**New Friends**

by Emi Tsuruta

About halfway through the summer last year, I was on campus heading to see my friend Satomi when I bumped into Yuriko, a girl I know from our university's Japanese Student Union. I hadn't been to a meeting for a long time, but both my boyfriend Ryosuke and I used to be members. It's sort of a social club for anyone interested in Japan, but the last time we went, it was almost all Japanese exchange students. Yuriko was all excited to see me because they had a couple of events coming up, and she wanted to know if I would join in, and help. I'd been pretty busy that summer, but I knew that soon, my friends Sarah and Takuya and all them would be leaving, so maybe this would be a chance to meet new people, and make friends. She told me when the next meeting was, and I promised to invite Satomi, Ryosuke and them. Ryosuke had to work, but Satomi and Asuna, Ryosuke's cousin, said they'd come.

Yuriko brightened up when the three of us walked in.

"Come in. Come in. Welcome," she glowed. I recognized Kazuo, the club president, and she introduced me to Mark, Tetsu and Noriko, three of the new members. Mark was a third generation Japanese American, but he seemed to understand a bit of Japanese.

Kazuo opened the meeting, and thanked us all for coming. The next big event they were planning was a Japanese-style fireworks show down on the beach in August. The club had a little money left from the year before, so it was just a matter of advertising the event, going out and buying the fireworks, and getting permission from the beaches commission. Yuriko promised to look into getting permission, and the boys said they'd buy the fireworks, so we started working on the posters.

They already had some paper and markers, so I lay out some paper on the floor, and tried to think what to draw. I got down on my hands and knees sketching out the design for one poster. Tetsu and Mark got down on the floor with me, and worked on posters.

I finally came up with a design I liked. When I looked up, I found Tetsu and Mark staring at me. I suddenly realized that I wasn't wearing a bra that day under my tank top. The way I was leaning forward I guess they could see my breasts down the front of my top. I sat back up a little embarrassed. They looked away, trying to pretend like they hadn't been staring. Eventually, I started drawing again, but I could feel them watching my dangling breasts. I guess it wasn't that big a deal, but still.

Satomi and Asuna came over, and told me they were going to head home. Ryosuke said he might drop by later, so I decided to stay on, and keep working on the posters. Yuriko and Noriko disappeared off somewhere, and so for a while, it was just me and the three boys. Kazuo spread out a sheet of paper just behind me. The miniskirt I was wearing was so short he could probably see my panties. Whenever I looked at them, they would play innocent, but all this attention was making me nervous. It's not like they are bad guys or anything, but it was a bit off-putting.

I finally got up, and went out to the hall to give Ryosuke a call. He was still at work, but he said he would be done soon. I asked him to come down, and meet me there as soon as he could. I felt a lot safer knowing that he was on his way. I bumped into Yuriko out in the hall, and told her Ryosuke was coming. She smiled.

When I got back, we decided to take a break, and have some tea. Kazuo complimented me on how neat my lettering was. Tetsu and Mark nodded in agreement, but whenever I'd look away, they'd peer down at my breasts. I eventually realized that the straps of my tank top had fallen off my shoulders. I was about to fix them when Yuriko came back. She'd brought some snacks for us to eat. She set them down on the floor, and we all gathered around. As I leaned forward, my tank top slid down till it was hanging right on the edge of my nipples. You could maybe see the pink of my areolas. I didn't want to make a fuss though, so I just left it. There was this strange atmosphere with me munching on a sweet cake while the boys tried not to get caught ogling my breasts.

Ryosuke finally showed up, so I went over, and gave him a hug. The boys looked jealous. I felt a bit bad, but at least now they knew I was taken.

Yuriko looked at her watch, and said it was getting late, so we decided to wrap up, and come back another day. Ryosuke walked me to the bus stop, kissed me good night, and we went our separate ways.

Our next problem was what Satomi, Asuna and I were going to wear for the fireworks show. Usually, when we go to see fireworks in Japan, all the girls wear yukata (colorful cotton robes for the summer). I'd bought one in Miori's father's shop last time I was back in Japan, but neither Satomi nor Asuna had one. They seemed interested in Miori's yukatas, so when I got back to my room, I gave her a call.

"How are things in California?" she asked.

"Oh, you know. The same as usual," I answered, lying down on my bed to get comfortable.

"Oh come on. You must be up to something interesting. I know you."

I told her about Takuya stealing my towel. Without really thinking, I stuck my hard down the front of my shorts, tousling my pubic hair, and playing with my pussy a bit.

"So what? You were running around in front of all these guys naked?" Miori asked.

"Yeah."

Suddenly, I heard a cough come from outside my bedroom. I froze. I thought that my host family were all out at school or work.

"Um, Miori, listen. Can I call you back? I think someone's here." I pulled up my shorts, and got up off my bed, listening. I knew it couldn't be Loretta because she always calls out when she comes home. I tiptoed out into the hall, and sure enough there was her son Brandon standing right outside my door, eavesdropping. He let out a crazy laugh, and ran back into his room.

"Hey, wait. What were you doing? Listening in?" I yelled at him.

"I knew it. I knew it. You are a nympho!" he taunted.

I was so surprised. I'd been talking to Miori mainly in Japanese, but I guess I'd mixed in some English words, and somehow he figured out what I was saying.

"Calm down, will you? I'm not a nympho."

"Oh yeah, then what are you? You just said you got off flashing all your male friends down at the dorm there."

"That's not what I said. You misunderstood. That thing was all Ricardo and Takuya's fault not mine. Those guys tricked me."

"No, no, I heard what you said. You loved it. Aw man, wait till I tell Dylan and Scott."

"Who are Dylan and Scott? Don't you dare tell anyone."

"So you admit it then. Can you show them?"

"Show them what?"

"Your body, man. Scott and Dylan have never even had a girlfriend!"

"And you have?"

"Sure, man. I've dated tons of girls."

I just laughed. I'd never even seen Brandon talk to a girl, let alone date one. He was still so young and pretty quiet, most of the time.

"Anyway, I'm not going to strip for your friends... or anyone else for that matter. Like I keep telling you, I'm not that kind of girl."

"Oh come on, Emi. Please. You have to. It would mean so much to them. It really would."

"No, no way." I went to leave, but Brandon just followed me back into my room.

"Oh come on, Emi, please. I mean it. We'd be sooooo grateful."

I just looked at him. At least, he wasn't going to tell his mom on me again.

"Anyway, I'm not going to show anyone. If you want to bring your friends here some time, I can meet with them, but that's all."

He gave me this puppy dog look.

"Listen, Brandon. You're a good boy. I know that. But I think the best idea is for you and your friends to find some girl you like, and ask her out instead. I can help you if you like. Give you some advice or whatever."

"Oh, Emi, you don't understand at all. The girls at school are nothing like you. They're all stuck up and stupid and ugly."

This was a pretty back-handed compliment. Frankly, I was surprised me he would even say that. I had already wondered if Brandon might have a crush on me, but I didn't really expect him to come so close to saying it. Even my boyfriend Ryosuke rarely complimented me. I did feel sympathy for Brandon, what it must be like, curious about the opposite sex, but not know what to do. We've all been through that phase I guess.

"Um, yeah well, anyway... I still think if you look around, you're bound to find someone you like. Like I said, I'll try to help."

Brandon didn't look satisfied, but he let it go. I was kind of surprised about how he'd handled the whole situation. I'd been so worried that he'd try to tell Loretta on me again, but he didn't seem to be thinking about that at all. Instead of thinking I was strange, it was almost like he looked up to me as a woman with experience. It was nice to be appreciated.

After that, Brandon settled down, but summer was here, and it was starting to get really hot out. I go a bit wrangy in the heat. I have to take showers, or go swimming, or dress really light, or else I swelter. In years past, I used to sleep in my underwear, but now with Brandon starting to worry more about girls and stuff, I'd have to dress more properly, or risk giving him the wrong idea.

One outfit I had was the robin's egg blue halter and shorts set I got at my cousin Namie's wedding. It was light enough to keep cool in, but look decent, sort of like a gym outfit. I'd been wearing it a lot, so I had to get out, and buy some new clothes.

That weekend, Brandon brought his friends Dylan and Scott over to meet me. I'd seen them around before, but I'd never really talked with them. They seemed really excited to meet me, which was kind of nice. They told me about the girls they knew at school and what problems they'd been having. They seemed like nice enough guys, but they were obviously inexperienced, awkward even. I told them to just be honest with the girls they asked out. They hemmed and hawed, and said how they got all tongue-tied when they talked to girls.

"I'm a girl," I reminded them. They went silent, and blushed, which I thought was kind of cute.

"No, but you're different."

I smiled. I told them each to choose a girl, talk to her, and come back, and tell me how it went. They came over to our house quite a bit after that. Brandon was a bit hesitant to tell me everything, but I learned a lot about Dylan and Scott's lives - the girls they liked, their plans and disappointments. They seemed like pretty sensitive guys. I kept telling them that soon enough girls would notice how nice they were, and things would go well for them.

Not long after that, we all ended up going out shopping together at the big mall. I needed some new outfits, and I promised to help them pick out some cool-looking clothes. While we were there, we ran into Yuuki, the Japanese girl I told you about who runs a Japanese goods stall in the middle of the mall.

"Oh Yuuki, how are you doing?" I asked her switching to Japanese. Brandon and them just kept their distance while the two of us talked.

"Emi was it? Yeah, I'm fine. How about you? What are you shopping for today?"

"Oh I just want to get some new outfits and maybe some accessories for the fireworks show. You've heard about that, have you?"

"Oh yeah, Takuya told me. I was planning on going too. I've even got my own yukata and everything."

"Where did you get that?"

"Oh Mr. Kishitani brings me over clothes from Japan every once in a while. I don't bring them to the stall, but if you are interested, you could come by my place, and I could show you. It's all new stuff, the latest fashions." Mr. Kishitani was her boss.

"Really? Um, sure, that sounds great! I've been having trouble finding stuff in my size."

"OK, great. Here, I'll give you my phone number. Oh by the way, who are your friends?" she asked nodding towards Brandon and company.

"My host mom's son and his friends."

"Cute," she grinned with this naughty gleam in her eye.

"No, it's nothing like that," I told her, denying it. I looked over at Brandon. I hadn't really thought about it, but he was growing up to be quite a handsome boy. "Would you like me to introduce you?" I offered.

"No, no thanks. I have my sights set on Mr. Kishitani," she giggled.

"Good luck!"

"Yeah, you too," she winked mischievously. I just laughed. I found it so funny that she thought I would actually go out with Brandon. He was a bit young, but I guess so was she.

Anyway, Brandon, his friends and I hit the stores, and we ended up buying a few new things. A few days later, I gave Yuuki a call, and arranged to go over, and see what clothes she had. It turned out that she lived right downtown, not far from the train station. Her apartment was up on the sixth floor. It was small, just a bedroom, a balcony and a tiny bathroom. Out the window, there was a condo building just across the way.

"It must be expensive here," I noted, looking out the window.

"It's not that bad, a lot cheaper than Tokyo anyway."

Yuuki was at least a couple of years younger than I was, but she didn't seem to be going to school at all. I liked her though. She seemed so confident. She pulled a whole bunch of clothes out of her closet, and set them down on her bed. They were a bit flashy - mini-skirts, hip huggers, bubblegum pink halters and silver belts, like the clothes she wore at the mall. I wonder if I could get away with wearing the same thing. My boyfriend Ryosuke would like them for sure.

"Um, can I try them on?"

"Sure, be my guest."

I glanced over at her bathroom.

"Oh, sorry," she said. "It's a bit cramped in there. I usually just change out here."

I looked out the window again at the rows and rows of condo windows across the way. There was a light on in one or two, but it mostly looked like no one was home.

"I can close the drapes if you want," she offered, getting up.

"No, that's OK," I nodded sitting down on her bed. She looked at me quite intently, and then finally spoke.

"I don't know if I should be telling you this or not, but I've heard some stories about you."

I looked at her, a bit surprised.

"What kind of stories?" I asked trying to act calm, as I undid my jeans, and slid them down.

"Um, like, Takuya was saying those guys have seen you naked a few times."

A shiver ran up my spine. I stood up, straightened my panties, and picked up a pair of her hip huggers, feeling a bit jittery.

"What? What did he tell you?"

"Oh I don't know. He didn't go into the details. I was a bit curious though. What happened?"

I looked at her for a moment unsure of how much to tell her. I guess I could trust her, but I felt kind of weird.

"Oh, it was just them and their silly games. I was sleeping over at their dorm one night in Satomi's room, and Ricardo knocked on the door saying there was a call from my mom on the phone downstairs. I went down in my towel, and Takuya the perv ripped it right off me."

Yuuki laughed.

"Why'd you go down in your towel?"

"I don't know. It was early in the morning, and I wasn't dressed yet. When Ricardo said it was from my mom, I knew I had to rush. It had to be long distance."

"That's so funny."

I pulled on her jeans, but they were really tight, and I had trouble getting them all the way up. I finally managed to get them buttoned up, but they were cut so low that you could see my panties over the top.

"Woops!" I laughed, showing her.

"Oh, you have to wear special lingerie with those..." she said, pulling some low rise panties out of her drawer to show me. "Or nothing at all."

I looked down at the seat of her jeans, wondering if she was joking. Her jeans hung so low that you could almost see where her pubic hair started.

"Are you wearing any now?" I asked unable to contain my curiosity.

"Of course," she assured me. I kept right on staring at her, so she finally undid her jeans, and showed me. Her panties were a demure white stretch cotton, low enough but not too low.

"Sorry," I apologized, blushing.

"Here, can I try on your jeans?" she asked. "I just want to see how they fit."

"Sure." I pulled off her jeans, and stood there for a moment wondering what to do. "Um, can I borrow your shower?" I asked. "I get a bit sticky in the hot weather."

"Yeah, go ahead."

I looked out the window again, trying to tell if anyone was looking in. I couldn't see anyone in those apartments. I peeled off my panties, top and bra in no time, feeling distinctly naughty to be stripping in front of the window.

"Have Hiro and Takuya ever played tricks like that on you?" I asked.

"No, not really," she replied. It was hard to read her expression, but she didn't seem shocked at all to see me standing here naked by her window.

"Have they ever seen you naked?" I continued calmly.

"No," she answered more defensively.

"Can I borrow a towel?"

She looked at me a bit quizzically, and then started rummaging through her drawers. I walked over, and stood - naked - right in the middle of her window looking out at the building across the street. As my eyes focused, I suddenly realized there was someone in the window directly across from us looking over this way. I quickly backed away, a bit shocked to find someone watching. Yuuki wondered what was wrong, so I whispered,

"There's someone there."

She handed me the towel, and went over to look.

"Yeah, I don't know who that is. Maybe you shouldn't stand so close to the window," she noted.

"Sorry," I bowed an apology, and then scurried off to her bathroom. I got into the tub, turned on the water, and tried to calm down. I don't know why I keep doing things like that. I sure hope I don't bump into him on the street.

Before long, I heard someone knocking on Yuuki's door. I was afraid at first that someone had called the police on me for flashing, but it turned out to be one of Yuuki's friends, a Japanese boy who lived downstairs. I quickly finished washing up, turned off the shower, and dried myself off.

"Who's here?" I heard him ask.

"Oh, it's just my friend, Emi. I was just showing her some of my clothes, seeing if she's interested."

He sounded young, Yuuki's age maybe. At first, I thought he might be her boyfriend, but it sounded like he was more interested in her than she was in him. Once I was all dry, I wrapped the towel around myself, and cautiously stepped out.

"Hello," he smiled. "My name's Akira."

"Emi," I bowed, sitting down on the bed. Yuuki's towel was bit on the small side. I spread it out trying to make sure my pussy was covered. Without really wanting to, I was getting all excited again.

"Where do you two know each other from?" he asked eyeing my bare shoulders and thighs.

"Emi comes by to my stall at the mall every once in a while, don't you?"

I nodded, and brushed the hair out of my eyes. I was holding the towel close against my breasts with one arm, but I could feel the knot unraveling at the back. I blinked nervously under his gaze.

"Anyway, I'd better get dressed," I bowed again, hoping he would leave.

"Oh, uh, yeah, right. OK, maybe see you guys a bit later," he suggested hopefully.

"See you, Akira," Yuuki said, escorting him out. I stood up, and my towel fell open at the back. I don't think Akira saw, but when I looked out the window, the guy across the way was watching. I pulled the towel back around me. The guy looked disappointed.

Yuuki closed the door, latched it, and came back. I nodded over at the peeping tom.

"Kind of unnerving, isn't it?" I complained.

"I guess. I never really noticed him before."

I turned back to Yuuki, who was wearing my jeans.

"How do they fit?"

"A little bit baggy. You have wide hips."

"No, you're so thin. I'm envious."

"Don't be. Akira sure took a shining to you quick."

"Is he your boyfriend?"

"No, he's just some guy who lives here. I don't really know him that well, but he keeps knocking on my door, bugging me for things."

"He's probably got a thing for you," I teased.

She laughed. I turned back to her clothes on the bed.

"How much does all this stuff cost?"

"Um, I don't know. Instead of paying me money, I was wondering if you'd be willing to fill in for me a day or two at the stall. I've got a friend coming over, but I don't want to just shut the stall down. We do a good business, you know."

"Um, isn't there anyone else who could...?"

"No, not really. I don't want to ask Takuya or Hiro. They don't know how to sell this stuff anyway. But I'm sure you could."

"Really?"

"Yeah, part of it is you've got to dress the part, flirt with the customers a bit. You'd be a natural."

I pulled the towel tighter around myself, glancing back at the window again.

"I don't know. I'm not really good at that kind of thing."

"No, no, you'd be great. I can tell. Listen, just try it once, and if you don't like it, we'll just shut it down till my friend goes home."

I wasn't quite sure what to say, but in the end, I told her yes. I was getting bored of studying, so I thought it would be fun to try something different. Also, I kind of liked her style, how she seemed so calm and cool with everything. She seemed so different from Satomi and my other friends.

Well, I guess I'd better stop here for now. I'll try to write again soon.