

Onegai Teacher: Reconciliation

by Juliet Carnell

based on the animated series Onegai Teacher by Yousuke Kuroda

Kei stared out the window of his classroom at the gray sky and contemplated all the things he didn't want from life.

I don't want to be in here ... I don't want to be outside either...

It was the interval before the forth-period and three of Kei's closest friends, Morino Ichigo, Herikawa Koishi and Shidou Matagu, were standing by his desk trying to involve him in a conversation about the upcoming weekend.

"It's going to rain." Ichigo said in her usual monotone.

"No way!" cried Matagu, "If it rains all weekend that will spoil everything. Kei, tell them it's not going to rain all weekend... Kei?"

I don't want it to rain all weekend... I don't want to talk about rain...

Kei continued to stare out the window. Ichigo looked at him with concern, but her friend's eyes were alert and responsive. He wasn't going into a standstill so she turned her attention back to Shidou-kun.

"Think what you like, just don't go out without an umbrella."

"There's lot's of things we could do if it's raining," chimed in Koishi, "We could all go see a movie or something. How does that sound Kei?"

I don't want to do anything if it's raining... I don't want to go to the movies either...

What Kei really wanted right now was to see his homeroom teacher Kazami Mizuho who was actually an alien from space living illegally on Earth who was, coincidentally, secretly married to Kei. He had not seen his wife since homeroom and would not be seeing her again until well after school was out when they both got back to the apartment they shared.

"Okay! Finally we have a decent suggestion," said Matagu with gusto, "It's a given you'd like to see an action picture, right Koishi-san?" she nodded enthusiastically, "and I'd like to see a science fiction film. Hyosuke and Kaede will go to anything as long as they can sit together in the dark. What about you Ichigo-san? What sort of picture would you like to see?"

Asking Ichigo any question was like asking an oracle to predict your future, it might be wholly trivial but everyone within earshot wants to hear the answer. Not surprisingly Kei heard the room fall quiet behind him and he too listened to hear what the diminutive young woman who was wise beyond her apparent years had to say. When the answer never came, Kei turned to see why. What he saw shocked him; Ichigo, Koshi, Matagu and everyone else in the room were standing with their eyes closed, heads bowed and arms hanging limp at their sides. They all appeared to be asleep on their feet!

"What the..."

Kei was closest to Koshi, so he stood up and leaned in close, putting his ear near her mouth, she was breathing slowly and regularly just as if she were sleeping.

"Good, you're alive..."

Expecting some reaction he dared to touch her wrist, but she didn't even flinch. Her skin was warm and dry, he checked for a pulse and found one.

"Are you Kei Kusanagi?"

The deep male voice startled Kei so much that he jumped back from Koshi and knocked over his chair. He whipped around to see a tall man in a skin tight jumpsuit standing nearby. Kei could only stare in wonder at the stranger. He was easily the tallest man Kei had ever seen and the dark blue and gold jumpsuit he wore revealed a body any weight lifter would die for. Thick muscles rippled across the man's chest and down his abdomen. His legs and arms bulged with muscles. His face was clean shaven and had the chiseled good looks of a movie star. Kei had never met anyone like this guy, but there was something familiar about the jumpsuit...

"Are you Kei Kusanagi?"

He spoke in English with a distinctly American accent. English was not one of Kei's best subjects, but he recognized his own name and that he was being asked a question. It stood to reason the man was asking if that was his name, so he nodded affirmatively.

The man pointed a finger at an object he held in his other hand. It looked like nothing more than a piece of black plastic about the size of a notebook. Suddenly the thing became alive with colors and strange characters dancing in the air just above its surface.

Kei looked from the object to the man's jumpsuit and then back again. He had seen both of these things before. The little display device the man held looked just like the consoles on Mizuho's spaceship and his jumpsuit was made from the same strange material as his wife's form fitting space costume. As a bead of nervous sweat trickled down Kei's spine he realized that this man was an alien, just like Mizuho!

"Well, now that I'm certain who you are, we need to talk."

Kei picked out a few of the English words, but in his current state of agitation he couldn't put them together into a coherent sentence. The thought racing through his mind was: He's come to arrest Mizuho! What should I do?

"W-What did you say?"

The man looked quizzically at Kei then glanced down at his display device. He waved a finger at it and suddenly the strange shapes dancing there turned into Kanji characters. The man shook his head and smiled briefly. He waved a hand over the display and it went dark. Standing at attention the man bowed formally to Kei and said in perfect unaccented Japanese, "My apologies Kusanagi-san. The last time I visited your world was to a place called Wisconsin. Very much like this place, but without the mountains."

Kei had to blink and shake his head. The man sounded like a television announcer, his Japanese was that good.

"N-No problem."

"I had not intended to speak with any locals, so I did not check the language requirements or file for a suitable code name. You will forgive me if I introduce myself simply as Inspector."

Kei returned the bow, but remained on his guard. *Who is this guy and what does he want?*

"When you failed to respond to this stasis," the Inspector waved his hand in the direction of Kei's sleeping classmates, "I guessed it was you. It would seem you have friends in small places. We need to talk Kusanagi-san, but not here. This," again he indicated the room full of immobile students, "was only supposed to last a few seconds. Please find a way to excuse yourself from your friends and go to a place where you can be alone and unobserved. I will transport you from there. Do you understand me?"

"Y-Yes, but..."

Before Kei could say another word the man barked an order in a language Kei could not place. Suddenly a ball of light appeared at the Inspector's shoulder, which resolved itself into a small life form. It was the same as Marie, Mizuho's spaceship controller, but instead of wearing yellow pajamas this one was dressed in a miniature version of the Inspector's blue and gold jumpsuit.

"Adjust command language to Earth type Japanese. Initiate transport and then terminate stasis field." Turning to Kei he continued, "Act as if no time has passed. Transport will take place as soon as you are alone. By the way, the chair was upright and you were sitting in it." He once again bowed formally to Kei, then was enveloped in light and disappeared. Kei had just righted his chair and gotten seated when Ichigo spoke.

"The question isn't what picture do I want to see, but what pictures don't I want to see," Ichico said as she came to. She got a curious look on her face then shook her head, "That was funny..."

"Ichico-san, your answers are always funny," laughed Matagu, "How about you Kei? Do you want to wage in on the great movie debate?"

"I-I think I have to go to the toilet," stammered Kei. He got up quickly, knocking over his chair again, and then headed quickly towards the door. "I'll be right back."

"Kei?" Koshi called out, "Class is about to start. You better hurry up!"

Kei ran to the boy's lavatory on the first floor. Classes were in session downstairs so the bathroom should be empty. Kei's heart was pounding as he raced through the door and ran straight into the wall of his own bedroom.

"Man, I hate when she does that!"

The bedding had all been put away this morning so the floor of the Japanese style room was barren and hard. Kei picked himself up off the tatami mats, walked to the door and tried to slide it open, but the door wouldn't move. "This door doesn't have a lock..." he said aloud. He strained at the handle, but try as he might the door would not slide open.

He put his ear to the door and listened. He could hear voices in the living room. One was definitely Mizuho and the other sounded like the Inspector, but why were they singing to one another? Mizuho's sweet voice rose and fell with obvious emotion.

"Mizuho!"

Kei couldn't make out any of the words, but whatever she was singing it sounded like she was on the verge of crying.

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Mizuho sat on the couch anxiously looking at her wristwatch for the hundredth time. She had walked into her fourth period classroom some ten minutes before expecting a room full of 10th graders, but had instead stepped into her own living room. She knew instantly that the jig was up. Only someone from the Gingarenmen could have created a dimensional door between the school and her apartment and since neither her mother nor her sister had been there waiting for her she could only assume that an official had been sent to take her back home. However, this time she wouldn't be facing a desk job at Headquarters, she would be facing criminal charges.

She had resigned her commission and returned to Earth without permission. Her mother had hacked into the automated surveillance system the Federation had installed after her removal and landed her daughter on the now restricted planet. Even her little sister had conspired by helping her to recreate the identity of Kazami Mizuho. Not only was Mizuho in big trouble, but thanks to her so were Hatsuho and Maho!

And what about Kei? This time when the Federation wiped away his memories of her, he would not be protected by the "withdrawal" he was in the time before. Only his extremely low life forces and the mental suggestion that they would one day meet and marry, which Mizuho had illegally inserted into Kei's dormant mind, had allowed him to recall their former life together. This time she would lose him forever and he would never even miss her!

"Marie? Please, this is Priority One!"

She called out once again for her little companion and still he did not appear. What he might actually do wasn't clear to her yet, but the little system controller was the only hope she had.

"Your controller has been temporarily neutralized. He won't respond."

At the sound of the Inspector General's voice, Mizuho jumped up from the sofa and snapped to attention. The reaction was a reflex; even though she no longer belonged to the corps her training was deeply ingrained. She had not become the youngest Planetary Surveillance Officer to ever be assigned a class five planet for nothing.

"At ease Kazami Mizuho."

"Sir!"

"I suppose you know why I am here?"

Mizuho listened to the Inspector speaking in her native language and thought how strange it sounded. After years of training and living with Japanese, the lilting musical quality of it almost sounded childish. She suppressed a smile and responded as an officer should.

"Sir! You have come to arrest me and return me to Gingarenmen Headquarters for criminal punishment."

"I could have sent a junior officer to do that. Why do you think that I am here in person?"

She hadn't considered that. Without her ship she was powerless to leave the planet and what little energy Marie had tapped from the automated surveillance system was not enough to teleport them very far. Anyone with a little experience could have easily found her and cleaned up all traces of her existence. So why had her former boss come halfway across the galaxy? If not to arrest her, then what?

"I- I don't know sir."

"Why did you resign your commission and return to this planet in violation of Federation law?"

"I wanted to be with Kei."

"Ah yes, the Earth life form you call your husband. I believe that's him now."

As if on cue, the sound of running feet, a loud bang and a softer thud came from the bedroom. The Inspector's system controller teleported into the air in front of the bedroom door and struck a guard pose. Mizuho heard Kei's attempts at opening the door followed by his calling out her name.

"He is NOT just another life form! The people on this planet are not just life forms for us to study! They are people just like us and I love the one you have locked in that room!"

"Kazami-kun, as you well know, out of the countless billions of life forms in this galaxy only a handful have achieved a sentient state of intelligence and of those the majority are nearly identical genetically. You yourself are living proof that these people are physically the same as we are, but that does not change the fact that at their current state of social development they are wholly incapable of dealing with our existence."

"Kei knows what I am and he doesn't have a problem dealing with it!"

"Doesn't he? Can you honestly say that his life hasn't been adversely affected by your being an extraterrestrial?"

Mizuho started to respond, but stopped. In her mind she began to review all the things that Kei had been put through because she was from another planet. The very first day they met he had nearly been sucked into a dimensional vortex and lost forever. Her sister had nearly blown his head off with a particle beam weapon that Earth scientists wouldn't even dream about for another century. He and all his friends had had their memories of an entire summer altered and only Kei could remember what really happened during that time.

"Well... I... I never meant for him to be involved, but I had to do something when he saw me arrive."

"Our laws and regulations are intended to protect these people from the kind of interference you have had over that boy's life. Detection by the indigenous population is often inevitable, but rarely receives the credibility needed to cause damage. However, the kind of direct contact you have made here can cause serious long term ripples in their social progress. I cannot allow you to continue living here under these conditions, so I'm afraid I have only one option in this case..."

"Wait!"

Mizuho tried to think quickly. Kei had been put through a lot, but he hadn't always suffered. If it hadn't been for the advanced technology at her disposal, Kei might have remained in his standstill

and spent more years locked away from the world. He had always kept her secret and even been the one to straighten things out when she (or more often her mother) had let something strange slip out. But how could she sum that up in such a way as to convince her superior to leave her here with Kei? What could she say to persuade him?

"But... I love him!" Mizuho dropped to her knees and began crying. *"Don't take him away from me again! Please!"*

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Kei had been listening to the little opera going on in the living room. He had eventually come to the conclusion that the singsong dialog he was hearing had to be Mizuho's native language. Even though he was deeply concerned about what was happening in there, he couldn't help thinking how beautiful it sounded. He hoped that one day she would have the chance to say something intimate to him in that lyrical tongue.

Then he heard her begin crying and lost control of his emotions. He flung himself at the door intending to knock it down, but there were forces blocking his way far stronger than the door itself. It didn't budge. Repeatedly he threw himself at it, all the while calling out Mizuho's name.

Outside the Inspector looked from the sobbing woman at his feet to the crashing sounds coming from the bedroom. He nodded to his controller and the little guy floated away from the door. Just as Kei lunged at it again the door flew open. Kei spilled out into the hallway and tumbled into the wall.

"That hurt..."

Kei quickly regained his feet and charged into the living room. Without thinking he raised his clenched fists and positioned himself between the Inspector and his wife.

"If y-you want to take her, y-you'll have to deal with me first."

It sounded a bit shaky, but Kei really meant it. "I forgot how big this guy was..." Kei thought and he lowered his fists just a little.

Switching smoothly to Japanese the Inspector spoke to Kei, "Who said anything about taking her away?" He looked down at Mizuho, "I have no intention of separating the two of you."

"What?" Kei and Mizuho said together.

"There are rules and regulations Kazami-kun, but the Federation isn't heartless. We could have stopped you from coming here in the first place since we detected your mother's tampering with the surveillance drone well before you landed. Hatsuho is a brilliant woman, but hacking into security systems is really out of her league. Your sister Maho did a much better job of covering her tracks; it took us quite some time to figure out that you had returned to your former identity here."

"You... You knew I was here?"

Mizuho had stopped crying and was now clinging to Kei's pant leg. Kei had dropped his fists and stared at the Inspector like a deer caught in headlights.

"Yes, I suspected you'd head back here when you resigned. I assumed you'd soon grow tired of watching Kusanagi-san living out his life with no clue as to who you were. I expected you to eventually come back to us and resume your career. It was only after close surveillance that we

determined he had regained his memories of you. One day you will have to explain just how you accomplished that Kazami-kun."

"My name is now Kusanagi," corrected Mizuho.

Kei looked down into Mizuho's wet eyes and his heart filled with a pride he had never felt before. Because of their situation at school, he had never heard her call herself by that name.

"Ah yes, my apologies Kusanagi-kun." He turned to Kei, "You may not be aware of this Kusanagi-san, but within the Gingarenmen there is no legal equivalent to your 'marriage'. Men and women make personal commitments to one another and mostly they last a life time, but they are not held to it by any form of contract."

Kei hadn't known this, but it certainly shed light on some of his mother-in-law's strange behavior.

"But we do hold those personal commitments in very high regard. That is why your mother was never reprimanded for keeping her Earthling. It is sad that it ended so unexpectedly."

Mizuho had never heard her superior talk this way. She had always assumed he was just the cold heartless bastard all the other officers in her division had said he was. Now she was beginning to get the idea that she wasn't going to be arrested after all, but what did that mean exactly?

"Sir? If you are not going to separate us, and I can't stay here, just what is to become of us? Kei-kun can't leave school yet, with his grades he needs to finish his education."

What did she mean by that? Kei, whose heart had just been filled with pride for his wife, now looked at her with consternation. Why did she suddenly have to start talking like a teacher?

"I never said you had to leave. While it is true that I can't leave a civilian alone on a planet as underdeveloped as this, I can leave a qualified commissioned officer. That is if she has learned her lesson and is ready to get back to work."

"B-But... you said... "

"What I did was remind you of your obligations to the life forms that are entrusted to you, including those you chose to fall in love with."

Kei finally spoke up, "Mizuho can stay?"

"Yes, she can stay, but she will have to resume her duties as planetary observer." At this a ball of light appeared on the table as Marie materialized along with Mizuho's reporting console disguised as a laptop computer. "Your ship is parked in synchronous orbit behind this planet's primary satellite. It is cloaked, but be sure to have it hidden on the lakebed before dawn tomorrow."

"Yes sir!" said Mizuho as she stood up. "Thank you sir!"

"Thank me after you have filed a complete report covering the entire period since your return. I expect it on my console by the end of next week."

Mizuho deflated somewhat at hearing this and leaned against Kei. Sounding like a schoolgirl just assigned extra homework she responded, "Yes sir."

"Oh, one more thing," The Inspector turned to Kei. "Kusanagi-san, it is not within my power to grant

you Galactic citizenship, I doubt I would do so even if I could, but it does seem unfair to leave you with Mizuho and not give you access to at least some of our technology. So consider this a 'wedding' present."

There was a flash of light behind Kei's head and Mizuho's hand flew to her mouth, "Oh, Kei look!"

Kei turned his head and there floating over his shoulder was another system controller, identical to Marie except that the pajamas were light blue and the inner tube was yellow.

"Noo!"

"Its access to ship functions has been severely restricted. Until you master its use you will only be able to teleport within this local vicinity. It has no access whatsoever to weapons or communications and it can only pilot the ship in cases of extreme emergency."

Kei turned back to the Inspector, "This is for me?"

"Yes Kusanagi-san, but it comes with a great deal of responsibility. If you abuse the access I have given you for any reason, I assure you I will not hesitate to take it away. Mizuho will explain how it all works."

Kei straighten up and then gave a formal bow to the Inspector. "Thank you very much, for the controller and especially for my wife's freedom."

The Inspector returned the bow, "I should be going now and you two should be getting back to the school and figuring out a couple of good excuses for where you have been all this time."

"But you're not going back to headquarters so soon? You came all this way..." said Mizuho. She had a new found respect for her boss and she looked forward to showing him her gratitude in some way.

"Kusanagi-kun, I wasn't always the stuffy old Inspector General of the Gingarenmen. I served my time as a junior observer on out-of-the-way underdeveloped planets too. I thought I might spend a few days in Wisconsin and catch up with some old friends." He winked at Kei then spoke to his controller.

"Adjust control language to Earth type English, subtype Middle American. Set coordinates and transport." Then to Kei and Mizuho, "Good luck to you both. Be happy."

* * * * *

Kei stared out the window of his living room at the rain spattering on the veranda and reflected on everything he wanted from life.

Nothing, I have it all!

He sat on the couch with Mizuho in his lap reading a book. She had quickly tired of writing her report earlier in the evening, preferring instead to cuddle with Kei. After the Inspector left that afternoon she had teleported them both back to the school, cautioning Kei not to try using his new system controller until she had an opportunity to explain the basics of teleportation to him. He had returned to his forth-period class just as it was ending. Since the only excuse he could think of was that he had spent the entire time in the boy's lavatory, he had suffered the rest of the day being teased by Hyosuke for not being able to satisfy himself quickly enough.

Mizuho put down the atlas she was reading, "So, Wisconsin is in the middle of the North American continent and they make cheese there."

"If you say so."

Mizuho had fared much worse. Someone from her fourth-period class had gone to the director's office when she had not shown up. The director had scoured the school looking for her and when he caught her coming out of a janitor's closet he marched her straight to his office. She made up a story about receiving an important cell-phone call from her hometown, but he had chewed her out anyway reminding her of her responsibilities to her students. It was the second such lecture she had endured that day!

Kei tired of watching the rain and turned his attention to the top of the television where Marie and his new best friend were running head long at one another. When their inner tubes met, they would bounce back to opposite ends of the set. Each time this happened it was followed by a giggly chorus of, "Noo... Noo... Noo... Noo... Noo..."

"They seem to be getting along well together," Kei said.

"Why shouldn't they?" replied Mizuho.

"Well, I thought Marie might resent having to share control of the ship."

"No, I'm sure Marie is more relieved at not keeping track of both of us from now on." Mizuho turned slightly to look into Kei's face, "Have you thought about what to call him?"

"Call him? You mean he doesn't already have a name?"

"No silly, he has a registration number, but you can't pronounce that in Japanese."

"Really? What's it sound like?"

Mizuho looked over at the television and began singing a seemingly random string of notes. A little blue clad head popped up from behind the set.

"Naa?"

At the sound of Mizuho's voice, Kei was reminded of the fantasy he had while locked in the bedroom that day. A smile crossed his face and he reacted in other ways as well. Before he knew what was going on they were both surrounded by twinkling lights. When the lights dimmed he was on his back looking up at the bedroom ceiling with Mizuho lying on top of him. She turned over and crouched above him.

"Is this where you targeted the teleport? That was excellent; you're a natural at this Kei-kun!"

"I-I did that? But I didn't say a word?"

Mizuho lifted an index finger in front of his face and in her best stern teacher voice said, "First lesson. You don't always have to say the command, but you must always *think* the command." She touched his forehead with her fingertip and then lightly kissed the spot. Letting herself down on top of him with their faces close together she asked, "Now husband, just *why* are we here?"

"Say something else in your native language."

"What do you want me to say?"

"Whatever you are thinking right now," Kei said with a grin.

Mizuho was silent for a moment then began singing softly into Kei's ear.

Yep, I have everything I ever wanted.

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