A rustle echoed through the dark room. Yoko leapt up and scanned his dark surroundings, his heart thundering against his ribs, drowning out the deafening silence. Nothing. Yoko sat down again, breathing hard. He had so many questions but no answers. How long had he been down in this murky silence? He had no idea. When would his aunt be back? Again, no idea. He stood back up and paced around the room, still thinking. No answers came. Irritated, he sat back down. The questions were useless in stifling his fear. He heard a slight crackle. Spinning around, his heart caught in his throat as he saw the source of the sound. Fire. He turned to run, blindly feeling for the door. Heart thudding. Feet pounding. Hands feeling. Flames licking closer. Yoko continued to randomly dash around the walls. Hands feeling. Feeling. Still feeling. Suddenly, his hands thudded against a smooth, cold ball. The doorknob. He thrust his fingers around it and began to turn and pull. The flames were closer than ever. It reached out a fiery arm. *Come,* it hissed, *Come…don’t leave…*

Yoko yanked the door open and raced out – right into his aunt.

‘Oh,’ she said, looking surprised, ‘You got out? Well then, I suppose you’ll go the hard way.’