Secrets to Keep

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by zer0chelen

Summary

Kai discovers something about a new ally and reconnects with an old friend. Also, possibly has a mental breakdown over a stove.

Somewhat of an AU in which Kai discovers Pixal in the new Samurai X earlier than in canon.

Notes

A gift for Netbug009 for FriendshipEx 2026, cross-posted from ao3 and SquidgeWorld, Originally posted here.

See the end of the work for more notes

Why can’t anything ever go right for me?

Kai bemoaned as he dodged behind the machinery of the defunct warehouse, barely avoiding being filled with bullet holes from the rapid-fire gunshots. He crouched, catching his breath with a huff as irritation spiked through him. The clanking bullets on metal died down, the shooters seemingly smart enough not to waste ammo when they couldn’t actually hit him. He spied a couple of them reloading between the openings of the large machine.

Theoretically, this should have been simple. He and Zane had been working for weeks, tracking illegal weapons shipments and collecting intel, all to take down the Mechanic. Ever since the man had escaped Kryptarium Prison, he’d been causing a lot of problems on top of the already rising crime, and with all the ninja split up on their own missions, Kai and Zane were a little spread thin handling the fallout with just the two of them. Even so, this part should have been going much smoother, just handling some low level thugs working for the Mechanic, he’d even made a cocky joke about it to Zane before they split up for the day. Easy. Again, *Theoretically.*

Of course nothing could ever go that easy for him, could it?

There was a flicker of movement out of the corner of his eye as a group of thugs made their way around to where Kai was crouched, clearly trying to sneak up on him. They were terrible at it though, shuffling loudly and breathing too heavy, idiots. Kai quietly pulled himself on top of the machinery and dropped down onto one of them, landing on the woman’s shoulders and hitting her head until she was out cold. Quickly moving to grab the next guy’s arm before he even realized what happened to his fallen comrade, disarming him, and with a swift kick, Kai sent him barreling toward the other two who only had a split second to react.

“What the fu—”

All three ended up in a heap on the ground and Kai flipped back up to where he started, scanning the upper rafters of the building, he caught sight of a hanging, metal catwalk. Leaping up, he caught the edge and pulled himself fully onto it.

Things had gone bad almost immediately out of the gate, a new record for him, he imagined. He would personally stand by the fact that this particular time was not his fault, actually.

The information he and Zane had about the number of guys that would be here? Wrong, there were almost twice the number then there were supposed to be. Whatever, he could handle that.

It wasn’t even like they were difficult to fight, he could tell that none of them were particularly well trained, certainly not compared to Kai. There were just a lot of them and

they had a lot of guns. Kai always hated fighting people with guns, mostly because nine times out of ten they weren't very skilled and in his experience, an unskilled idiot with a gun was always more dangerous than someone who actually knows what they're doing.

He only hoped Zane was having better luck with his half of the mission.

From his new perch high above, he watched the main floor. Down below, a tall, thin woman, who obviously had some kind of authority, came upon the guys he'd taken down and started barking at her subordinates to find where Kai had gone. Grinning to himself, he crept further along the catwalk. Keeping his eyes on the movement below him as the thugs spread out to search for him. Just when he readied himself to jump another couple of them, he heard the low rumbling of a motor from outside.

Oh, c'mon! Seriously?

If more people were showing up, he swore he would just set this entire stupid place on fire. Well, he wouldn't, that wouldn't help. Yeah, he was trying to be a good distraction to get their attention off *other* places, but an entire building burning down would be a bit too far. Not least because it would be more suspicious and he didn't actually want to seriously hurt someone if it wasn't necessary, but also they were somewhat working with the Commissioner, and Kai couldn't imagine the man would be very happy if he started lighting buildings in his city on fire. So no, no setting everything on fire right now, though he'd definitely be pissed enough to stop being so careful.

Before he could continue his arson related fantasies however, someone who most definitely did not work for the Mechanic appeared, or more accurately rammed their entire vehicle through the large, industrial door of the warehouse. The metal shrieking and breaking violently as the armored car came to a stop almost hitting some of the guys who scrambled back yelling in surprise.

"Oh, Shit! It's that Samurai guy!"

Leaping out and taking down two men was who he now recognized as the new Samurai X. Kai hadn't had many run-ins with the guy, at least not since all the time twins business, but he'd heard enough about them from Lloyd that he knew they were, at least mostly, an ally.

Though secretly, Kai always thought Lloyd had a bad habit of trusting people he barely knew way too much, and Kai wasn't a big fan of people stealing his sister's stuff, but it wasn't like they had done anything but be helpful as far as he knew, so Kai decided it would be fair enough to help out.

Just as another thug was about to jump Samurai X from behind, Kai leapt down, sending a burst of fire out before he even hit concrete. The man, already flailing back from the flames and not having expected Kai's arrival, was easy to knock out.

"Wow, crazy seeing *you* here." Kai tried for a friendly tone as he kicked another guy to the ground, backing up to stand by Samurai X.

They didn’t answer right away, throwing a shuruken to knock the weapon out of the hands of another man. They brandished their katana and tilted their head to him slightly.

“Where is the other one? Zane.”

There was an odd note in the mechanically altered voice that Kai couldn’t place, but he brushed it off, he had more important things to worry about. Their confusion, at least made him feel a little more confident that despite everything, the plan was working. If even Samurai X, who always suspiciously had way too much insider knowledge on some of the ninja’s missions for both Kai’s taste and trust issues, didn’t know that Zane wasn’t here with Kai, that was probably good news.

“Busy,” Kai answered shortly, spinning his own twin katana as he drew them.

“What are *you* doing here?”

“I thought I might offer my assistance.”

Kai swore they were sassing him, but he didn’t really know this guy enough to tell, choosing to focus on fighting.

The two working together was going fine enough, that is, until one of the men had decided to go and take up one of the weapons from their shipment. He aimed what looked like some kind of rocket launcher at them, Samurai X was busy dealing with some other guys, so they didn’t see.

“Look out!”

Kai yelled out and jumped down. Luckily, he’d had seen that his warning did some good, as the last thing he saw before the giant explosion rang his ears, was the samurai leaping out of the way.

When Kai came to seconds later, he had been thrown back into one of the conveyor belts, his arm ached painfully as he pushed himself up. He’d been mostly out of the way of the explosion and fire didn’t hurt him, but still he was probably relatively lucky he wasn’t more injured.

Looking out over the burning mess, he saw what had exploded, Samurai X’s vehicle was now a mangled mess and the remaining flames from the explosion mixing with fuel were starting to burn higher. He cursed under his breath, and tested his arm again, *it’ll be fine*, he decided and ran forward to stop the fire from spreading.

Taking control of the flames, he tried to make them die down before they caught the rest of the Warehouse on fire. It was then he spotted were Samurai X had ended up after the explosion. Still knocked down, they were surrounded while being beat into by more of the thugs, who had obviously taken advantage of their prone state to hurt them while they were down. Seeing this, Kai changed course, instead of tamping the flames pulled them to him and released them in the direction of the attackers, who had to duck back to avoid being burned. Running forward Kai crouched by the samurai, taken aback by the fact that they weren’t

bleeding or anything, their arm was busted open and their helmet was damaged, and if they were a human… but they weren't, there were wires and metallic pieces in the places where blood and flesh would be in their arm.

Samurai X was a nindroid? Huh, interesting.

He didn't have time to consider the implications there, as the guys he scared off with his fire had the bright idea to come back, instead of bothering fighting, Kai just stood, glowering dangerously, allowing the flames he still held in his hands to burn up his arms. That seemed to get the message through to them, because the front guy immediately dropped his weapon, held up his hands and ran, the others wisely scrambling after him.

Watching them run off made him realize that the other thugs were long gone, probably having run after the explosion, he turned, the fires behind him had gotten worse, crap. Forgetting about the injured samurai for a moment, he took control of the flames once more, urging them to burn lower and lower until they were out.

Checking quickly to make sure there wasn't any more to put out and doing a quick sweep of the area to find all the guys who'd been knocked out. Kai quickly sent a message to the Commissioner. Now that he was sure the man would be on his way to pick them up, Kai made quick work of tying up the remaining unconscious thugs, leaving them by the conveyor belt. After he was finished he returned to Samurai X's side.

They were in the process of pushing themselves up, struggling a bit due to their injuries. Now, Kai was far from the best with machines and fixing things, definitely nowhere near his sister in that department, but he couldn't imagine it would be easy for them to fix themselves up in this condition, plus with their ride in pieces, they could probably use his help.

"Hey," trying to get their attention, his voice came out harsher than he meant, he moved a bit closer, pulling down his hood so they could see his face and clearing his throat, still a bit unsure if they'd accept his help.

"Can you stand?"

They didn't respond immediately, instead choosing to struggle for a moment. The light in their helmets visor flickered and they shook their head in frustration. A low, glitchy sound that was reminiscent of an annoyed huff came out of them.

Crouching beside them, he reached out to help them up, they twitched back, tilting their masked face toward him, he could almost feel the suspicion radiating off of them. Kai had to resist the urge to roll his eyes, biting back a snarky comment.

"I'm not gonna hurt you… Let me help," he jerked his head vaguely in the direction of where he'd parked his bike outside, "I have a safer place we can go to fix you up."

Considering his words for a moment, they finally nodded slowly and allowed him to grip their uninjured arm. Trying to pull them up as gently as he could, he let them lean on him as he helped them outside.

The drive wasn’t far and it wasn’t long before they reached the place Kai and Zane were staying temporarily. It was a fairly decent apartment, owned by Cyrus Borg, which was why it was so cheap, that man always seemed endlessly willing to help the ninja anyway he could. As a side effect of it’s owner, it had some fancy, high-tech, built-in amenities courtesy of Borg industries. Nya and Jay probably would have loved it. Personally, Kai thought it was all pointless and stupid, but it was a far, far nicer place then they probably could have been able to stay otherwise, so who was he to complain?

Thinking of his sister, he made a quick mental note to call her later as the door slid shut behind them. The auto sensor lights faded in as they stepped inside, bathing everything in soft light.

The central area had an L shaped sofa with a fuzzy carpet, a fancy TV on the wall opposite it and a little coffee table. The large window that spanned the far wall had it’s blinds shut, blocking out the city view, a glass sliding door that led out onto a little balcony sat just beside, and at the far right was the kitchen and a hall leading to where they slept.

“Well,” he started, his voice filling the empty apartment a little awkwardly, “here we are.”

Not responding, Samurai X almost immediately made their way to the couch, limping slightly. At first Kai tried to help but they shrugged his hand off. Throwing his hands up conceding, he backed off. Oh well, if they didn’t want his help.

Keeping them in his sights as they struggled a bit to sit at one end of the couch, he massaged his aching shoulder, it didn’t seem too badly injured, but it wouldn’t hurt to look at it later just in case. Still watching the other carefully, he sat across from them.

As they tried to study the damage of their arm, the light in their visor glitched irregularly which seemed to irritate them, but when they tried to clutch their head, some broken mechanism in their arm tweaked, causing it to lock up. They made a frustrated noise. Even with their struggles, they seemed adamant on not removing the helmet. Kai bit his tongue resisting the urge to offer help, they didn’t seem up for help from him, but he supposed… He let his eyes wander casually off toward the window.

“You know...You could take that off if it’s bugging you, right?”

Even though he wasn’t looking at them, only able to vaguely sense them at the edge of his vision, he knew their attention immediately snapped to him. They didn’t say anything, in fact, they hadn’t spoken once since being injured, which made sense, he guessed something damaged whatever was allowing them to change their voice, identity hiding and all that. Kai almost laughed a little as he rolled his eyes, standing and looking back at them with his arms crossed. Doing his absolute best to keep the smugness out of his voice.

“It’s *fine*, I won’t tell anyone it’s you Pixal.”

That seemed to throw them for a loop, they paused, silently considering his words. Then slowly removing the Samurai X helmet. Pixal's familiar glowing green eyes peered out. It looked like she was trying to narrow her eyes at him, but the effect was kinda ruined by how damaged the left side of her face was. Part of the metal plating had broken off, exposing the wires and metal parts beneath, and there was a nasty looking crack through her eye's lens. Cringing at the sight, Kai's pain empathy kicked in and he subconsciously rubbed the scars on his own face. Wondering if that was painful, maybe not, being a nindroid. Either way, it was obviously not fun for her. Arms dropping, he stepped a little closer.

"You need help wi—"

"I am fully capable of repairing myself," she cut him off.

Shrugging, he eyed her for a moment, then turned. While she worked at fixing herself with the built-in gadgets she had, he walked over to the kitchen. If she was going to be busy for a bit, he might as well whip up something to eat. Pretty much all of the appliances were brand new and very fancy, in fact neither he nor Zane had even used them, aside from the microwave. In fairness, they hadn't really had much time for cooking since moving in and were mostly just living off instant noodle cups and take out. Oh well, Kai could probably figure it out.

Having the bright idea to cook the noodles on the stove instead, he dug around for a good pot. This was an amazing idea.

Turns out, it was actually a terrible idea, because for First Master knows what reason, the stove was barely a stove, it didn't even have a proper stove top, it was just smooth? Worse, there weren't even buttons or anything, just a touch-screen. What was wrong with this thing?

Tapping the little screen, he cursed out loud.

"What are you doing?"

Kai almost jumped when Pixal spoke, not having heard her approach, too distracted by his own annoyance, he turned and saw her leaning on the partisan that separated the kitchen and main area.

"Uh, food?" he frowned, glowering at the source of his ire, "except this stove is annoying as hell."

He kicked it for emphasis and grumbled, "what does a *stove* even need a touch-screen for? It's a stove!"

"You… Cannot figure out how to use a stove?"

"It's a stupid stove," he snatched up the pot and waved it at her, "shouldn't you be sitting down?"

Turning to the kitchen sink, he filled the pot with water, a new idea coming to him. Pixal didn't respond to his question so he threw one of the ramen packets at her.

“Here catch!”

Turning it over in her hands Pixal raised an eyebrow at him as she followed him back to the couch.

"What is it you are doing now?"

One of Kai’s hands held the pot while in the other he let flames burst to life, holding it under the pot. He grinned happily at her.

“Improvising.”

“This does not seem wise,” Pixal pointed out, “cooking over an open flame indoors is unsafe.”

Kai scoffed, “it’s *fine,* if anything catches, I’ll just put it out.”

“What about the smoke?”

Kai looked up at her and dead-panned, “you’re a nindroid and I’m the Master of Fire, breathing in smoke doesn’t do anything to us.”

The expression on her face was unimpressed, seeming intent on her point, “and the smoke alarms?”

“Are you just being pedantic on purpose?”

“I did not know you knew such complex words.”

“Wha—Hey! I’m not an idiot...”

“You aren’t?”

“No! And I’ll have you know, I disabled the smoke alarms…” he trailed off trying to focus on the water which was starting to bubble a little, and grumbled under his breath, “kept waking

me up in the middle of the night…”

Pixal, seeming amused, went back to her repairs.

After a bit, the water came to a nice boil and Kai had Pixal dropped the noodles and flavor in the boiling water. Once she returned to her spot, a quiet settled over them and Kai watched the noodles slowly spread out in the bubbling water.

“How did you know?”

“Huh?” Kai looked up at her when her voice broke the silence.

“Samurai X,” she paused, studying him a moment, “you said that you knew it was me, so I am curious.”

Rolling his injured shoulder, he hissed a little in pain, thinking about his response.

“Just a hunch… It made the most sense,”

The noodles were done so he waved the flames from his hand and set the pot on the coffee table. Counting off his fingers, he ran down the list, “I ran into Ronin a couple weeks back, so I know he’s busy, plus, doesn’t seem like his... style. Chamille, maybe, because of the voice thing you did… But I heard from Skylor that she got caught for something or another, no way she could’ve been doing this from Kryptarium. Already knew it couldn’t be Sky herself for, uh, reasons.”

He made eye contact with her, letting a smirk onto his face, “then finding out you’re a nindroid pretty much confirmed it.”

“It could have been so many others,” she argued, but her lips quirked up into a faint smile.

“Right… Like who?”

“It could have been… Dareth.”

“Really,” Kai tried to hold in his laugh, *“Dareth?* You think Dareth could of pulled it off, Dareth?”

Raising his eyebrows at her, he started laughing, Pixal joining in a second later, laughing in the slightly awkward way she always did.

Sobering a bit, he looked at her thoughtfully and his voice went serious, “Why didn't you tell anyone?”

Pixal’s eyes widened a little and she looked away, a grumpy expression on her face.

“I mean…” he looked in the same direction she was staring, side eyeing her, “You don’t *have* to tell me, obviously…”

When she still didn’t respond, he decided to fetch some spoons and bowls to eat their ramen with. Once he came back, she had gone back to fiddling with her arm, instead of sitting where he had been before, he plopped himself down beside her.

“Well, you want some food?” he offered up the second bowl to her.

Barely glancing at him she answered shortly, “I do not require the consumption of nutrients in that way.”

“Zane eats sometimes,” he pointed out, watching for her reaction.

That made her pause, another odd expression crossed her face at the mention of the other nindroid, ah, maybe that was it, or it was somehow related at the very least to why Pixal had lied about Samurai X. Deciding to put this observation on the back-burner (haha) for now, and Pouring himself a bowl, he stirred it a few times before taking a bite.

“It is pretty good, you know, as far as crappy inta-ramen goes,” Kai said conversationally, nudging her gently, “if you don’t eat some, I’ll probably eat it all, and that’s not good for me.”

She was still stewing silently, so he went back to his soup.

After Kai had eaten almost two bowls of it, (sue him, he was a fast eater and he hadn’t had anything all day) Pixal spoke up, “Perhaps, I could have some… Just to try.”

Brightening, Kai scooped her a bowl and handed it over. Pixal seemed to like it and once she was done, she methodically traced the edge of her bowl with the spoon, looking pensive. Next to her, Kai Leaned back luxuriously, he could honestly fall asleep he was so exhausted from the day. In fact, he almost did pass out when Pixal suddenly spoke, snapping him back to focus.

“I did not like being the way I was.”

Pixal looked at him, and he nodded to show he was listening.

“I missed having my own body…”

Kai watched her a moment, went it didn’t seem like she was going to say anything more right now, he took a breath. Sitting forward with his arms resting on his knees, he spoke slow.

“I mean, hey, I get it, if I were you, I wouldn’t like being stuck in someone else’s head either.” He shuttered at the thought, “not being able to do anything sounds *awful…”*

Glancing over at her, he continued.

“But… still, why did you lie?”

Now she was back to not answering again, he saw how she tensed and stood abruptly, “I should go, Zane will be back soon, correct? I do not want him to see me...”

Jumping on her words immediately, he stood facing her, “so this *is* about him! I knew it”

Realizing that he’d gotten a bit too excited at being right and let his voice go a little calmer, tilting his head. “You could have told any of us though… You know, it’s okay to need help, right Pix? We’re all a team…”

“*You* are telling me this?”

Not knowing what to say to that, he stayed silent. Kai knew he was being a bit of a hypocrite, despite what everyone thought, he was at least somewhat self aware, but it was always frustrating to watching someone act...well, *like him.* And he really didn’t like seeing other people make the stupid choices he would make. Kai sometimes wished he knew what to say to people to make them stop doing that.

Already walking away, she turned slightly and spoke in a cool voice.

“Goodbye.”

The sliding door clicked open and just before Pixal was about to step out Kai called out.

“Wait, hold on.”

He stepped closer to her and she looked at him weird. As he pulled her into a quick hug, wrapping his arms around her. Feeling her freeze up in surprise before relaxing and awkwardly patting him back. Letting go after a moment, he gave her a friendly punch to her uninjured arm.

“Don’t get you’re ass kicked again!” Kai grinned, “Or else you’ll owe me two…”

“I think we are even for last time,” Pixal answered, smiling back at him, Kai could give her that, so he just laughed and shook his head,

“fine.”

Making finger guns at her as he backed up, “Don’t be a stranger, stranger.”

Kai turned to go sit back down. By the time he was back at the couch, he could see that she was already gone.

Staring at the remaining broth in the pot, lost in his thoughts, he was getting the oddest sense of Déjà vu to the first Samurai X, back with Nya… *Times change, I guess, or not really,* he shook his head.

End Notes

This sort of inadvertently turned into Pixal angst! Ha ha, but I love their funny little friendship. I hope you enjoyed reading!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!