

S-Files: Next Try

The New Saint Dossiers

Von abgemeldet

Kapitel 14: Chapter 6: The Search for Cosmo! Willing, but No Teacher

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Makoto ushered Milo out of the laboratory. The Scorpio Gold Saint looked at her in shock.

"Can't I switch places with Camus? I think I'd really prefer thawing Himiko instead of doing demeaning menial stuff..."

"Demeaning? It's what has to be done! -- And about Himiko... Camus put her into the Freezing Coffin, so he has to get her out again, too."

"But I *hate* housekeeping stuff!"

"I don't mind," Makoto shrugged. "When Himiko isn't there someone else has to do it."

"Well, *you* are there! Housekeeping is women's work."

"These ideas are old-fashioned. Anyway, without Himiko around who will cook, wash, iron and do the gardening?"

"You of course!"

"Oh no! Don't even think about that. This is my house, and you will make yourself useful -- that is, unless you want to pack your things and go back to your temple."

"What? You blackmail me? Me who fetches your food and teleports around with and for you?"

"The only thing you really do is appear punctual when you smell that there is food on the table."

"Isn't that of major importance, too?"

"Sure, but as you are on diet from now on, you have time for the *really* important tasks."

"You can't be serious -- depriving me of my proper food is life-threatening!"

"It's more life-threatening if you get fat."

"I am not fat. I'm only getting bigger and stronger."

"You'll never get bigger, just wider around the middle."

"That's all muscles! Just try!" Milo posed in front of her and pointed at his biceps.

"I don't doubt that you are nicely muscled *there*. I worry more about your belly. Ah well, what for do I argue with you anyway? You'll *never* listen to reason."

"Hm... I'm always reasonable," Milo claimed. "Which reminds me, when do we eat?"

"I'm sorry, I won't be able to cook -- as you don't want to help me I have other household chores to do and no time to prepare any food."

Milo stayed quiet for a moment, thinking hard. "Speaking hypothetically -- if I would help you a little, would you then have the time to cook something?"

Makoto just gave him a look as if he were some insect that was due to be exterminated. 'Hypothetical', hah! Either he did something, or he had to see where he could obtain something to eat.

Milo sighed. No food, that was a harsh punishment. And promptly, his stomach began to grumble.

"Did *you* grumble, or was it just your stomach?"

"My stomach!" he said accusingly.

"I cannot believe that you are already that hungry again!"

"I ate only some tiny tidbits in the morning," Milo tried to defend himself.

"In my opinion you ate a veritable mountain."

"I'm a Gold Saint and our enormous Cosmo needs a lot of energy, of course."

"I thought Cosmo *is* energy?" Makoto examined Milo closely. "Moreover, you haven't done anything today."

"But something has to power the Cosmo in the first place, don't you agree?"

"I cannot believe your Cosmo is powered up by you filling your stomach."

"No? I always thought it was just like that," Milo claimed.

"That's ridiculous. It would mean Saints just have to eat to increase their Cosmo..." Makoto frown. "Although, if I think of it, most of you Saints do indeed seem to eat all the time..."

"See!" Milo grinned. "Cosmo does indeed increase with good eating."

"And I thought it increases due to diligent training..."

"Well, training helps a little, too."

"Now I know what happened to *my* Cosmo. It simply starved," Makoto laughed. "And Himiko's went mad because of malnutrition as she only eats like a sparrow."

"Yeah, Himiko's weird Cosmo... It still needs to be examined. Who knows, maybe it's no real Cosmo after all?"

"I can't tell. So far I haven't understood this Cosmo at all."

"Camus should find out. The Kyoukou gave him the job to examine it."

"Whatever," Makoto shrugged. "I really wonder how it feels too produce these silly hearts."

"Dunno. It never happened to me."

Makoto grinned inwardly. She knew she had seen him do it at least once. But obviously that meant it wasn't really noticeable. "Well, so far I haven't had the misfortune to produce anything Cosmoish."

"Fortunately," Milo breathed in relief. Who knew what she would produce? Probably little nasty syringes... "But still you must have at least a little Cosmo or you couldn't have passed the Veil to visit Sanctuary."

Makoto shrugged. "But I don't feel anything."

"Maybe you need to concentrate hard to evoke something."

"And what if suddenly I start to produce silly pink hearts, too?"

"Naa, you don't look like the type for little pink hearts. Maybe you can wield Excalibur like Shura? Or you can throw people in Another Dimension like Saga?"

"But what for? I don't need any Cosmo."

"But I would love to train you!"

"I certainly don't want to be trained by you."

"Why not? I want a disciple, too. Why has it always to be Albiore or Crystal or Dohko or Camus who are allowed to train?"

"How should I know? I just know I don't want to train at all. After all I heard it's straining and dangerous."ai

"You should be excited that I, a *Gold Saint*, want to train you! It's an honour. And anyway, according to the rules of Sanctuary, everybody who shows some Cosmo needs to be trained."

"If you volunteer to do my job here at the Graude Foundation Research Labs? Otherwise I'd have no time."

"Is everything so complicated out of Sanctuary?"

"Sanctuary is not of this world, it seems." Suddenly Milo frowned and seemed to listen inside. "Camus asks if there is a way to set your hair dryer to automatic and let it do the work itself. He gets bored, he says."

"I don't mind if he gets *terminally* bored. Maybe then he thinks twice before freezing poor Himiko again. Tell him he has to live with it."

"I'll tell him..." Milo closed his eyes, then opened them again. "I'm sure Hyoga won't be amused when he learns that Camus froze his new mama again."

"Just don't tell him."

"But don't you think he'll notice that Himiko isn't here?"

"She is with Camus and they have to train. That's all he needs to know."

"And when he homes in on Camus and goes there?"

"I'm sure he will understand that Camus and Himiko don't want to be disturbed," Makoto said with raised eyebrows.

"Indeed, that's a good idea."

"Ah, finally we're back home..." Makoto opened the door and slipped out of her shoes. Milo did the same. He didn't want to be reprimanded by her for neglecting that.

"So what do you cook for lunch?"

"Don't you remember that I have other things in mind than cooking?"

"Not even canned food or maybe cup noodles?"

"That's something you can do yourself!"

"You are heartless!"

"Not at all."

"Puhlease, Makoto?" He looked at her with his best puppy dog gaze.

"You really can get on a woman's nerves..." She went into the kitchen, rummaged through a cupboard and found a portion of cup noodles. She hated this stuff, but for Milo it should be just perfect. It took only a few minutes and they were ready, and then they stood right in front of the hungry Scorpio who already sat at the table with a fork in his hand.

"I like food where I don't have to wait for long," he beamed. "Fast food in the literal sense!"

Makoto shook her head and tousled his blue-violet mane while the noodles disappeared in no time.

"So, now my stomach doesn't growl anymore. -- Why don't you eat anything, too?"

"Fast food isn't my kind of food, I'm afraid."

"I see. So let's now try to find out about your Cosmo!"

"And how do you want to examine that?"

"We could go into the garden and you will take a stone and try to smash it with your fist. It was the first exercise my master Scorpio Antares gave me, and I think I heard it's the first exercise for any new Saint-to-be."

"The poor stone! I don't like the idea."

"But it's how it has to be done! You have to learn to focus your energy."

"That doesn't sound like fun." Makoto looked at her hand. When was the last time she had smashed wooden planks and bricks in her karate training? She knew too well how much it had hurt in the beginning when she hadn't done it correctly.

"Training is training. It's not supposed to be fun. But when you have mastered your Cosmo you might become very powerful."

"I would prepare to hit something soft, I have to admit."

"But that wouldn't help you to focus your Cosmo properly."

"Okay, okay, I will fetch some bricks if it pleases you." Makoto went into the garden. Next to the house there was some rubble, among it some bricks and stones. She waited for Milo to join her in the garden and gave him a stone the size of two fists.

"Look closely!" he said. He took the stone, his hand began to glow golden and the brick crumbled to dust in his fingers. "That's what Cosmo can do."

"I don't think I'll manage to do that."

"Just try it!" Milo took another stone. "Here. Concentrate on the stone, feel the matter and the molecules and atoms it consists of and make them break apart. It's very easy." This stone, too, crumbled to dust.

"If you say so..." Makoto took up a brick and looked at it darkly.

"Now concentrate," Milo encouraged her. "Make its structure break apart."

"It refuses to cooperate."

"You just don't concentrate enough!"

"What about if I hit it after all?"

"Well, that's the other option. Then you have to concentrate all your energy in this hit, and it will crumble, too."

Makoto lay the stone on the ground, concentrated like her karate sensei had told her and hit it with a loud scream. It broke in two nice parts.

"Not bad," Milo said in surprise. "But I didn't feel any Cosmo!"

"This works without Cosmo."

"Hm."

"I can break two stones on top of each other, but that's all."

"Hm." Milo frowned. "You were supposed to use your Cosmo!"

"No, you said I was supposed to hit the stone. I did it. If I knew how this Cosmo really works, I might try it, but I just don't know."

Milo sighed. This was harder than he expected. Cosmo was just natural for him, nothing to really think about. How should he *explain*? "Well, you just *do* it," he said helplessly. Maybe there was a reason that Albiore and Camus got disciples and he didn't... "Maybe you should ask Camus," he finally decided.

"I will if he has time. Which reminds me -- I have no time for this now. There are more

important chores to do. You will now learn how to do the laundry and iron it. It's just fair that I will teach you something, too."

"Pardon? Washing and ironing? You can't be serious!"

"Of course. You make things dirty, so you have to learn how to clean them. I hate uncleanly things in my house."

"*You* are free to wash the stuff!"

"If you make me angry I will throw you together with your clothes into the washing machine."

"I don't fit in there," Milo grinned.

"I will make you fitting!" Makoto went inside again and tugged Milo along. As her tone of voice sounded dangerously final, he decided to comply. *Watching* her doing the laundry was an okay option for him, too. "And you are going to help," Makoto added. "If you refuse it's no dinner for you."

"*What?!* But you *promised* to cook dinner for me!"

"If you don't help me this will have to wait due to lack of time."

"That's a mean trick!"

"No, just the brutal truth." Makoto began to sort the laundry.

Milo looked miserably at the choices in front of him. But the outlook not to get any dinner was worse than doing some menial tasks. "You will promise not to tell anyone that I did women's work," he demanded.

"Whom should I tell that?"

"Promise!"

"If you insist -- I promise."

"Good. Even being seen here would compromise my reputation..." He closed the door, and Makoto just shook her head. Men! Or rather -- Scorpio Gold Saints!!

* * *

Today Hyoga and Shun returned home early. Kinoshita-sensei, their teacher, had an important conference this afternoon and so part of their lessons were cancelled.

"Do you have an idea what we could do now?" Shun asked. "It's nice that we have the

whole afternoon off for a change."

"Too bad that our mama will be still at work," Hyoga sighed.

"You're right. This means we have to wait until the evening to get some tasty meal." Shun echoed Hyoga's sigh.

"Let's stow away our school books, and then let's look for something in the kitchen."

"Oh yeah, maybe we find some sweets."

"And ice-cream!" Hyoga added.

"And cookies!"

"Let's storm the kitchen!"

When they passed the washing room, they were surprised that the door was closed. A loud crash from inside made them stop in their tracks.

"Milo! Can't you be a little bit more careful? Now that stuff is all over us both!" Makoto's voice could be heard.

"That was your fault, not mine. But you look really cute all in white," Milo's voice answered.

"Oh! That's Makoto and Milo in there -- together! And why have they closed the door?" Hyoga wondered.

"Good question," Shun agreed and put his ear to the door. "I wonder what they are doing in there -- together."

"Hey, you tickle me!" Milo protested from the other side of the door.

"Now keep still, or we don't get anywhere!" Makoto chided him.

"How can I when you tickle me all the time," Milo squealed.

"Don't be so oversensitive! I'm sure you will survive."

"You could be a little more tender to me, don't you think. It's the first time I do something like this."

"Are you hearing what I'm hearing?" Hyoga whispered to Shun in amazement, trying to keep his voice low so that he wouldn't be overheard by the two in the washing room.

"Sure," Shun said with big eyes. "Interesting, isn't it? Too bad we can't see anything..."

"Can't we? Have you checked if there's a key in the keyhole?"

"Just a moment..." Shun shifted position and looked through the keyhole. "Nope, no key inside," he grinned.

"What do you see?"

"Hm... That's interesting..."

"What? Spill it out," Hyoga hissed.

"Now let me look at it first!"

"But I want to see, too!"

"Hey, don't!" Milo protested.

"If you don't let me get your clothes off we can't start!" Makoto exclaimed impatiently.

"I think my clothes are nice just where they are..."

"I disagree. Now get out. Right away!"

"But, Makoto..."

"Shun, now tell me what you see!" Hyoga tried to replace his friend to get a good look himself. "Wow! Makoto just ripped the shirt off Milo," he reported.

"I wanna see, too," Shun sulked and nudged Hyoga in the ribs.

"You didn't tell what you saw."

"I was just speechless..."

"Hey, be careful," Milo gasped from the other side and suddenly dropped out of Hyoga's visual range.

"It seems now they are lying on the ground," Hyoga described dutifully and have the place back to Shun.

"Too bad that now there is nothing more to see," Shun said disappointedly.

"Don't struggle so wildly or I will bind you," Makoto growled from the other side.

"You are so brutal," Milo moaned. "Hey! Don't you dare rip off my... Hey!!"

"Wow!" Hyoga commented in awe. "Makoto seems to be a real tigress."

"And I thought she didn't like Milo..."

"Oh no, of course they are madly in love with each other. I mean, you certainly heard that the more people tease each other, the more they love each other, hm?"

"Sure. But I never believed it was true with those two!"

"Are you satisfied now?" Milo asked panting.

"Not in the least," Makoto replied. "I have not even begun properly!"

"What else do you want of me?"

"All that is left of you!"

"You are truly insatiable!"

"Of course, what did you think? I don't know any mercy in that respect."

"I feel somewhat suppressed by you here," Milo complained.

"I thought you were generally superior to me?"

"Actually I *am*. But as I said -- if you *ever* tell anyone about this little ...episode here I will kill you!"

"You can overdo things..."

"But it is *demeaning*! And now I am fully at your mercy as all my clothes are gone..."

"Wow!" Hyoga whispered to Shun. "We *really* should ask Milo for some hints about how to seduce a girl..."

"Indeed," Shun giggled. "They seem to have a lot of fun."

Hyoga nodded. "You see, my sensei always told me I'd better attend to my duties than run after girls..." He sighed. "But I can't help it -- I *like* cute girls!"

"And they like you," Shun said with an amused grin.

"Well, some of them." Hyoga blushed. "I really should ask Eri for another date."

"There are a lot of girls who asked me about you," Shun told him.

"Who?" Hyoga looked at Shun in amazement.

"Well, there is Sachiko-san, the leader of your fan club, and of course all of her friends..."

"She!" Hyoga shuddered. "If I remember correctly, she has an annoying high-pitched voice and a very silly grin on her face, especially when she clutches one of my autograph cards in her hands. And her friends are a bunch of chattering chicks... I really prefer cute blondes..."

"I know," Shun grinned.

"What did you tell them about me when they asked you?" Hyoga asked in a dangerous tone of voice.

"I just told them that you are not interested in dating any of them because they are not blondes."

"Good," Hyoga breathed in relief.

"Last thing I heard, though, was that there was a dangerous shortage of blonde hair-dye in Tokyo now..."

Hyoga gave Shun a dark look. "My heart belongs to Eri. And Freya. And the cute blonde we met in front of the training hall last week!"

Shun suppressed a giggle. "Why is it suddenly so quiet in there?"

Hyoga almost flattened his nose at the door. "I can't see anything."

"But I want to know what's going on in there," Shun complained.

"Okay, that's enough!" Milo finally said.

Before the boys could react, he opened the door and wanted to storm out of the washing room. Unfortunately, they all toppled over and formed a knot on the floor, Milo on top. The Scorpio Saint was only clad in one of his boxer shorts (a red one with a cute scorpion printed on it), and some white powder stuck to his hair.

Makoto (fully dressed, by the way) examined the heap of Saints with great interest. "Do you also have some dirty laundry?" She began to put Milo's clothes into the washing machine.

"D-dirty *laundry*? Hyoga asked incredulously.

"Yeah. Makoto *insisted* on washing all of my things," Milo grumbled. "Even the ones I wore right now. -- But hear me, Makoto: my shorts stay on!!"

"Sooner or later I will get them, too," Makoto threatened.

"So that means you two haven't--" Hyoga coughed discreetly while his face turned into a cute tomato red.

"Have what?" Makoto inquired.

"Ahm, *nothing*," Hyoga hurried to say. "I have to put my school books away..." He took his satchel and fled upstairs, closely followed by Shun.

"They boys are just cute," Makoto remarked when she watched them disappear.

"Hm. But don't you dare tell them that I helped you with the laundry!"

"Why should I? It would not even be true. The only thing you did was spilling the washing powder everywhere."

"I'm a warrior and not a house-man!"

"Gosh, we look horrible!" Makoto said when she got a glimpse of herself in the mirror. She, too, was covered by a thin layer of washing powder.

"Why don't we take a bath together?" Milo suggested seductively.

"We could. But we won't. Now get in there and get rid of that stuff -- *now!*"

As Milo still hesitated, Makoto cleaned herself first, wondering how long the boys had listened to them at the door. When she was finished, she looked at Milo.

"Hm... I wonder how we shall get that stuff out of your hair... I'm sure it will foam far worse than any shampoo."

Against all customs she put him into the bathing tub just as he was and tried to rinse the washing powder from him. As expected the amount of foam that resulted was enormous.

"The washing power is for wool and delicates," Makoto giggled. "I'm really curious what it will do to your mane of hair!"

"It'll probably get extra-fluffy," Milo said sheepishly.

"I always wanted to have a fluffy pet."

"I'm no pet," Milo complained. "But whatever, I definitely need some more rinsing."

"Hot or cold?"

"Hot of course," he said seductively. When he saw Makoto's evil grin, he hurried to add, "hot, not boiling!"

"You're lucky that I have my nice day today."

"Well, then you could massage my head a little, couldn't you?"

"I think drowning you in the washing basin might be a better idea..."

Milo decided to ignore the threat. "But women should serve their men!"

"Indeed?" Makoto turned the water to 'cold'.

"Iecks! That's *cold*!"

"Just what you deserve."

"Pah. I'm not Camus -- *he* would like ice water like this."

"*He* wouldn't get a shower here at all. And now we're done here." She turned off the water and threw Milo a large bathing towel. "Shall I tell you something -- I think you need a sound spanking..."

"Would *you* volunteer?" Milo asked her with a insolent grin.

"What? Don't tell me you like the idea..."

"If you do it personally?"

"Thanks, but no thanks! -- And now let me wash off the rest of the washing powder off me, too."

Milo made a step aside. "Shall I help you?"

"Better not. You would only worsen it, I'm sure."

Milo sighed. It was so unfair that Makoto still refused to give in to him. Longingly, he watched her while she tried to brush the powder out of her hair. As he wasn't allowed to help her, Milo wrapped himself into the towel and began to dry his hair with the hairdryer.

Finally Makoto shook her hear and began to wash her hair properly, too. There was no other way to get rid of that annoying stuff. "I know one thing -- I will never let you get near any washing powder again!"

"I just wanted to be helpful," Milo claimed. He hoped that now she would never bother him again with things like doing the laundry.

"I know what's going on in your mind," Makoto said darkly. "So don't think you are now freed from all household tasks!"

"Okay, okay..."

Makoto rubbed her hair a bit dry before she braided it. When she saw Milo trying to brush his mane, she giggled.

"What happened?" Milo looked in shock at his mirror image. His hair was not only

unruly like always, but a wild, fluffy mop.

"You were thoroughly conditioned." Makoto tousled his hair. "Wonderfully fluffy!"

"But my hairstyle... I don't want to look fluffy, I want to look cool again!"

"Poor guy," Makoto laughed. "I suggest you stay at home until it's over."

"That's unfair." Milo looked into the mirror and sighed tragically. Why *him*? He grumbled something and tried to keep his hair down.

"Just cute," Makoto giggled.

"I gotta get outta here," Milo said desperately.

"You want to flee from me?"

"Not from you -- from the disaster that befell me here."

"Tomorrow it will be over, I guess. If you hadn't spilled all the washing powder that wouldn't have happened."

"But until then you seem to treat me like some fluffy pet. But I want to be treated like the man I am!"

"I treat you just like you deserve it."

"You don't," Milo sulked.

"How would you like it?" Makoto asked with great interest.

"Well... I thought of..." He whispered her some very rated things into her hair.

Makoto shook her head. "You are totally depraved!"

"I just read that in some magazine and would love to try it out."

"That's what I thought."

"Pah!"

Makoto laughed. "It shows that you are still very young."

"I'm almost 22!"

"And you spent most of it on some island or at Sanctuary."

"Well, sure. Most Saints do that. But now that I'm back from the big Holy War I want to *live* a bit for a change!"

"Who hinders you?"

"*You!* You refuse to give in to me."

"Why does it have to be me?"

"Because you are cute. And you are not easy to get."

"Pah, I'm not cute," Makoto frowned. "You seem to need some glasses, too."

"But you *are*. You have a merry smile and cool green eyes."

"I'm much too tall to be cute. -- I'm almost your size!"

"I think your size is very practical. You are not so fragile."

"I'm not sure whether I can consider *that* a compliment," Makoto shook her head and decided to change the topic to some less dangerous issues. She knew one thing that would work with 100 percent certainty to put his attention elsewhere. "By the way, would you like me to cook something for you now?"

"Oh *yes!*"

"Then come with me. And try not to spread the washing powder through the whole house."

"Okay."

"Do we get something to eat now?" Shun asked when Makoto and Milo went into the kitchen.

"Of course," Makoto nodded.

Shun examined Milo with great interest. "What happened to your hair?"

"I didn't know Makoto was so temperamental," Hyoga grinned.

"I used the wrong shampoo," Milo sighed.

"It is in no way my fault that Milo looks like a mop run wild," Makoto said while she assembled the ingredients for a tasty meal.

"You sure?"

"Absolutely. I'm always innocent concerning things like that."

"It *was* her," Milo contradicted. "She washed my hair with washing powder for delicates and conditioner."

"You put all of this stuff into your hair," Makoto pointed out.

"It was an accident when *you* ripped the clothes from my body!"

"It was necessary as you didn't want to let me wash them."

"Only because it wasn't necessary!"

"It was. They smelled!"

"Pah. That's a manly smell," Milo grumbled.

"More like a pig stable," Makoto shot back.

Milo glared at her. Why did she always have to have the last word? Women!

Shun still looked with fascination at Milo's mane. "Isn't it a strange feeling when the hair stands on end like that?"

"Don't remind me!" Milo growled.

"Don't growl," Makoto chided. "You are still alive."

"But my hair-do is totally ruined!"

"It's not *much* worse than usual," Makoto giggled.

"Pah!"

"Why don't you use some hair-gel?" Hyoga suggested.

"Don't!" Makoto said disgustedly. "Then I'd get sticky fingers when I tousle him."

"So you want to ...retire with him after all?" Hyoga asked and grinned sagely.

Makoto gave Hyoga a dark look. "What are you thinking again? Actually I would love to have a pet, but as I haven't, Milo has to do."

"I thought you weren't so fond of scorpions as pets?" Hyoga wondered dead-pan.

"As long as they are fluffy, it's okay," Makoto laughed. "I like everything soft and fluffy."

"Fluffy he is indeed at the moment," Hyoga grinned.

"Just you wait," Milo snarled. "I'll throw you into a bath of washing powder, too!"

"I wouldn't mind," Makoto said and tousled Hyoga. "I'm sure a blonde fluffy looks

cute, too."

"Never! A swan is an elegant bird," Hyoga contradicted.

"Little swans are fluffy," Makoto pointed out.

"Am I not already a beautiful grown-up swan?"

"At best you are a duckling," Milo said mercilessly.

"A kawaii little fluffy swan chick," Makoto giggled.

"Pah," Hyoga sulked and looked really cute.

"You almost sound like Milo," Makoto commented.

"Like Milo? Wah! Camus is my big idol, not that fluff Scorpio!"

"Well, there is still much work before you until you resemble Camus," Makoto said.

"Not that I think it would be a good idea in any case..."

"Why not? My master is such a great person! Distinguished, calm, sensible and definitely the strongest of all of the Gold Saints -- all in all he's simply *cool*!"

"Camus is certainly not stronger than *me*," Milo frowned.

"But he is indeed *cool*," Makoto grinned.

"If only I could become as cool," Hyoga said wistfully. "Although I certainly wouldn't run away from the girls."

"I see." Makoto shook her head in amusement. So Hyoga had his own mind at least in that respect.

"Wouldn't / be a far better role model then?" Milo asked.

"Nope. After all, the girls don't run after *you*."

Milo gave Hyoga a deadly look. Fortunately Makoto had just finished the preparation of the first course.

"Don't fight. Here's some vegetable tempura for starters."

The Saints immediately started to devour the fried vegetables. Together with soy sauce as dip they were just excellent.

"You are all just insatiable!" Makoto sighed.

"We're are still growing," Shun said with a sweet smile.

"You and Hyoga, yes. But this big black hole over there doesn't have your excuse!"

"I need some sustenance to keep my strength," Milo claimed.

"You don't train, so you don't need so much energy."

"But I do train. You just don't see it because at light speed I'm too fast for your eye."

"Interesting excuse..."

"I'll show you!" Milo stood up from the table and began with some push-ups at light speed.

"What are you up to now?" Of course Makoto didn't see anything, she just sensed the airwaves and heard the bang when Milo broke the sound barrier. "Which reminds me, I can't remember I ever heard such a bang since you were here..."

Milo stopped right away and sat down again, his face reddened in embarrassment. "Ahm..." He said, trying to find a good explanation for that.

"So you never even trained once so far!" Makoto harumphed. "Just what I expected from you."

"Pah!"

Hyoga and Shun grinned broadly. Makoto looked questioningly at them.

"I trained this morning," Shun hurried to say.

"Me, too!" Hyoga nodded. "I always train for half an hour right after I get up. And in the evenings while I watch TV, of course."

"I know. You almost train a bit too much."

"But I want to become stronger than my sensei, so that he can be proud of me."

"Aren't you already very strong?" Makoto wondered. "You should be a bit more careful not to strain yourself too hard while you are still in growth."

"That's not too much for me, don't worry. During my initial training to attain the Cygnus Cloth, Crystal and Camus let me work much harder."

"Humph," Milo made quietly. The boy certainly bragged like that just to make *him* look bad.

"I will watch you closely," Makoto finally said. "After all, it's my job to take care of your health."

"My health is *perfect*!"

"We will see. On Monday, right after school, you will report to me at the Graude Foundation Research Labs for a thorough check-up."

"Have mercy!" Hyoga begged. "No blood samples!"

"Of course. Don't tell me you are afraid of syringes?"

"I'm not afraid -- I just prefer not to encounter them."

Makoto laughed. "You will survive it. I just want to check whether you are really in perfect health. After all, Athena told us to do an examination of *all* of her current Saints, and you belong to that elect group."

"Okay, okay..."

"That's fine." Makoto tousled Hyoga's hair. "I'm sure Himiko will be very proud of you."

"I hope so." Hyoga smiled. He was so happy that finally he had a new mama.

Makoto looked at the cute boys and tousled both of them before she gave them some sweets as Himiko was not in the condition to pamper them today. Milo looked jealously at them.

"And what about me?"

"I only have two hands."

"Yeah," Hyoga grinned. "Sorry, you lose, Milo!"

The Scorpio Gold Saint sulked.

"Makoto, do you know when our Mama will return?" Hyoga wanted to know.

"Tomorrow morning, I think."

"She has to work that long?"

"Sometimes it can't be helped." Makoto didn't want to tell the boy that Camus had put Himiko into a Freezing Coffin again. She was sure Hyoga wouldn't like that at all. So she decided to do the most sensible thing and changed the subject. "What do you want to do this weekend?"

"Something nice that we can do together," Hyoga pondered.

"Yes! Let's visit the Hot Springs!" Milo exclaimed. Maybe he could get a glimpse of Makoto in a little less clothing there, he hoped.

"It doesn't sound like a bad idea," Hyoga agreed. He hoped he might get a glimpse on some cute blonde girls of his age.

"Well, why not." Makoto stretched. "The Hot Springs are good against my cramped neck." And when Himiko was thawed, she certainly would like a hot bath, too.

"Wonderful," Shun beamed. "A family trip!"

"I hope Camus-sensei will accompany us, too."

"We'll try to convince him," Makoto promised. It would be a just punishment for him for freezing Himiko.

"I don't think he will agree," Milo contradicted.

"He owes it to Himiko for all this hard ...training he lets her go through."

"Indeed?" Hyoga looked questioningly at Makoto. "What exactly are they training?"

"Camus was ordered by the Pope to help her master her weird Cosmo."

"Poor mama. This can certainly be very hard. I think a bit relaxing might do her good after all of that."

"I'd say Camus will need t even more," Milo laughed.

"I really hope they will marry someday," Hyoga said wistfully. "They fit together just perfectly."

"I agree," Shun nodded. "They look cute together."

"My master really deserves some warmth and love."

"We will see what will develop," Makoto commented.

"Yeah. Tomorrow morning. -- Why *morning*, by the way? Does this mean my master and my mama will spent the whole night together?"

"Sure," Makoto answered with a wry grin. "They wanted to train very thoroughly."

"This lets my hopes for a complete family increase," Hyoga sighed happily. "After all, I still want a little sister."

"I fear you might have to wait a little longer for *that*," Makoto grinned.

"Nine months, I hope."

"More likely even a bit longer. But then, a baby can get on your nerves quite a lot," Makoto pointed out.

"I would take care of it," Hyoga promised. "My master wouldn't have to trouble himself with the little one."

"Just wait and see."

"Yeah." Hyoga was almost content. Now that he had his new mama, the dad and a little sister would follow in due time.

"By the way, did you do your homework already?"

"Ahm, not yet..."

"Well, then do it right now. Tomorrow you don't have the time."

"If you insist..." The boys fetched their textbooks and exercise books.

"Fine! Now you have some time to put your attention to me again!" Milo said when Hyoga and Shun began to solve their exercises.

"Time? Are you kidding? The kitchen has to be cleaned, the laundry isn't done yet, the floors need to be vacuumed, the bathroom needs some cleaning, too..."

Milo sighed. "That's unfair! Hyoga and Shun still get your attention, only I am ignored..."

"Awwww!" Makoto tousled Milo's fluffy mop.

"That's better."

"And now you will help me with all the cleaning stuff..."

Much to her surprise he helped her indeed a little. Finally everything was done, and the four watched a little TV (Milo desperately tried to make sense of the Japanese game shows he watched), until they retired to their rooms to sleep.