kissing his fingers gently. "You were always too interested in baseball and sports and trying to get a scholarship that way. At that time I couldn't've handled simply being your girlfriend, not your exclusive priority."

Takashi shrugged, not really able to argue that and Rei smiled. "That's alright though, I'm stronger now and so are you. We can be our own people without one of us leading the other around."

With that Rei leaned down and kissed him this time, smiling faintly as she felt his arms go around her. After about five minutes of kissing Takashi deepened the kiss, and she squeaked a little as his hands ran down her back to her rear gripping it hard. She squeaked again as he moved away from her mouth finding a spot on her neck that caused her to moan aloud. "Right there , OHHhhh...."

She sat up in bed, moving to take a position on top of him, while her hands went down to the bottom of her shirt lifting it above her head. In preparation for bedtime Rei had not in fact put on a bra when she changed into her nightclothes, and her breasts bounced free the moment she pulled her shirt off them. Looking down she laughed aloud seeing his poleaxed expression and reached down taking his hands gently and lifting them to her breasts. "Hehehe, you can touch them if you like."

"I-I've never done this before," Takashi admitted even as his hands molded to her breasts and his thumbs began to flick at her nipples.

Rei moaned aloud at the sensation he was giving her, and the knowledge that this was Takashi doing it, the boy she had loved since practically kindergarten! That added a whole new dimension to it, making it even better than the few

times she and her old boyfriend had gone this far. "Trust me," she muttered, "Most of this will be new to me too."

She leaned down, and he leaned up to meet her, their tongues now and questing for one another. Rei found that Takashi was now dominating the kiss, and found that she actually liked it that way. After a moment however Rei pulled back and sighed faintly as his hands once more began to knead her breasts. Her own hands began to inch down his chest to the bottom of his t-shirt. "I guess we'll just have to do what feels natural..."

OOOOOO

Having taken one of the guestrooms for themselves Shizuka and Rei had immediately moved into the bathroom. Well, after another intense make out session the moment the door was closed anyway.

First they both rinsed and soap one another, going over their bodies inch by inch. By the time Rei and Takashi were really getting into it however, they had moved on. Now they lay back, with Rika being pillowed in Shizuka's massive chest while the hot water steamed around them. The nurse was playing with her lover's light purple hair for a moment, while Rika's own hands were on Shizuka's knees pulling them around her waist so she could start playing with her lover's feet.

"I missed you sooooo much," Shizuka said pulling Rika back against her. Shizuka's breasts pressed into her lover's back as her arms went around Rika's much more modest chest. Not to say that they weren't large because they were, Rika was known among the SAT as one of the hottest women to ever wear a uniform for very good reason. It's just that they were smaller than Shizuka's bountiful breasts. The nurse was probably in the top 10 in the nation in that department.

"I missed you too," Rika said her breathing a little heavier now that Shizuka was kneading her chest. Right now though she wanted to take some more time to talk before they moved on to more physical pursuits. "I'm amazed that you all made it through, and without losing anyone along the way to hear you all talk about it."

"I am too," Shizuka sighed laying her forehead against the back of Rika's head, breathing in her sense. "It feels a little unreal sometimes, but we all made it from start to finish, and picked up more friends along the way. If it wasn't for Neko-chan, Saeko-san and Kohta-kun, I don't think any of us would be alive today. I know I owe Saeko-san my life from the very beginning, and Neko-chan saved Kyoko when this all began at the school."

Rika hummed for a moment, then asked a question she really wished she didn't have to, but in times like these... "And are any of them a danger to themselves or others? How are they doing mentally? I know civilians aren't really trained to deal with crises situations like soldiers and policemen, how are they holding up?"

Shizuka let her go as Rika moved away to lean against the side of the tub, her dusky breasts lifting slightly out of the water. Rika's skin was naturally darker in hue than normal Japanese, and her bright pink nipples stood out even more because of it.

The nurse frowned, thinking hard, not a hint of her normal airheaded nature visible on her face. "I think this chance to unwind is precisely what we need before tackling our next job which will be much more mentally demanding rather than emotional and physical I hope. Rei and Saya I thought would be dangers at first, Rei wasn't really mentally prepared for any of this but she seems to have turned the corner in the past two days and Saya slipped easily into an advisory role. Kyoko is sort of our group's counselor, that and her budding attraction to Takashi-kun seems to be keeping her going. Alice has bounced back from her father's death with the speed of youth, though she still has nightmares at night when she's asleep."

She shook her head at the thought, this would actually be the first night they spent anywhere that she would not be bunking with the young girl, and she resolved to unlock the door just in case Alice wanted to join them at some point after Rika and her fun was finished for the night. After a full day she doubted that her lover or she would be up for more than an hour and a bit of lovemaking.

"The two mothers are alright. I will have to wait and see how Nodoka-san responds to not having her dominant arm. Frankly if we had a hospital that wound of hers wouldn't be much of an issue, but as it is she will probably never be able to fully regain her former strength in that arm. That could cause her to go into a depression, but I don't think so. Both of them are very strong mentally, and Kiriko was a policewoman, she's trained to deal with crisis situations."

"I thought I recognized her," Rika mused. "Traffic division right, wasn't there a major altercation between her and some biker gang or other? She beat the living daylight out of them?"

Shizuka shrugged. "I know she was part of a biker gang in her youth, Rei mentioned that once, but I don't know

anything else."

Rika nodded, now having turned in the tub so that her knees were up against her chest one of her lover's feet between them as she began to work her nails down the underside of it causing Shizuka to shiver. She was amused as always by how Shizuka could flip her personality like that.

Anyone else would have thought that Shizuka would've been the one to watch out for in danger of breaking, but Rika knew her best friend/lover far better than that. Shizuka was deceptively strong mentally and emotionally. She had to be deal with all the trials that had been thrown her way since puberty hit with such force.

Shizuka had put up with a life after that point of needling barbs from fellow women and constant come-ons and solicitations from men, ranging from subtle to forceful. She persevered and won through, as she had when faced with other challenges in her life, not only her parents sudden death but higher education and several others. While there was no real comparison to that and the world they now inhabited in terms of danger or stress Rika was certain that Shizuka would mope, whine then get on with her work and the next day just keep on going.

"And the rest?" she murmured, working her fingers in between Shizuka's toes.

"Eep..." Shizuka squeaked a little at the sensation, her breathing coming out slightly faster now. She had to shake her head for a moment to get back to the conversation, but Rika didn't stop her ministrations simply smiling warmly at her. "I oh, I, think that Kohta would be the one that is most in danger of cracking. He's a gun nut as you probably noticed, and I don't like the fact that he simply enjoys shooting so much, not really caring about what his target is. But I, oh right there AKKK! Um, I, I think Asami has him well in hand, and she's already taken him strongly to task a time or two. In turn I think he is her strength, she'll keep going as long as he's there toOhhhh... to help her along and hold her hand."

Rika had continued to knead Shizuka's foot, and she smiled at the little pauses and breaks her attention to it caused, but her mind was on what Shizuka was saying. The fact that if either one died the other would break down or become a danger to the group was left unsaid. "Does Ranma know about that?" She asked not specifying what she was talking about, and pausing in her ministrations, "And what about him and the others?"

"Saya knows for certain," Shizuka answered without any hesitation or doubt in her voice, though she was pouting at her lover stopping her ministrations of Shizuka's feet. "That young lady is by far the brightest young woman I have ever met. She's also very good at noticing things like that as long as they don't have to deal with her. I doubt she's shared it yet, but if anything happens she will. Without Neko-chan around however Saya would not be the pillar of strength she is, those two are sort of necessary for one another much like Neko-chan and Saeko-san."

"I'm not worried about Yuuki either, she's adaptable and a survivor used to looking out for herself. Yuuki's meshed well with the group and she is very interested in joining Ranma's little harem."

Rika laughed a little at that, shaking her head but then went on more seriously. "What about Saeko and Ranma? Even I can tell those two are the central pillars for the entire group."

"They are and it's funny," Shizuka chuckled a little darkly. "Out of everyone aboard, despite Saeko-san's desire to test out the king-sized bed I don't doubt that they are the only ones that didn't need the down time, either physically or mentally. Neither of them really fit in common society. Oh," she waved one hand raising it out of the water making waves in the water for a moment. "Saeko at least can play the part of a normal young woman, but I think the tension in her would've built up inside of her eventually. And Neko-chan's never made any bones about being anything but what he is, a consummate martial artist with a bit of a dark side to him and no understanding or respect for most of society's norms. Or scientific ones either, come to think of it. They fit in this world, in a way that none of the rest of us do."

Rika cocked her head one eyebrow raised and Shizuka shrugged. "They won't ever become a danger to us, not unless they get out of hand in combat and refuse to retreat or something like that. Both of them generally care for the group, and will defend all of us to the best of their abilities, it's just that they're more at home in this world and the implications of living in it than anyone else. Saya-chan balances the two of them out well, injecting a bit of common sense and being able to hopefully control their battle urges if the time ever comes to rein them in. It hasn't just yet, though I think we came close when we were ambushed by that group or thugs right before we picked up the two mothers outside the police station, and again right there."

The purple haired policewoman nodded, then shuddered as one of her lovers hands found her legs underneath the water and began to slide towards her pussy. She eagerly took the hint turning quickly and kissing Shizuka hard pressing her back against the edge of the tub, their breasts mashing and rubbing wetly against one another. "Enough

about that for now," she murmured, pulling back for a moment, "let's move on to more important things."

Shizuka giggled throatily and then began to attack Rika's neck laying little kisses and bites on it just the way she knew Rika liked it. Their hands began to fondle one another's chest, both of them knowing precisely what buttons to push, how to touch the other in the way to get the best reaction.

Rika slowly pulled back, both hands going under Shizuka and raising her into the air slightly by her ass, standing up easily despite her girlfriend's weight in her arms. Though nowhere near as strong as a martial artist Rika was plenty strong enough to carry Shizuka out of the tub and plant her on her feet outside before they both grabbed towels, still fiercely kissing their breasts pressed together so tightly you would be hard-pressed to get a playing card between them (except right down their cleavage of course). Rika gently pushed Shizuka around dominating her easily just like Shizuka enjoyed, being a very submissive individual in bed so long as she trusted the other person.

Later neither of them would remember how they got out of the doorway of the bathroom and into the guest room they had taken over, but soon Rika had Shizuka on the bed splayed out, her blonde hair still wet from the bath sticking to her head and down her back as Rika began to move down her body.

The blonde's own hands rested on Rika's head gently, one hand gently moving down her spine to her tight rear grabbing it and kneading it for the moment. The other moved to her front and began to tweak one of Rika's light brown nipples.

Rika landed on Shizuka's legs pushing them wider spreading them so that she was spread-eagled on the bed before her fingers began to find Shizuka's pussy. A sudden wicked thought occurred to Rika and she grinned wondering where this would take them both in the short and long-term. She leaned up whispering in Shizuka's ear. "The way you talk about Ranma, I bet you're interested in him aren't you? Want to ride the Wild Horse do you?"

Shizuka gasped and panted as two of Rika's fingers entered her pussy at the same time as Rika spoke. Shizuka shook her hips lifting off the bed wildly. "Oh" she moaned, "D-don't say that, I'm faithful, you're, you're more than enough for me."

"Oh please," Rika said laughing. "I saw the way you looked at him a few times tonight, I bet you would like it if he was here right now." Shizuka's panting moans answered her, and she chuckled. "I wouldn't mind riding that horse myself, it would certainly be an experience at least."

"Imagine it Shizuka, Ranma would be standing right there," Rika went on teasing her blonde lover, nodding at the bedside right by their heads. "His large cock would be hard and ready, ready to plow you into the mattress, but for now just standing there stroking himself watching us. Can you imagine it, can you imagine what he'd think if he knew that we were doing this thinking of him, what he would do to you?"

Shizuka moaned again and suddenly spasmed her whole body going rigid as she came her juices squirting out onto the bed. Rika laughed gaily, bringing the hand she had used to stimulate Shizuka's pussy up to her mouth and licking the juices off it. "Delicious as always," she murmured laughing again as Shizuka recovered a little to look at her in shock.

"W-were you serious?" Shizuka asked. "I meant it, I'm more than happy with just you, you know."

Rika moved up her body, her legs on either side of Shizuka's until she was resting on the other woman's stomach right below her gigantic breasts. She brought Shizuka's hands up to her chest where they immediately began to fondle and play with Rika's breasts once more and Rika sighed a little. "Back before this began I would never have even dreamed of sharing you love, but in this world? You know you and I talked about adopting once or twice, or maybe going in for artificial insemination."

Shizuka nodded, gulping a little as she realized where this conversation was going. But the very idea of it also caused a pool of fire to start simmering deep in her stomach and lower down as well.

"Well, Ranma can give us both what we want, children of our own. He can put one right here," Rika said reaching down and patting her flat toned stomach before moving down her own body caressing her pussy for a moment where it met Shizuka's stomach, patting the blonde's stomach. "And right here. These," she continued both of her hands now moving up to squeeze and fondle one of Shizuka's breasts. They were so big each of them needed two hands to really stimulate. "These could produce milk someday, milk for children that you and I could raise together."

"OOOHHHHh...." Shizuka moaned again, the idea of producing milk not just for her baby but for her lover making that fire inside her burn even hotter and she reached up and pulled Shizuka down into a searing kiss. Those were the

last words spoken in that room for the rest of the evening, and Shizuka was proven wrong, the two of them were up for more than **three** hours of lovemaking rather than just an hour or so. Luckily Alice did not come down and try to get into bed with them, or her education in certain matters would have been accelerated very prematurely.

And so the night progressed, the group aboard the yacht unburdened and unthreatened by the world around it as they were at last able to unwind.

OOO Lemons are over, lemons are over OOO

Ranma woke up and stretched languidly, smiling down at Saeko and Saya who were still out of it. Saya was splayed out above Saeko, her pink hair mingling with Saeko's purple hair. Saeko murmured in her sleep as Ranma extracted himself from between them, writing his hands down there thighs and legs for a moment before forcibly turning away and getting dressed for the day. He frowned a little as he looked down at his clothing.

Despite the fact that they had picked up several items of clothing along the way, most of that was weather gear, and they only had a few packets of boxers to add to the amount that Ranma had grabbed from home. Spread out between him Takashi and Kohta (as well as Yuuki for some reason, who claimed she hated wearing panties when she didn't need to) they weren't going to last very long, but luckily thanks to the ship's laundry room they would be able to clean them easily enough. Still he pulled on a clean pair, then his one remaining clean pair of pants and a clean shirt.

Silently Ranma moved out of the master bedroom closing the door firmly behind him, hoping that the two girls would remain asleep for a few more hours, since they both needed it. He stood still for a moment sniffing the air and smiling before moving down the corridor towards the kitchen area past the ramp going up to the main area of the ship. He found Nodoka in the kitchen puttering around wincing occasionally as she tried to use her injured arm and found herself unable to. "Hey mom," Ranma said moving into the kitchen kissing her on the cheek. "How are you? Did you take any more pain pills for yer arm?"

"I did, and I am having an alright morning I suppose despite my wounded wing as it were. Though I daresay nowhere near as good as yours," she said smirking at him and Ranma actually blushed a little. "I hope you were a perfect gentleman with Saya and Saeko my son."

"No worries there," Ranma muttered looking away embarrassed to talk about something like this with his mom.

"Good, now you can help me make breakfast for everyone. From the ingredients here I think it's bagels, cream cheese and bacon. Whoever was on this boat likes bacon quite a bit," she said laughing a little. "The refrigerator holds an entire drawer of it. Rather disturbing really but a good thing for our group I suppose."

Ranma shrugged, and began to move around the kitchen at her directions while she sat on the central table giving out orders like a queen.

The smell of bacon cooking permeated the air, rousing Zeke up above who in turn roused his mistress by bounding up over her head and down to the ground before making his way down the ramp. Soon Alice followed, sniffing the air appreciatively as she did, and was roped into helping Ranma set up a table up top.

Luckily Kiriko had done a magnificent job of clearing off that area before even their meal of the evening before, and it wasn't even a hint that several dead bodies had inhabited the seats there.

In the sitting area Yuuki and the others began to wake up, stretching languidly as they pulled themselves from the best sleep any of them had since this all began. Not even sleeping at the Takagi estate had allowed them to rest this way. A few of them had been able to sleep well there, but Kyoko and Yuuki couldn't get past quite the they were knowledge that they surrounded by armed men who they didn't know.

Asami and Kohta came in from the sunning area, having taken turns on watch throughout the night. They were both looking much more sleepy than the others, but still much better rested than they had previously and both gunners sniffed the air appreciatively. Soon enough a small banquet was set up and the noise of the group at the table roused Saeko, Saya, Rei, Takashi and Shizuka. Rika had woken up an hour before to work with Saya's computer and had been sitting in the pilot's station working with it.

Once everyone arrived at the table there was a whole lot of blushing going on at the dinner table, mostly from Rei and Takashi but Shizuka for some reason was joining in too. Ranma caught her looking at him a time or two and wondered what that was about but shrugged off for now.

Saya was also looking a little embarrassed, and very sore. She had winced every step of the way coming up the ramp, and had downed several painkillers that she had taken from the small emergency medical kit before coming up. Despite the fact that her adrenaline and arousal had offset it at the time, Saya was going to be sore for several days because of the amount of activity last night.

"Were you able to make up a map of the airport for us?" Ranma asked looking over at Rika.

"I did," she said slowly "but I'm not certain any more we should do this honestly. As I was making the map I realized that fighting our way through that part of the airport is going to be a bitch and a half. It's not like the front of the airport which is just one large hallway with breaks in it you know, this is an area where there are a lot of twists and turns, a lot of rooms along the halls where zombies could hide, and I'm not certain if it's worth the risk anymore."

Saeko and Ranma exchanged a look and a brief smile. "Don't worry about that," Saeko replied, "we're good in enclosed spaces." With that they got down to the nuts and bolts of the operation moving over with Rika and Kohta and Saya to look at the 3-D rendering that Rika had made.

Rika walked them through the several entrances they could use, including the one that was leading up from the small docking area. It wasn't actually small, in the sense that it was only for small boats, but it was only large enough for two cargo ships at a time. When docked the ships would be uncovered, but there was some cover provided by concrete roof over the rest of the docking area, and along the little walkway that led from that area up to the main airport.

Of course the main freight came up from a large conveyor belt, which was about as wide as two men across. "That's our entry point then Ranma said tapping it. Saeko and I can get up that easily, and it'll take us into an area where we'll have more room for a bit to deal with any zombies."

"That's nice and all for the two of you, but what about the rest of us?"

"You're not coming." Ranma said bluntly.

Saeko elaborated. "The two of us are by far the best close combat specialists of the group. You yourself said these weapons would be in an area where you would be more likely to be attacked from every direction than have clear lanes of fire. We can handle that environment better just the two of us rather than a larger group."

"You can't be serious," Rika scoffed, "you'll need backup in there."

"We have backup, each other. We'll be better able to watch our backs together than in a larger group, we'll be able to move faster, and there won't be any danger of friendly fire."

Rika gaped at them, but over the next ten minutes found that she couldn't dissuade them. The only concession they would make would be Ranma agreeing to pull someone else up with them to guard the top of the conveyor belt.

"But," he said looking over at Kohta sharply, "You don't shoot unless you damn well have to. And," he continued, now looking over at Shizuka and Kyoko "When we disembark you move the ship away from the pier. No physical contact between the boat and the pier until we clear out the dock. We'll fill up if we can before you pull out, but after that no physical contact."

"But if you're being chased at that point won't that make it more difficult to get away?" Nodoka asked. She was now very, very irritated indeed that her dominant arm was out of commission. That idea of her son and his girlfriend/possible wife (after all how exactly were they going to find a priest to marry them legally or whatever here in this messed up world) going in there just the two of them bothered her quite a bit.

"We won't be, and even if we are, going from what Rika can tell us that end of the pier should be easily enough to defend." Ranma said confidently.

"You will take a radio with you at least," she said her voice brooking no argument. Both of the martial artists looked at one another and simply nodded in reply to that.

Within an hour the yacht was ready, the anchor pulled up and they were on their way. It only took them about 15 minutes to get close to the island, and another 10 to move around it and find the small cargo port.

There were about 10 zombies are so scattered around the loading area, but Kohta Rika and Asami were all situated at the prow of the ship with their guns, though that had engendered some salivating from Kohta when he saw her twin pistols. When she had informed him she had to leave her own sniper rifle behind on the bridge before Ranma and

Saeko had come to her rescue Kohta had nearly wept when he found out what kind it was.

Rika stood there ready and waiting to lend more firepower to any defense needed, but was impressed by the way the Asami and Kohta swiftly gunned down the ten zombies, both of them using their sniper rifles, which now had silencers on them given to them by Rika from her pistols.

After that was done the boat slowly eased along one side of the dock until Ranma and Saeko jumped out onto the pier grabbing the ropes and tying the ship down quickly.

Yuuki immediately moved over to join them on the dock, stopping momentarily to look at the side of the ship where a small flap opened allowing her to start refueling. Takashi, bum ankle and all still helped her pull the long hose from the station at the far end of the dock area, though it barely stretched down to the yacht.

Saeko and Ranma moved to the end of the dock and remains there on guard while Takashi and Yuuki went past them to grab the hose and return. After a moment Yuuki motioned Takashi and Ranma over to her. She nodded at the large metal can gas container. "This things got nearly all of its fuel inside," she said happily. "Only problem is its electronic and we'll need to pump it out instead using the emergency pump here," she said tapping the large wheel along one side of it. "I don't suppose either of you big strong men could handle that, could you?"

Takashi and Ranma shared a grin, and moved over quickly to grab one end each of the large wheel. Yuuki scuttled back past Saeko to make certain that nozzle was correctly aligned then nodded her head over her shoulder. "Good to go."

The two boys began to move the wheel around, almost immediately hearing the creaking and groaning of the pump inside the container pushing the gas out and down through the tube. It took about 15 minutes to fill up the boat, and after that Yuuki asked the boys to stop for a moment before rushing over to grab up on of several dozen emergency gas containers, filling it up as well. She handed it up to Kyoko to put away in the engine room downstairs. There was a way to fill up the engine from inside the engine room so this would see them through quite well. Yuuki frowned thoughtfully worrying her lower lip. There were over nine more containers like that, but was it worth the time and danger?

She voiced those thoughts and Ranma for frowned for a moment, looking around. "All right little bit of a change of plans here. Kohta, Rika, you two are on guard here Asami, you stay put there. One of you stay by the conveyor belt, the other one station yourself by the walkway up to the rest of the airport." He looked over at the others. "Break out the nail guns and the shotgun as well, just in case. Yuuki, Takashi and Rei, you're own pump duty."

The group responded immediately moving around swiftly leaving only Shizuka on the ship to remain in the pilot's chair just in case they needed to make a fast getaway anyway.

The noise of their moving around attracted a few zombies that were in the hallway, and one zombie actually fell down the conveyor belt but it was swiftly killed by a single blow from Ranma. Rika took care of the group that had responded by the hallway deeper into the airport.

After that Saya and Rika prepared a defensive position right at the entrance to the hallway. "You do know this is insane right? Rika asked, looking over at Ranma. "There are at least 200 zombies in there, maybe more, and you two don't know the area enough to head straight to where you're going."

Saeko shrugged. "I have a very good sense of direction and a good memory of maps, I think I can direct us, and besides," she smiled, and Rika suddenly realized that Shizuka was right about these two. They took being combat junkies to the Nth degree. "That just makes it all the more challenging."

Asami and Kyoko had set themselves up by the conveyor belts heading upwards, just in case, while Saya (armed with one of the nail guns) and Rika took up position behind their barricade staring down the corridor. Kohta stayed back on the prow of the ship, ready to add his firepower to either position.

Ranma nodded at Saeko as she moved up to join him the looked over to Kyoko and said "We'll be back."

Kyoko nodded firmly, having no doubt that the two could handle anything it the airport could offer them. They'd survived so far after all, they could survive this.

Ranma and Saeko jumped up onto the conveyor belt and swiftly raced up the ramp, able to deal with the shifting of the belt underneath them rather easily though Saeko had slightly more difficulty than Ranma.

Up top they immediately ran into 12 zombies who had been milling around by the entrance to the conveyor belt,

unable to get on top of it. The zombie that had fallen down might have been turned during his attempt to get up onto the belt in his attempt to get away from the zombies.

They struck like lightning, Ranma whipping out his meteor hammer and dealing death (debatable true) left and right while Saeko swiftly slaughtered anything that came within sword's range. Like this the two of them cleared the area around the conveyor belt with ease. A few more zombies were making their way towards him, but Ranma raced to meet them killing all three quickly.

The conveyor belt emptied out into a another storage area, somewhat empty at the moment but normally bustling with activity as the food for the planes was moved over to small vans that would take them out to the planes. Another conveyor belt carried more food and food ingredients deeper into the airport to the back of the food court and the worker's cafeteria. After looking around at all this Ranma asked, "Where to now?"

Saeko pointed at one door leading off to the right. "That will take us to the office area, move through that up to the third floor and then find a lounge that should be on the right as we exit up onto the third floor from the stairs."

"You're the boss love, I can't remember maps for crap." Ranma replied with a shrug and the two moved off.

As they entered the corridor several zombies turned towards them, the door having a loud creaking noise that attracted their attention. The two martial artists grinned at one another and charged forward weapons at the ready. One doorway they passed opened and more zombies poured out, causing Saeko to stop in place her blade lashing out to kill the first two and then catching the third with her backswing as Ranma barreled into the first four killing them all with swift strikes from his meteor hammer.

The sounds of the dead bodies hitting the ground echoed loudly in the hallway, and more zombies began to appear.

"This place must've been overrun the moment Rika pulled back," Ranma said conversationally, as the two stood back to back making their way through the horde slaughtering any that came within range. Still more came on, but neither martial artist was in danger of weakening.

"Indeed," Saeko said blandly, dodging an outstretched arm before beheading its owner. "Remember what Rika said, she was supposed to provide some kind of diversion with fire. The diversion obviously failed even more spectacularly than she thought."

"I wonder if that means that last batch of people got out, or if they're still held up in here hoping for rescue or whatever?" Ranma's fist and legs lashed out at three targets at once, smashing two back and slicing the head off the third.

"I don't know," Saeko said, slicing another zombie in half at the waist before taking the legs off another zombie, before her blade came back finishing the job.

The two lovers continued to hack and slash their way down the corridor, until they reached the staircase leading upstairs, a few minutes after the first flood of zombies had tapered off. Ranma looked up the staircase, a winding one only about the size of two men abreast and twirled his meteor hammer meaningfully. "I'll leadoff, you follow me after."

Saeko nodded, and took up position at his back following him up the staircase swiftly. They found only one zombie in the stairwell, but when they broke out onto the third floor they found four more. One of them looked as if he had tried to blow his own head off, and there were several dead bodies lying around, both former zombies and humans who had been ripped apart. The zombie who had tried to kill himself was wearing a uniform, while the others appeared to be workers from the airport.

Saeko dispatched to one of the zombies while Ranma simply slaughtered the other three and they stood momentarily over the body of the SAT soldier bowing their heads briefly in prayer. "At least he died swinging," Ranma said as he lifted his head up.

The purple haired swordswoman looked up from where she had been mumbling a Buddhist prayer for the departed and nodded. With that the two moved off. Despite their concerns this hadn't actually been very difficult so far, and both of them were tense and ready for anything.

Throughout this corridor they came upon dead bodies, both human and zombie. The entire hallway was riddled with bullets and the two martial artists could barely find room to put their feet down for bodies. Here and there were bodies of humans who had been ripped apart but retained their weapons. Despite knowing that Kohta would have wanted them to, neither martial artist could bring themselves to take their weapons or check their clips or anything like that. It

seemed disrespectful to the dead in the extreme.

About 10 minutes later they found the lounge area that Rika had described to them. Inside they found several dozen rifles of various kinds, though neither of them were knowledgeable enough to know which was which. However a thorough search turned up not a single box of bullets.

The two shared a glance and then played rock paper scissors for a moment. Ranma lost and groaned aloud. "Best two out of three?"

Saeko merely laughed and waved a hand at him moving over to guard the doorway. Ranma sighed, pulled his backpack off from around his shoulders and reached inside to pull out his walkie-talkie. "This is Ninja to Megane-hime, can you read me, over?"

"God damnit," said Saya's voice. "Would you stupid fuckers stop it with the god damn call signs they don't serve any fucking purpose! And I hate mine! Now, what is it? Did you find the guns?"

"Yeah we found the guns, but no bullets." Ranma shook his head. "Tell Rika that that diversion of her's probably failed badly. There was one hell of a fight up here," he paused before going on, his voice somber. "We found a guy in the same uniform she's wearing up here."

After a moment Rika's voice answered her. "Did he die a zombie or as a human?"

"Human," Ranma said not wanting to tell her the truth. "He got bit but he also bit of bullet instead of being turned. And he went down swinging him and a few others. It looks like a war zone up here, at least 30 zombies dead and 10 humans ripped apart not a one of them turned." That was a lie of course, more than half of them had turned and been cut down in turn but Rika didn't need to know that.

Rika sighed heavily wondering if she should have come back after the diversion with setting the gas tanks on fire hadn't worked.

"The problem is though we didn't find a single box of bullets." Ranma continued, "Are you sure you guys gathered it all in one place?"

"Positive," Rika said. "The airport security forces kept a major arms locker on hand for any issues that arose, and we pulled it all out for this crisis. They didn't have nearly as many rounds as we could have liked for the number of guns though, so I guess that makes sense."

"Then we're on our way back down," Ranma said shrugging.

"Wait!" shouted aloud voice and there was a huffing and puffing sound from the radio as were Kohta joined in. "We can still use the guns can't we I mean we need to take them with us! Think about the trade resource they could be! And maybe we could figure out a way to make bullets at some point!"

Ranma grunted irritably, and estimated the number of guns he could carry and still be able to fight. "Saya, it's your call. Is it a good idea to take these with us, 'cause I gotta say I don't think it is."

"Please I'll do anything, you guys let me have those guns please! At least give me a description of them! Come on, with four or five of them we could arm everyone!" Kohta yelled hysterically into the radio.

"We don't have enough bullets to go around," Saya muttered pushing the boy away from the radio (and out of her personal space). She thought for a few minutes then shook her head. "I don't think so Ranma, if there's no bullets there this is a wasted trip, and as good as you two are you can't carry many of them. Grab one or two I suppose, but I think we're wearing out our welcome here. We're full up with gas, if you find any clothing or anything grab it, but otherwise let's get out of here."

"Roger," Ranma said and signed off and Saeko forged their way back down the stairs, while Ranma grabbed to short, stubby automatic guns. Luckily they didn't meet any more zombies, though they could see dozens through doors into the public area of the airport. They did make a few stops, moving into the shopping area and coming back with packs of t-shirts and other items of clothing (though no underwear, alas) and stuffing both their backpacks with them, as well as a few bags of food and some medicines, but not much of either.

Soon they were back at the conveyor belt and Saeko whooped a little as she slid down it.

Ranma chuckled coming down after her, and nodded at everyone around them. Kohta was sulking by the conveyor

belt having abandoned his position on the prow of the yacht. He crouched there poking the ground irritably and muttering under his breath about 'ungrateful peons' and 'barbarians' but Ranma simply ignored him looking around at everyone else. "Pack it up guys and gals, let's get out of here."

Everyone else followed the order with alacrity but even with the two guns Ranma had brought back Kohta was still disconsolate. He kept on poking the wall until Ranma grabbed him by the shoulder lifting him bodily up by it and literally throwing him onto the boat. "There are more important things than guns Kohta, and right now you're lying next to one."

Kohta opened his eyes after his surprise trip through the air to notice that Ranma had aimed him to land right next to where Asami had moved back to take up station at the brow of the boat.

He nodded and sighed sadly while Takashi and Ranma undid the ropes holding the boat against the pier before jumping aboard themselves. Shizuka slowly started the engine, backing the ship away before turning around once they got out into open water turning away from the airport.

OOOOOO

The group headed out into the ocean for a few hours, while the two martial artists got some food and another shower before rejoining the rest.

"Where to now? Did you guys decide on an island?"

Saya nodded firmly. We're heading down towards Kyushu for the moment, the island we're aiming for is called Gajajima, and it should be more than large enough for us. It's easily defensible, and will have enough land for us to put under plow or whatever the phrase is. I can guide us there by compass and by landmarks if we get close enough."

Ranma nodded and waved at Shizuka who was looking at them through the open door to the cockpit. "Make it so Shizuka-san."

"Aye-aye sir!" Shizuka laughed bring up one hand to salute, and turned back to her controls.

It was still bright day out, and Yuuki shrugged. "If that's all, I'm going to go change into my bathing suit and way out and get some sun. And you lot said I was stupid for grabbing those suits for us all. Hah, who's laughing now!" She looked at Ranma for a moment smirking. But before he could analyze her look she walked down the stairs followed by some of the other girls.

Kyoko and Rei both wanted to get some sun as well, as did Saya though Saeko moved over to one of the sofas and laid out on it for the moment. Ranma cocked an eyebrow at her and she shrugged. "Just a little tired, our exertions last night plus today have pushed my endurance a bit."

Ranma blushed a little at that, but decided to get some sun himself and headed down to grab up one of his cleaner pair of boxers and put them on in lieu of a suit.

Despite that first day's excitement the next three days passed peacefully enough. The ship made its way down towards the target island, moving with the coast always in view and as the compass directed. She figured if they could find a few landmarks then she would be able to find their place much easier, but for now this would do. The fact that the ship also had sonar on it helped warn them off a few times from a few reefs and even a ship or two drifting dead in their path during the night.

They saw a few ships in the distance moving around during the day, and even tried the radio a few times always having Kohta, Takashi or Ranma do it, just in case. Yet despite this no one was answering, and Shizuka and the other adults exchanged a glance every time this became apparent.

Yet despite this the days were just easy days, spent getting to know one another outside the dangers of combat and without the fear of zombie attacks hanging over them. The Miyamoto sisters and adults in particular didn't know much about one another and used this time to bridge that gap.

Today, Yuuki was once again laying out on deck, near the front of the ship this time rather than on top or in the back, her barely there bikini once again barely covering her body. Her head was turned so that she could see Ranma and a smile on her face showed she knew what she was doing to him. Ranma had barely controlled himself that first day, but had lost it early the next day when she came out for some early morning sunning while he was getting ready to turn in from a night on guard. Yuuki hadn't been a virgin like Saya or Saeko, but neither had she been with a martial

artist before, and Ranma had worn her out. It was only because he had pushed the top of her swimsuit into her mouth had kept her from waking up the entire boat with her moans.

Ranma however had other things on his mind as he had caught a flash of white out on the water caught his attention from their far left side. "Sail ho," he shouted "or whatever the call is."

Saeko and a few of the others came out onto deck quickly, looking the direction he was pointing. "Kyoko says it's course will cross ours if we keep on our current heading. Should we change course or what?"

Ranma frowned, but shook his head. "Nah, not yet, wait until we can see the boat better before making a decision." A few minutes later they were close enough to see that there were only three figures on the small boat. "Pull up alongside, I can't tell who they are, but they look human, er generally speaking. One kid, one woman, and one, um... oompa loompa?"

Saeko and Saya exchanged a glance, discounted the ending there, then looked over at Kyoko who shrugged, but nodded. If it had been a trio of adults or even teens, maybe Kyoko and the other, more pragmatic ones among their party could have convinced Ranma, Nodoka, Kiriko and Rei to leave them be. But the mention of a kid changed that equation.

Almost as soon as the yacht pulled alongside, Nodoka who had come out and was leaning against the railing along that side of the yacht gasped in astonishment. "Master Happosai, is that you?!"

Ranma stiffened at the name but by that time the little gnome had jumped aboard, quickly grabbing onto Rika's chest before jumping to Shizuka and away. "GAHAHAHAH, so many lovely ladies so little time!"

Amid shrieks and angry yells Happosai perched on Nodoka's uninjured shoulder looking down at her injury. "I see you haven't come through this whole mess unscathed my dear,. Then he looked up at all of their enraged faces, as well as the fact Saeko had pulled out her sword already and Rika was cocking her heavy pistols.

"Now, now," he said smiling in what he hoped was a winsome manner. "Just call it my greeting my special greeting to lovely ladies." Happosai then turned back to Nodoka. How are you doing my dear, besides the obvious I mean, its been many years since I saw you. I can't sense that ne'er-do-well husband of yours, did you kick him to the curb at last? You were always too strong willed for Genma to be happy with."

The others growled at his groping but Nodoka simply smiled as if the old man was a long lost friend, or possibly a respected adversary. "Yes I did eventually, and then, wonder of wonders, my son found me, leaving me with the best thing to come out of that marriage."

Ranma frowned a little at the mention of his father, wondering if this old man was the Grandmaster he had heard about once or twice from other martial artists. Genma had never mentioned him, but the name had shown up in his scrolls a time or two.

A polite cough from below made him turn and look down into the boat again. Ranma's first thought upon looking at Kasumi was that here stood a woman who was possibly the most gentle soul he had ever met. Dark, honey brown hair falling down her back, a simple homemakers outfit that somehow on her looked very good indeed, an angelic face as pretty as any of the girls he was already with, dominated by brown doe-like eyes looking up at them. Besides her looks she just seemed to radiate this aura of peace and kindness. Next to her stood a young boy around Alice's age, tough looking and with a grim set to his mouth but other than that he looked as if he had come through the zombie crisis with all his bits and his mind intact.

"Hello, may we come aboard please?" said the woman, "I am Kasumi Tendo, and this is Makoto Nagano."

"Oh, um, I'm Ranma, and this is my group, they'll introduce themselves. Hold on," Ranma said jumping down to them. He hoisted the little boy up onto his shoulders, and picked Kasumi gently up bridal style, somewhat enchanted by her eyes. "Um, anything here ya want to keep?"

Kasumi gulped. Ranma holding her like this was very different from grandfather holding her like this, and she flushed more than a little as she felt his hard chest alongside her head, his skin warm under her cheek. "N-no, no-nothing," she stammered trying to control her blush, "We ran out of food yesterday, and none of us had any personal items when we boarded."

Ranma nodded and then leaped up again to land aboard the taller yacht, smiling at Kasumi's giggle and the little boys shout of astonishment.

"Well Makoto, Kasumi, this is our crew." Alice and Zeke came forward first.

The two young children looked at each other little warily but eventually Makoto held out his hand. Alice shook it then he went down to one knee to scratch behind the puppies ears, while Ranma turned still gently folding Kasumi's arm unconsciously as he set her on her feet.

Saeko saw this gesture and smiled faintly, moving forward to exchange a hug with the young woman. "My name is Saeko Busujima, welcome to the club my dear," she said. The double meaning flew over Kasumi's head at the time, and she simply smiled and hugged the purple haired woman back. In the coming days she would come back to that comment and wonder how Saeko had known that she and Ranma would eventually become an item, but it was obvious that the two formidable looking people were an item.

"And this is Saya-chan and Yuuki-chan." The affection in Ranma's voice as he introduced the two girls made Kasumi wonder about her previous assumption, but the reality of their situation would become clear that evening. "And the tanned gal is name Rika, and the lady standin' next to her is Kyoko sensei, and then Takashi and my cousin Rei. Shizuka and my aunt are inside, you'll meet 'em in a moment."

Kasumi nodded, and Yuuki took her hand, guiding her around the side and then inside the yacht with the children following as Ranma signaled Shizuka she should turn the boat away from the sailing boat.

With that done Ranma turned to look over at Happosai, who was still perched on his mother's uninjured shoulder. "So you're the old man who used to train my old man"

"I taught him a lot my boy, but you should know our school emphasizes learning on the fly. And may I say," Happosai said looking around at all the lovely women aboard the yacht, "that you have fine tastes my boy, fine tastes GAHAHAHAH!" the old man cackled. Then he went on more seriously "I'll see how good you are when we can get to this island Nodoka-chan mentions. Since you're the only one besides me who practices Anything Goes, that means I need to make certain you're up to snuff."

Ranma frowned but after a moment nodded, "If you can help me start to use my ki better, then you're on."

Saya sighed, running both of her hands through her hair. "Just what we need, a lecherous martial artist, must be our lucky day." Suddenly she felt something grabbing her bust, then felt her bra disappear from around her breasts despite the fact that she was still wearing a shirt over it.

She gasped and opened her eyes bringing her arms down to cover her chest as Happosai darted away cackling. "Pretty beauties, pretty beauty's all mine!"

Ranma groaned looking over at his mother. "Are you sure taking this guy along is a good idea? I could still stuff him back aboard the sail boat y'know."

"Not at all," said Nodoka, shaking her head. "But he is a martial arts master, and he will be able to teach you a lot more about ki and anything involved with it than you could ever learn on your own."

Ranma scowled as he heard shrieks from inside, and even a faint 'oh my, grandfather!' but nodded. "I just hope it's worth the aggravation." With that Ranma bolted inside to join the chase.

Inside, protected at the moment by the closed door to the cockpit Kyoko shook her head looking over at Shizuka who was piloting the yacht away from the smaller craft. "I think our group just got a lot livelier, I just wish I knew if that was a good thing or not."

End chapter

I was somewhat tempted to just leave this story as is, and let other people make their own conclusions about the conclusion. However, I won't do that to you, I will post a final chapter, which will be set several months into the future, and maybe have a few flashbacks to things that happened as they set up their home/fortress. Probably not though because, and a lot of my reviewers were right about this, once you leave the zombies behind, there goes the danger and drama, and frankly the interest. I love some of the characters, Saya and Saeko leading the group, but I am nearing the end of this tale, because I refuse to write mere fluff or lemons for the sake of lemons. And before anyone bitches about Yuuki not getting a lemon, I did not want the lemons to dominate the chapter, and if I added another

one, then they most certainly would have.

'Till next time everybody.

Chapter 12: First Pirates, Now Zombies?

I do not own Highschool of the dead. Unlike the writer/artist of that story, I am actually finishing this story. Nor do I own Ranma 1/2, for uncounted number of reasons.

Good evening..... INFIDELS! Ahh, Achmed the dead terrorist, how funny you are, yet also faintly disturbing as a sign of America's desire to trivialize possibly the most serious issue of our lifetimes. Still funny though.

So, I was stuck at my relatives place for two weeks, and since I don't keep my Dragon Naturally Speaking program on my laptop (for some reason it doesn't really work well on it, there's always 'him' between every actual word I speak, none of the names I've added to my profile carry over to my my online profile, no idea why, and the speech recognition is WAAAY off) I had a few hours a day to devote to writing up the outlines for my next chapters of ATP and Wild Wolf, and also finish this story, parts of which I had written some time back, but hadn't polished. I was honestly surprised how many people wanted me to write an actual ending rather than leave this story open ended, but there you are.

I have to say I **love** the characters in HOTD (the original), and a part of me does wish to come back to this crossover in the future, not this story though. I feel, looking back on it, I sort of emphasized the sex part of things slightly too much instead of making it a point of drama or comedy. Plus, while the idea of heading out to an island was good, that also removed the whole zombie issue. Ranma also, despite his mental issues, is too powerful in this story to allow for much real drama in terms of survival, and unlike in Wild Wolf, where I have plans to correct that imbalance, in this story I can't just make the zombies tougher, because that would cut into the realism of others surviving against them, removing the human element from the list of things the group had to deal with. Maybe if I had him get shot or not have him add new skills to the ones he already had when I first introduced him, but no.

Anyway, if anyone is interested in talking about ideas about another crossover in this fandom, pm me, in particular ways to change the group, make it larger/smaller without cutting into 'air time'. Realize however, that I have a lot of other ideas for fics as well, and I doubt I would come back to this fandom until at least *Gods and Devils and Wild Horses*, *Oh My*, is finished.

On a related note, I have decided to not follow up with my Star Wars/Ranma or Harry Potter crossover ideas for a loooooonng while. I am also leaning towards Ranma instead of Harry because I would want it to be primarily combat/comedy based, and Ranma is simply a more random and chaotic individual than Harry, even my initial ATP Harry. I will also not get into Transformers for a long time, unless someone **literally** begs me, in which case I'll try to put out a one shot/prologue. That story would take too much world building which equals time and effort, and I'm already doing that with ATP and to a lesser extent *Wild Wolf*.

Thank you again to everyone who reviewed, in particular Prier, who has good enough to point out a lot of my mistakes in the last chapter. I was amused to see however that only two reviewers knew where I got the Makoto Nagano name, so kudos to Tomon and lyoko-kun, who recognized it as coming from Ninja Warrior, one of the three winners.

And now for the final:

Chapter 12 First Zombies, Now Pirates?

The next several days passed uneventfully while the ship moved south into the Kagoshima prefecture through the Satsunan islands carrying the now enlarged group of survivors. They spotted other ships numerous times a day, both moving simply because of wind and wave, while others were still moving under their own power. Yet terror had gripped the populace of even the smallest fishing boat, and not a one of them were willing to respond to the radio hails that Ranma and the other men sent out.

After discussion it was decided that using a male voice would probably be best, but even their relatively harmless sounding voices could not generate any response. They also kept far enough out to sea that no one on the known populated islands they passed, especially Nakanoshima, the most populous island in the area.

The trio of newcomers fit in well with the rest of the odd crew. Makoto knew his way around the ocean having lived on it off and on his whole life, so he had a lot to teach them about wind, wave, triangulation, and of course, fishing. He and Takashi in particular got along. The two of them added to their ready supply of food with at least five fish a day despite the boat moving along, something all of them were thankful for.

Makoto also got along well enough with Alice so there was no friction between the two children. They bonded the evening of his arrival over a silly card game of some kind that Ranma had never heard of. They occasionally dropped references to it in common conversation that Ranma didn't understand but the other teens seemed to get it.

Despite being stuck on board a ship Happosai had proven to be an able teacher, teaching Ranma several meditation techniques that would help them build his ability to manipulate ki. Building up his reservoir however was much more difficult, and required a lot more exercise and usage of his life. Like any physical muscle, the more someone used ki, the more they would have access to. That was on hold for now, until they got to a place where they could really go at it.

But besides his teaching ability, Happosai was not seen as a welcome addition by the rest of the pride. He was an old pervert after all, and Kasumi, who he was almost well-behaved around, couldn't be everywhere. He was constantly hopping from chest to chest, fondling and moving on quickly before any of the girls could retaliate, with, more often than not, their 'silky darlings' in his wrinkled hands.

On the other hand, beating on him gave the girls a decent outlet for any anger or other issues they were currently feeling, which came in handy when Rika and Shizuka had their monthly monsters show up. Without chocolate or any sappy movies to appease the beasts both of them had become terrors to everyone around. Happosai proved once and for all that he was nothing if not durable however, coming back for more every time they beat him down.

Kasumi fit in the most easily of all three, which would have come to no surprise to those who knew her. She was gracious, kind, an excellent cook and had this aura of tranquility about her. All the other girls had befriended her quickly. Even Saya, whose harsh tongue kept most of those who could have been her friends away before this, couldn't muster a harsh word about Kasumi. She tried at first, but Kasumi would simply smile and go about her business which made Saya think of it in the same way as kicking a puppy for wagging his tail.

Surprising nearly everyone given their vastly different natures, Kasumi and Saeko got along famously. They had a few of the same likes in terms of shows, they both were more traditional in their views and hobbies (outside of kendo of course), and even had the same tastes in food.

There was just something about Kasumi that drew even Ranma, and he smiled over at the front of the boat where she was sunning herself in a borrowed swimsuit, one of Rei's, next to Yuuki. Her one piece wasn't anywhere near as overtly stimulating as the two-piece Yuuki wore, but on Kasumi it seemed sexy.

Ranma and Kasumi had bonded that first evening. Kasumi had pushed her grief aside, at first to simply survive then to take care of Makoto and her grandfather. Now, in a place of safety and with others to take up those tasks, she had withdrawn, collapsing slowly under the weight of her grief for her family. Ranma and his mother (whose idea it had been to go looking for her when she retreated to one of the guest rooms) had helped her through it, given Kasumi shoulders to cry on, as well as willing ears.

He smirked when he noticed Yuuki looking at him and then away, flushing. She wore a two piece white two piece bikini. It wasn't anything special, though the body it covered certainly was, but it wasn't Yuuki's normal style. That suit in fact was the second one she had grabbed back at the mall. The other one, Yuuki had worn the night Ranma had finally taken the plunge and made a move on her after Saeko and Saya gave their approval. It had been ruined many times over during their playtime, and Yuuki had reluctantly thrown it over the side.

He turned around at when he heard Saya's voice hailing him. She was walking her way carefully along one side of the main cabin of the ship, one hand on the side of it, the other on the rail. She too wore a bikini, though in her case it was because they had gotten Happosai to agree not to jump them if they gave him enough visual stimulation for the day. That, coupled with the even fiercer beating Rika had given him that morning for trying to take her last pair of panties, was enough to make him agree to play nice.

When Saya was close enough to be heard over the sound of the waves and the speeding boat, Saya pointed in the direction they were heading. "We should nearly be in sight of the island, we should get together and talk about what we our plans are."

Ranma nodded and soon enough all the others, save for Shizuka who was of course still at the helm, came out on deck. Zeke raced around on the deck, with Alice and Makoto chasing after him, while the adults gathered round the prow, trying to see if they could spot the island in the distance.

Saya took out her computer, before sitting down next to Yuuki on her sunning chair. She leaned back against the other girl using her as a back rest for the moment, ignoring the feel of Yuuki's breasts pressed into her back. Last night had been more than enough to quell Saya's libido for the next week at least, despite the fact that she knew

Yuuki wasn't sated. Of all three of the girls that were currently with Ranma Yuuki had the highest sex drive. Moreover she seemed determined to try and outlast Ranma, though Saya felt that was a lost cause.

"All right," Saya said looking up at them all. "This is the island of Gajajima. It was abandoned back in the seventies because the bonito fishing that sustained the island's economy died out, forcing the inhabitants to evacuate over time. We might get lucky and find a few buildings still intact. One in particular, the lighthouse, should still be livable."

She pulled up a picture on the computer and turned it around so that the others could all see an image of the island. It was a 3-D rendering from the JGS, which showed the island as a medium sized knoll with only a single large path allowing access up from the ocean. Besides that little bit of beach, the rest of the island was a cliff face.

On top of the island were a few scattered houses connected by dirt paths. In pride of place on the highest point of the island was a lighthouse, four stories tall judging by the size of the rest of the island, but that was all that could be discerned from the picture. Another building stood nearby, which Saya said was an elementary school when the island was inhabited.

"If someone else has moved in that might be a bitch to fight our way through," Kohta said musingly, gesturing with one hand at the pathway up from the sea. His other hand stroked the barrel of his rifle, which Kohta had with him since he had been on over watch up top on the roof of the main section. He smiled however when his girlfriend caught his hand, pulling it away into a vice-like grip, not letting it go.

Beside them, Rika noticed this and smiled, glad Asami was willing to control Kohta's more violent tendencies. Still, she nodded agreement with the other sniper's observation. "That's true, especially if they have set up watchers along the cliff's edge, they'd have a major advantage over us."

Saeko and Ranma simply shrugged. "If push comes to shove I can always scale the cliffs and attack whoever it is from behind." Ranma said shrugging his shoulders.

Both Saeko and the Happosai nodded agreement while Nodoka looked amused at the scared expression Kiriko was making at the very idea. Of course with her bum shoulder she wouldn't be joining them. While Happosai was a master at manipulating ki and healing himself, he had never learned how to use it to heal someone else.

Nodoka's shoulder was still much better than it had been thanks to his aid, but not up for anything that strenuous. She looked over at Saya. "But how likely is it someone's moved in?"

"Not very." Saya replied shrugging her shoulders. "This place is pretty much perfect for group our size, but that's only because we thought ahead and basically planned to do this nearly from the start. I won't lie, getting this place up and running and able to sustain us will take a while, it's not something a lot of people will think to do, at least not this quickly. Not with so much space on the main and even secondary islands available."

"Do recall said space is crawling with zombies. But I take your point." Saeko murmured, pursing her lips thoughtfully. Then she looked up at Ranma. "What do you think we should do?"

Ranma frowned. "If we were facing some group of survivors, I would prefer for us to slow down and come in at night, but..."

Saya shook her head interrupting him. "We're probably already visible from the top of the lighthouse, and if I was them I would certainly put a look out up there."

"In that case we can only go full bore." Ranma said with a shrug. "Saeko myself and Happosai will lead off. Kohta, Rika and Asami, you all stay up on top of the cabin here with Takashi, Rei, and Auntie Kiriko providing close in defense. Keep yer eyes trained on the cliff edge up above just in case. You think those little houses by the roadway going up are still there?"

"I don't know." Saya answered honestly. "Like I said this place was abandoned in the 70s. There were a few squatters a few years later but they were evicted quickly, as far as I know it was simply abandoned entirely, save for occasional stops in by the coast guard to run the lighthouse during the storm season."

Ranma nodded, and glanced in the direction the ship was travelling. He could now see in the distance a clump of rock rising out of the ocean, with what looked like a small spike on top of it. "We're in sight already." He said pointing at over the other's shoulders. "Get your game faces on guys and gals, its show time."

With the speed of Wally 118Power it only took them another twenty minutes to get near enough to the island to make out details. The small spike that Ranma had first spotted it was in fact the lighthouse on top of the rest of the island.

But as the ship moved around the island to its southern side and the rest of the island came into view, it certainly looked dilapidated.

The small wharf was gone, leaving only a few rotting stumps behind sticking out of the water. The small houses built nearest heading up the 'road' were gone, or at least the first few were. As they came closer they noticed that around the bend of the road there were a few more there. But they were moss covered and looked very much worse for wear without any humans inhabiting them.

There was however a boat pulled up on the shore. It looked like a larger ship's emergency craft, but it had the words Coast Guard printed out on the side, along with its home ship's name. The boat however had capsized since being beached, and was slowly being pulled back out to sea. "Not a good sign." Ranma growled, but shrugged and the ship continued forward.

With Takashi and Ranma taking soundings from the front, the ship slowly inched forwards, stopping when the chain they were using hit bottom. Happosai had forced Ranma to use his meteor hammer for this, and the younger martial artist gasped a little as he finally pulled it back in, shaking his head. Despite the last few days learning from Happosai, his ki reservoir was nowhere near the size it should be to use his hammer for that long. He took a few deep breaths then shook his head, pushing off from where he had been leaning against the ship's safety railing.

Ranma leaped over the side of the boat followed quickly by Saeko and Happosai, who perched on her shoulders for a moment before hopping nimbly onto the shore without even getting his feet wet. "Kakakaka, come on youngsters, get a move on!"

Behind them, Rika led the three shooters up onto the top of the cockpit area, sitting up the top of the cliff which was about 25 meters up here. The island rose higher up along the northern side to a hundred meters, where the lighthouse was, but here it was still a damn good defensible position.

As the three dedicated martial artists moved forwards, Ranma whispered further instructions. "With that boat there, we're going to have to clear the houses one by one just to make sure. I'll take the first one, Happosai you take the next, Saeko-chan third. We need to leave at least two people outside to make certain there ain't any other zombies around that'll respond to the noise."

The others both nodded. Even Happosai knew when to be serious, and he had sucked enough ki from the oh-so lovely ladies aboard the ship to last him for weeks. Not that he was going to hold back because of this, of course.

At first this caution didn't seem to be necessary. The first few houses were empty, falling apart ruins. All of them were single room houses, where a small family or a bachelor could've stayed during that time he wasn't out with the fishing fleet. But after so many years without anyone taking care of them, there was nothing to suggest anyone had lived there at all.

After they reached the top of the island however, they ran into what they had all feared. There were two zombies moving around out in the open, twitching this way and that, possibly in reaction to the crash of the waves and the rustle of the leaves of several trees in the other direction. Both of them looked like coast guard members. One had a large bite taken out of its shoulder, but the other's bite was barely visible, a small bite on the ankle only visible when that foot caught momentarily on a root. That bite must have been overlooked until the man turned into a zombie. At the feet of the one with the visible bite lay a small pistol.

The three martial artists exchanged glances, closing their eyes briefly in prayer for the men in front of them, before Ranma moved forward, killing them swiftly. He turned back to the others. "We'll have to clear the whole island, every place a zombie could hide. If there were two here, who knows how many others."

Ranma could make out a few more moving around the dilapidated houses elsewhere, all of which looked overgrown, and seemed to be collapsing. There was one larger building which was probably the school Saya had pointed out, but its whole western wall had been collapsed by a tree falling. More, smaller trees had taken up root inside, furthering its collapse.

Happosai nodded, closing his eyes for a moment. When he opened them he shook his head, reaching into his ki-space, a trick Ranma was desperate to learn, for his small pipe. Lighting it, he puffed a few times, then pointed out into the tiny overgrown community. "I can sense a few animals that way, and one or two other things moving around, my ki sense can't tell me more than that. About five or six 'unknowns', I suppose you could say. I can also sense two more such in the lighthouse."

The lighthouse was in much better condition. No trees were nearby it, the sides were relatively moss and vine free,

and it even had a door that was still on its hinges. Ranma nodded. "We'll handle the zombie freaks on the rest of the island first, then the ones in the lighthouse."

Happosai nodded then suddenly leaped onto Saeko's chest fondling her breasts giddily. "MMM, so firm, so supple, nothing like a martial artist's ta-tas for the perfect form, that bounciness!"

Saeko could not stop herself despite the danger. "EEEEKK! You perverted old man, I'm finally going to kill you this time!" She swung her katana in a sharp arc, intending with all her heart to slice the little gnome into two halves, but Happosai nimbly jumped away.

Before Ranma could intervene or say anything, Happosai hopped to land so that he put Ranma between himself and the furious swordswoman. "Now, now Saeko-chan, take a look at our guests!"

Both younger martial artists turned toward the ruins of the small community, to see several zombies, about five, stumbling out. All but one of them wore patchwork clothing, as well as straggly beards. There wasn't a single woman among them. "You see?" Happosai crowed. "Exactly as I planned! Isn't this much easier than going in and rooting them out?"

"I'm still going to slice off my pound of flesh old one." Saeko growled, then shot forward toward the zombies, the other two following swiftly. In less time than it would take to tell, all the zombies were dead.

Ranma looked down at them, frowning thoughtfully. "Leave the ero-oji alone for now, Saeko-chan. How the heck did the infection spread here? I mean, I can see what happened with the coast guard guys, but what about these losers?"

The ancient master of Anything Goes knelt down, looking at the uncovered arm of one of them. He spat disdainfully to the side. "Druggies. Look, you can tell where this one injected himself. They must have moved in here, begun to grow their own crops or something. I wonder if they had any actual crops besides whatever drug they use?"

Ranma and Saeko exchanged a grim glance. "We'll have to find those crops and burn them out. I understand marijuana has medicinal value, but anything else needs to be burned now. If we add to our community later, we can't have that kind of crap around." Happosai nodded, and he and Ranma moved off into the woods to take care of that, while Saeko went back to the boat to grab Rei and the other fighters save Rika and the shooters, who, after being informed of what they found, turned their attentions mostly out to the sea, just in case.

Takashi and Kyoko joined Ranma and Happosai moving through the rest of the island, which was about two square miles of usable land, mostly taken up by the ruins of the small community. They soon found another zombie, who Ranma dispatched, as well as the druggies paraphernalia and crops. Under Kyoko's instructions, Happosai set a controlled fire, burning them away.

However, Takashi also found a small area where the squatters had begun to grow other crops, real food type of crops rather than their drugs. "Guess they knew they couldn't live on that shit alone." Ranma and the others nodded, happy to see the small four feet by four feet wheat field, as well as the even smaller section of radishes, some other vegetables, and even sugar beets. No spices of course, but they had enough of those in their hoarded goods, and they had enough seedling to multiply these crops by a factor of five at least.

Inside the lighthouse, Rei and Saeko did indeed find the two predicted zombies in residence. One again looked like a Coast Guard seaman, while the other wore the same squalid clothing as the others on the island. The inside of the lighthouse was laid out as nearly all such were, a single large room at the base housing the, alas rusted generator, with a staircase leading up to first quarters and then the light itself up top. This place was so old that it had a small room on the first floor set aside for coal, but it also had a small kitchenette the two girls could see.

Done with their perusal, the two made their way up the stairs, making sure there were no more zombies before heading back out to join the others. The rooms on the second floor had to be aired out badly, they stank of mildew and decay, but other than that, there were no problems, and once they got rid of the smell, the three small rooms would provide decent bedroom quarters for the various pairings among them. The top of the light house was in worse shape, with much of the glass smashed, but even that was fixable.

Soon enough the martial artists were back onboard the boat, which Shizuka had grounded on the shoreline. Ranma reported what they found, finishing. "I think we should abandon the idea of fixing up any building but the lighthouse itself. It's still decent enough, no holes in this walls or anything, and I think it'd be big enough, for all of us."

Saeko described the layout of the lighthouse, as well as the degree of damage to the other buildings on the island had taken over the years, and everyone agreed that putting the lighthouse back in working order would be much

easier.

"If one of you can show me where the old generator was, I can disconnect it and rig a connection to one of the solar panels while we still have sunlight. If we can get in a full day of charging on it, we should have enough power to power the lighthouse without using our gas reserves." Yuuki said. Another of the portable solar rechargers was already hooked up to the boat, running all the electronics on it.

"I'll take you up there now." Saeko said nodding. "Takashi, Kohta, would you come with me please? We might need some extra hands to get the old generator out of there, it was badly rusted in places so might be hard to disconnect. After that, I think it might be a very good idea to have a watcher set up in the top of the lighthouse.

"What about the boat?" Shizuka asked. She pouted a little as she looked over at it. "That boat saved us a lot of time and effort, and it's a magnificent resource."

"We're not gonna get rid of it or anythin'!" Ranma said laughing a little. "In fact I was thinking of basically pulling it all the way up to the lighthouse and 'docking' it up there somehow. We can't leave it at the bottom here, it sticks out too much, telling anyone who stops by someone's here, and we'd have to leave people onboard to guard it as well." The ship also was a much more habitable dwelling than the lighthouse for now, if only because it actually had furniture whereas a lighthouse barely had any but a few sleeping racks on the second floor, whose mattresses were heavily riddled with mold.

"Ranma" Saya said sighing. "You have no idea how heavy that thing is. Even if we all got together, there's no way we could lift it."

"We can't lift it, but we can drag it up. There are a lot of trees up there,. Put them down as rollers, and pull the ship up by a rope. We can use its anchor chain can't we?"

"Lad you're dreaming!" Happosai laughed, shaking his wrinkled head. "There's no way we can do that. No, we'll have to... why are you looking at me like that?"

Ranma smirked, still staring at the diminutive martial artist. "I just had an idea..."

It took them the rest of the day to get everything ready for Ranma's plan, forcing them to break for the evening. That evening all of them save Yuuki, Kyoko, Rei and Takashi slept on the boat in shifts just in case someone came by and saw the yacht sticking out like a sore thumb on the beach.

Yuuki and her crew however were busy throughout the evening and into the night to remove the old generator, which alas was more 'rust than working parts' in Yuuki's opinion. Eventually they removed it however, and found that the electrical lines of the lighthouse were in decent repair. Many of the lightbulbs were gone, broken or missing, but eventually they would have light, power and even some heat in the lighthouse. Not a lot, the heating system was pretty bad, but the small kitchenette on the first floor would at least have all its parts working, and they could set fires for heat if need be.

The next day, while Nodoka, Kiriko, Kohta, Yuuki and Asami in creating a sort of docking area by the lighthouse (very crude, just enough to keep the boat upright once it was there, and it used most of their cement supply), Ranma and the others got to work. Saya and Kyoko were on over watch in the lighthouse, while Saeko, Rei, Takashi, Rika and Ranma worked on the boat. Shizuka and Happosai however were the main reason this plan was workable at all

.Happosai sighed happily, nuzzling into the giant pillows of Shizuka's chest. "Ah, so happy.... I would name Ranma my heir right now even if he wasn't the last one practicing my school!"

In his diminutive hands, Happosai held one end of Ranma's meteor hammer, whose chain glimmered blue with ki as it passed around the lighthouse like a very primitive fulcrum, then down the gravel path towards the beach. It ended where the other end was looped over the prow of the boat through a series of holes Ranma and Happosai had carefully sliced out of the carbon-composite that made up the hull along the safety railing there.

Down below, the ship had been slowly maneuvered until its keel sat on a makeshift sled, then tied down by every piece of rope they could find. At the back Ranma stood, waiting to help push the contraption along. The others were all lined up along sides of the boat, ready to rush in to aid in anyway necessary.

The idea was built around two things, one, that Happosai had a much larger and more readily available ki reservoir than Ranma, and he could gain power through his perversions. They had found a large natural stone formation, where Happosai would set himself, then he would, using the power he would soak up from being held by Shizuka, set

himself, and begin to shrink the chain slowly, pulling the boat up its length along the pathway. It would be slow going, but doable.

Makoto stood by with a radio, talking with Alice who was by the boat, nodded over at the old man and the incredibly busy nurse (who Makoto was developing a bit of a crush on). "The ship's all ready to go!"

"Alright, let's do this oji-san!" Shizuka leaned down, placing Happosai on the ground, giving him an extra tight hug and a kiss on the cheek before setting him on his feet.

Happosai giggled, ahh, bliss! With a thought, his perversion based ki aura blossomed around him, and he secured his feet under the monstrous piece of granite, sending his ki into the ground further anchoring himself. With his aura on full, the old man began to shrink the chain. There was a squeal behind them as the chain moved along the outer walls of the White House, followed quickly by another sound as the ship began to be pulled up towards him.

Next to him, Makoto listened in on his radio for a moment then gave Happosai and the nurse a thumb's up. Shizuka smiled happily, leaning over, not incidentally pulling Happosai's diminutive form further into her chest, causing his aura to flare even brighter. "It's working!"

Down below things were not going nearly so well. The makeshift lash up that was the sled was not moving very well. While Ranma was busy pushing, the others were busy removing the built-up gravel from the front of it. This was made harder several minutes into the operation when it began to rain. As droplets began to hit him Ranma shook his head angrily. "Great, just what we need!"

Saeko heard him from the front of the boat and shouted back. "Don't complain! Who knows what else can go wrong!"

The rain was making it worse for the group in front. Their footing was worse, the gravel was strangely slippery given the amount of moss that was practically everywhere, and the gravel clumped together worse at the front of the moving sled, making the going even slower. They had to occasionally tell Alice to signal Happosai to stop, allowing them time to remove some of the pile up, as well as redo the ropes, which occasionally came undone despite the Makoto's best efforts. Luckily the boat didn't show any danger of tipping one way or another, thanks to its general shape and the nature of its keel.

The operation continued throughout the day as the rain continued to pour down over them. By around midday the yacht had moved about halfway up the path and gotten around the bend, which was by far the most difficult portion so far. But the workers were beginning to tire.

They were about to take break when Alice held up a hand from where she had been walking next to the boat. Unlike the workers, she wore a raincoat, but it was still getting surprisingly cold thanks to the rain, and she was shivering a little. But that wasn't what had caused her to get the workers attention. She held her radio up to one ear, looking at them all with wide eyes. "Saya oneechan says there are boats incoming."

OOOOOO

Ranma raced through the woodlands then up through the lighthouse to join Saya and Kyoko staring out into the ocean. Kyoko lifted on hand from her binoculars to point out to the south of the island, straight past where the tiny entrance was. "Three small boats!" she reported. "They look like fishing vessels of some kind but they're moving together, and pretty quickly too."

Ranma frowned. *First zombies, now pirates? Great...* "Can you make any out any details?"

Saya shook her head. "These binoculars we're using aren't powerful enough. But they're definitely heading towards the island under power. The boat might have been seen sometime last night, or maybe we were spotted while we were sailing along yesterday. I don't want to say that their intentions aren't here in as the driven snow but..."

Ranma chuckled darkly, shaking his head. "No need, let's prepare for the worst and be surprised if it doesn't happen." He turned to Rika, who had just run up the stairs behind them, one of the rifles over her shoulder. "Do you think the snipers should stay up here, or move to the cliff edge by the pathway?"

"Both. Asami should stay up here, and Kohta and I will take position at the top of the cliffs with as many of the others armed with long range weapons as we can. Visibility is so bad because of the rain I doubt Asami-chan will be able to get off many shots, but from the top of the cliffs we should be able to, and be in a position to fire down into the pathway. I doubt we'll be able to tell whether they're good guys or bad guys until they're nearly on top of us in this weather, so that will be where the action really takes place." Rika replied authoritatively.

Ranma nodded, then turned without another word to race down the stairs again, meeting Alice coming up, huffing and puffing with a soggy Zeke next to her. "Call Makoto, he, you and the other noncombatants should fort up here." After that, he relayed his orders to Yuuki and the others in the lighthouse before moving on to grab up some of the weapons.

Soon enough he was back with the others relaying the news, carrying Saeko's blade as well as his cousin's jumonji-yari. Both women gratefully took the weapons while Ranma and Takashi slammed home several dozen makeshift hocks behind the sled.

After that, Takashi joined the others on the top of the cliff, taking a nail gun from Kohta, who was belly down in the wet grass, peering down his sniper rifle's scope already at the incoming vessels. Kohta, Takashi and Yuuki, both of the latter armed with the two nail guns, were on one overlooking cliff, nearly hidden in the scrub brush along the edge. Rika, Kyoko, Kiriko and Saya were on the other. Kyoko was once more armed with the crossbow, while Kiriko and Saya, surprisingly slightly better shots than Takashi or Yuuki, each held one of Rika's special pistols.

Kohta nodded back at the other two teens, pointedly ignoring the ability to stare right down Yuuki's shirt as she sprawled on the ground next to him. He and Asami had indeed had a fun time a few evenings ago, and Kohta was of the opinion that one girl was all he could handle. "Don't try to fire at the boats, even when they land on the shore, it's too far for you to hit. Concentrate on taking out any of them in the path directly below."

Both teens nodded, while Takashi glanced down the cliff to where Rei was waiting with the other marital artists worriedly. On the other cliff, Rika gave the same order then sighted down her scope at the incoming vessels. Below, Happosai joined the trio already there, hiding themselves in the shadows of the cliff out of sight along the bend in the gravel road.

They had to wait another forty minutes before the ships were close enough for the watchers on high to make out details. Ranma's radio crackled and he looked up toward the cliff where Rika was hunkered down. "Almost certainly pirates." she reported. "They're all armed, mostly knives and clubs with more than a scattering of guns. Not a woman among them, and all of them look shabby. Their boats are too far from what I can make out, though I'm no expert."

Ranma frowned. *That many guns might give us trouble if we can't get close. On the other hand, any extra rounds will be a good addition to our supplies. Kota at least will be happy* he thought to himself smirking a little at the thought of the gun nut and his one track mind. Still now he had a battle to plan.

Debating for a moment, he shook his head. "We can't assume we'll be able to treat with them peaceably, especially if they're that well-armed and with no women among them. Take them under fire the moment you can. Disorganize them as much as possible; target their leaders then anyone with a gun who tries to keep his distance behind the main rush."

"Roger." Rika's approval for Ranma's orders came through her voice easily, and not a moment later a single shot rang out from the cliff above, hitting a man on the first ship who was dressed slightly more colorfully than his fellows in the head. A moment later another shot rang out taking a man next to him in the chest.

Over the pounding rain Ranma heard shouts of dismay and rage in several different languages. The most prominent was surprisingly Vietnamese for some reason. The next most prominent was Japanese which made much more sense. He idly wondered where this crew had come from, but of course it didn't really matter, they were all going to die here anyway if he had anything to say about it.

He looked over at the other three. "Get ready, hopefully the shooters above will have disorganized them enough that they'll try to charge forward as a group so we can get close but if we don't, watch out for their guns."

Saeko and Rei nodded seriously, but Happosai chuckled. "Teach your grandfather to eat rice, boy!" He smirked reaching into his ki pocket once more pulling out a large ball that looks like a very makeshift firework. "Once the battle really gets going, I'll rush forward and burn their ships."

Ranma frowned a little then nodded. "Burn only one of them; we might be able to salvage some from the others."

Rei looked at her cousin shaking her head at the confidence he had in their ability to deal with this. Still, as he crouched, and tiny ki blades began to appear from his fingers, she somehow knew that they would survive this.

The small beach actually wasn't big enough for all three of the attacking boats to beach themselves. The first two slammed into it, the pirates, and whatever they had had once been they were certainly pirates now, swarmed over the sides into the shallows. The third boat was waiting its turn, too far out for the men aboard to jump into the shallows

and keep their guns out from the water.

Kohta and the others began to fire into the crowd of 50 or so pirates as they charged up the gravel path. Rika targeted the four pirates that had been left behind with the two beached boats, killing them all in quick succession before they could push their boats back out from the shoreline.

Several of the pirates tried to stay put and fire back up at the cliff top, but they couldn't range on the shooters above. Kohta and Kiriko concentrated on them, cutting them down where they stood.

The rest of the pirates continued their charge up the gravel path, but as soon as they turned the corner on the path up Ranma charged. Slamming into the front of the pirates, he was in among them before the ones with guns could train on him. He was simply too damn fast for any of the ones using guns to get a bead on, never still, striking and moving on.

Rei and Saeko followed quickly, their weapons flashing. Saeko was simply too fast and too skilled to be in much danger from the pirates wielding hand-to-hand weapons, and Rei's spear work was enough to keep them at bay as well, with Saeko watching her back at need. The gunners were the main threat, but they hesitated just long enough for the marital artist to get mixed up with them.

They still fired of course, pirates of any era were not known for caring about their fellow crewmen, certainly not in times like these. But now the three martial artists could use the crowd to protect themselves. It was still dangerous, but poor visibility thanks to the rain, the chaotic conditions they propagated, and the fact that there were only three of them for less than fifty pirates now made the guns more dangerous for their fellows than the defenders.

Happosai literally jumped over the entire fight not incidentally drawing quite a lot of surprised gunfire at first. He landed behind the main melee, racing on towards the beach, preparing his firework. "Happo Daikairen!" He threw it quickly, impacting the boat that was trying to nose its way between its fellows close enough to the shore for the pirates aboard to leap out onto the shallows.

The firework hit the boat, exploding on impact and sending fiery shards every which way. Even in the rain the fire caught helped along by several bottles of alcohol that had been left out on the deck. The pirates slovenly lifestyle came back to bite them in the ass as the alcohol ignited, racing along the small boat.

Several of them cried out, jumping into the ocean but Happosai remained there, killing any of them who made their way to shore. With the end of his pipe he pushed the now merely burning boat away from its two fellows. He watched with hard eyes as it was swept away by the ocean currents crashing into the cliff on the right side of the entrance before being pulled along the edge of it and out to the ocean.

Suddenly there was a booming blast as the fire ignited something explosive inside. Bodies and bits of bodies scattered along with pieces of the boat. Thankfully the ocean's current had already taken the boat out far enough that only a few burning bits smacked into the other two, and with the rain they weren't enough to spread the fire further.

With that done, Happosai turned and raced back to join the main battle.

By this time the Pirates trigger-happy attitude had cost them the majority of their men. In return, Rei had taken a blow from a club to her shoulder when she had dodged a pirate firing on her from point blank range, and another blow to her ankle from another pirate who had run out of bullets and been forced to use his rifle as a club. She was limping badly, leaning on her jumonji yari for support, but Saeko and Ranma were nearly untouched save for a few bruises here and there.

The combination of the pirates own gunfire, the fact there were only three of them, the fire from above and their close range skills had proven to be more than a match for the pirates numbers. Happosai came back in time to help finish it, killing the last standing pirate as he frantically tried to retreat while at the same time reloading his rifle.

Ranma nodded his head coming down from his battle high before raising a hand to wipe some pirate blood off his face from his face. The rain was doing it's job to clean the majority of it off thankfully. That battle had been up close, personal, and brutal as all get out, but they had survived it. By his side Saeko was wearily cleaning her blade, her eyes dark, but a thin, ecstatic smile on her face, as she shuddered, coming down from her own high.

Nearby Rei was shaking a little, not having gotten used killing other human beings before this despite the battle against the Shido-shit's forces back in the city. Still she shook it off quickly and, limping, joined the others as they moved towards the beached boats.

Behind them Kohta quickly came down to look at the guns from the dead pirates. Takashi came with him carrying the meat cleaver he had taken from the mall in one hand, and his nail gun in the other. He quickly moved to lend a shoulder to Rei, ignoring Kohta's mutters about the guns he was quickly stacking up, shaking his head in irritation at how many of them were broken, rusty, or otherwise useless. The others stayed up top to cover them.

While Rei rested on the beach, Ranma and Takashi searched one of the boats while Saeko and Happosai searched the other, though unfortunately they didn't find much of use. There was a lot of alcohol, which Happosai greedily stuffed into his the space, ignoring Saeko's look of censure. The blankets and the cots were so dirty none of the searchers wanted the chance them. They found a few crates of bullets and a few barrels of gasoline, which made Yuuki happy once she saw them since it supplemented the amount of fuel that their yacht had nicely.

At the moment however, Ranma shook his head. "These guys must have a main base somewhere I guess, but I don't honestly see anything else here we could use."

Takashi shook his head next to him as he came out of what had been possibly the captain's quarters. "I can't even find any charts or anything. I think we're done here."

Ranma nodded then moved over to pick the large barrel of gasoline while Takashi picked up two of the boxes of bullets, piling a heavy length of rope on top he had found out on deck.

They dropped their goods off after which, they all, besides Rei, Kohta and Rika, pitched in to remove the bodies from the pathway, throwing them onto the boats. This took more than an hour, by which time the storm had worsened even more, and the sun was beginning to descend in the distance.

Finally, Ranma and Happosai pushed the now filled boats out into the ocean after staving them in at both ends. They would soon sink, hopefully leaving nothing to indicate what had happened to them. Despite that defensible position of the island, anonymity was their best defense. With that done, the victorious yet bone weary defenders trooped up to the lighthouse.

The workers trundled into the lighthouse to be greeted by the most magnificent sight of all time. Hot, steaming food was laid out on the table, which had been taken from the yacht. Sandwiches, rice balls, seared tuna and other fish and other things.

Kasumi, Nodoka, the two kids, and Kiriko stood smiling at them all while Asami finished bringing out some of the plates, which had also been taken from the yacht, from the kitchenette, also piled with food.

Saeko shook her head in astonishment. "You did all that cooking that small kitchenette?"

"It was a challenge," Nodoka nodded, "but well worth it I feel."

Everyone quickly fell to with a will as Kasumi passed out warm towels, again taken from the yacht, to the wary warriors. The only one of the fighters who had any energy at all was Happosai, who cackled gleefully at having spent more than half the day with Shizuka either carrying him or pressing up against his back with her magnificent bosom.

It was decided to have Ranma and his 'pride' sleep down on the boat, while everyone else bunked up in the lighthouse, with Kohta and Rika taking turns on night watch up top. Eventually they would add further to their defenses, but for now they were still vulnerable and they all knew it, even if Kohta was ecstatic about the haul of guns and rounds they had taken from the pirates.

The next day, the workers went back to work on moving the yacht up the path, minus Rei, whose ankle, in Shizuka's opinion was too badly battered to take her weight. They finished moving the boat up into its makeshift hold by late afternoon.

Over the next month and a half the group got further to grips with making this island their home. Makoto, Kohta, Happosai and Takashi, surprisingly with Takashi in charge, scoured the remains of the small village for pieces of building material they could use, making the housing for the yacht much more permanent, as well as making a small, very makeshift barricade in the pathway down to the ocean right where it curved. Happosai also began to teach Takashi martial arts construction along with Ranma. Both boys took to it easily, but Takashi had a flair for it that Ranma, for all he was better at nearly all the actual martial arts part of it, couldn't match.

Ranma worked closely with Kasumi to expand the lighthouse's kitchenette with some of the material Takashi came up with, something that made Saeko and Saya as well as Yuuki smile every time they saw the two together. It was obvious Kasumi was attracted to Ranma but didn't want to act on it without getting at least Saeko's okay. She was still

not as used to life as it was now as the others were, but eventually Saeko knew that Kasumi would work up her courage enough to ask join them, and Saeko would welcome her. After all, Kasumi was a fine figure of a girl, and it was obvious Ranma was attracted to her as well.

While this was going on the bedding from cots in the crew quarters were taken out of the yacht and cleaned, along with all of the removable sofas and sofa pillows. These were used to make the lighthouse more livable. Kohta and Asami took over the topmost level of the lighthouse, a small area built around the light itself, which they had disconnected from the generator just in case. They used a few of the pillows, and two of the bedding sets.

The next level was somewhat larger, and now contained two rooms. One of them had been taken over by Shizuka and Rika, the other by Takashi and Rei. The others all slept on the first floor in the main area there, using the majority of the pillows taken from the yacht. Ranma and his lovers remained aboard the boat in the master bedroom, where they had built up quite a lot of happy memories.

With the two solar panels fueling their power, both the boat and the lighthouse had power, something that would come winter be a necessity.

While Ranma worked on expanding the kitchen and Shizuka helped Nodoka to redesign the interior, Kyoko led the others in creating a largish garden right outside the lighthouse at the back, where hopefully they would be able to eventually harvest more food for themselves along with a small garden that the drug use it used.

With all of them, even the children, doing their part, the island was both defensible and was quickly becoming more homely and self-sustaining. Thanks to Saya's planning they had enough supplies to last them until their first batch of crops came in, the fishing down on the shore and the few animals (mostly birds of various types) supplemented their diet. They had clothing enough for the time being and for winter when it eventually arrived. They had enough power, and enough material to actually make this place a home, no matter how ramshackle.

Despite all this progress however, there were some things that they couldn't create themselves on the island. There weren't a lot of excess wires so if any of the electronics in the lighthouse went that was it. They didn't have a lot of light bulbs either, making the lighting in the lighthouse intermittent, forcing them to switch some of the lights from the interior of the yacht to the lighthouse.

Everyone knew that they would eventually have to send 'cutting out expeditions' to at least Nakanoshima. Bullets were no longer an issue which Kohta gave thanks for daily, but Takashi was unhappy with the amount of wood that was really too rotted for permanent use. The planks they had already used were unfortunately the majority of the usable wood on the island that didn't come from the trees, which, given the fact they attracted birds to supplement their diet and a few were fruit bearing, none of the group wanted to cut down.

They also didn't have any ready supply of metal; there was no usable metal anywhere on the island that wasn't rusted badly, not even nails. Takashi had already thought up plans to create a more permanent method of moving the ship up and down the trail, but it would require more resources than they had at present.. It would always be backbreaking work, but it could be made much more easier then what had been, most especially with the inclusion of some wheels instead of a sled operation. Some gears could also help the meteor hammer to actually pull the boat up without so much muscle power necessary.

For now however, all of them simply wanted to stay here for a few months and relax. In Ranma's thought, the life they were carving themselves out here on this island was probably the best they could do in today's world. The future could solve itself in his opinion, right now he was just going to enjoy every day as it came.

Several nights after work had completed on enlarging the kitchen, Saeko stared down at two small pills in her palm, while her other hand was gently playing with her nether regions, feeling the fluids slowly dribbling out of her. Yuuki lay collapsed by her side on top of Saya's already dozing form, while Ranma's arm gently held Saeko against his chest from behind. A brunette head leaned lightly against Saeko's sweaty breasts, her own breathing slightly labored. Kasumi had indeed joined Ranma's 'pride' as Saya still rather caustically called them, and fit in immensely well, somehow adding another component to their family.

Eventually the mistress of the kitchens (Kasumi was called that by everyone, her cooking was better than even Nodoka's or her sisters) got her breathing under control. She too down at the two pills in Saeko's hand. The two of them shared a glance, communing silently before Saeko spoke softly. "Ranma could we ask you a question?"

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And there we have the end of *Horse of the Dead*. I could've expanded this further, going on their first 'cutting out expedition', putting in a few more lemons, but really I felt this was a good time to end the story. It wasn't so much that my muse was deserting me for *High School Of The Dead*, as evidenced by my pre-author statement, but that **this** story was coming to an end. Here we have them making home for themselves, making it self-sufficient, and the girls contemplating the future. I feel that is a good place to end it, I hope everyone enjoyed the story and again, if you have ideas you want to share about another crossover in this fandom PM me and I will cheerfully exchange ideas you. If you are a budding writer yourself and want to try this fandom out, I again will cheerfully offer advice. As always read and review, and I hope you enjoyed it.