

Web-Original / Literature / Tai's Story

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(Use ctrl+f ' ==X ' with no spaces between the = and whatever you're searching to find sections.
I can't link to specific sections with Google Docs, unfortunately)



Art by [Aogami](#)

“The title of the novel, although pretty plain and lame, was intended to reflect that, while this is Tai's own story, every other character and life around him also has their own – everyone has their own stories. From Mike's traumatic past to Robert's pain and loss to Darron's endless fury, they all have tales to tell.”

– Kichigai Kitsune, Tai's Story Extras

Tai's Story is a novel-length story by furry author [Kichigai Kitsune](#) [Wikifur]. It's about an eight year old fox kit named Tai, who moves from Alaska to New York City with his distant and neglectful mother, bringing with him the anxiety that comes from being a lonely and bullied kit. In New York he meets Mike, a ten year old fox kit, and they slowly become good friends.

The novel contains erotic scenes between the two under aged furry characters ('cubs' or 'kits,') but the nature of the novel is far from pornographic. It has a plot, legitimate character development, and, once again, is novel length. In fact, it clocks in at 630 pages, more than the UK edition of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows!

There's more to the story than just their friendship, as the official description belies, "*The tale of a young boy who suddenly finds himself in chaotic New York City, with the dark shadows of an untold past looming over him.*"

To say much more would spoil the novel...

...Which this [TVTropes](#) article will do. Of course, because this cannot be hosted on the TVTropes website proper, there will be unmarked spoilers, at least for now. It'd take a long time to censor every single spoiler entry with coloured text backgrounds that you'd need to highlight to read. I might add them later, I might not.

Every trope entry is a link. I've recoloured the page and the font to resemble TVT's Nightmode, so I'm not going to go out of my way to recolour every link. So **everything with an underline is a link. Except for this. This time it isn't. It's for emphasis.**

So, if you haven't yet, [please read it here first!](#)

The entire story as well as individual chapters, side stories, extra materials, *and* associated artworks [can be found here.](#)

==Main *Tai's Story* contains examples of:

- **Absurdly Spacious Sewer:** Averted. The sewer drains that Mike ends up swimming in are never described as large and roomy; though, being kits, both Mike and Tai fit into them fine.
- **Age Appropriate Angst:** Tai goes from being bullied and worried about making friends and being accepted by a new friend to witnessing his mother's murder and being shot. He only ages up to nine by the end of the novel, though, so it's something of a subversion.
- **Assassin Outclassin':** Brutally averted. Not only is Eraline caught unaware, but she just barely manages to stop Nate from killing Tai before dying herself. And even then, Nate survived his injuries. For a time.
- **Author Appeal:** Mike and Tai both seem to be interested in bondage and tie-up games. And then Jake is not only into bondage, but also *polishing* and multiple orgasms as revealed in the side story. Pretty convenient for a few *relatively* uncommon kinks, hmmm? Well, it could be debated that, for the polishing, Jake just knew about it and decided to subject it to Mike as punishment for teasing him for years.

- **Bathtub Bonding:** Mike and Tai share a bath together while waiting for Robert to get home with dinner. It's a touching moment until they're interrupted by Robert calling them on the phone.
- **Big Applesauce:** The author was heavily inspired by a trip to New York when visiting friends!
- **Bigger Bad:** It's revealed in the epilogue that the criminal syndicate that Darron was working for wasn't solely based in New York, and that the boss isn't too happy about his adopted son's death.
- **Big Damn Heroes:** The SWAT team that rescues Mike and Tai out in the docks. Though neither of the kits have the wherewithal to recognise them as their saviours.
- **Bonding Over Missing Parents:** Both Mike and Tai have lost family members, and there are a few scenes of them discussing this mutual loss together. Primarily in the scene where Mike manages to get Tai out to Central Park to help him get over the recent loss of his mother, but also shown when Tai notices a photograph of Mike's own mother, and he explains how he lost her.
- **Casual Kink:** Played with. Mike and Tai just happen to like tie-up games and bondage. So does Jake, according to *Years in the Making*. The story, having erotic elements, doesn't flaunt the kink as strange or bizarre, but as something interesting for the boys to explore together. See also, Author Appeal above.
- **Central Theme:** You are not alone; demonstrated over the course of the story in the love between Mike and Tai and how their parents' friendship preceded their own 'union' in the face of a horrible world. To a lesser degree, a secondary idea behind the story is encapsulated perfectly by the article's header quote: that everyone has their own story or tale to tell. This isn't really a substantive aspect of the story itself, however, but a philosophy of the author's.
- **Character Development:** Both Mike and Tai grow considerably over the course of the story.
- **Chase Scene:** Two of them! The first one is a little more slapsticky in tone, involving Tai fleeing from Darron and Wayle in a mall, knocking over fruit stands and zipping through stores and pissing off shoppers. But the second one, near the end of the novel, is more serious, with Tai making a distraction for Mike while trying to evade a large group of criminals on the rainy warehouse docks on a cold night. The scenes serve as a hard contrast, especially considering how one of Tai's pursuers in the first slips and comically falls next to a wet floor sign, while, in the latter scene, a pursuer slips on the wet cement and cracks his skull.
- **Children are Innocent:** Averted with the intention of portraying kits realistically.
- **Children Forced to Kill:** At the end of the novel, both Mike and Tai work together to kill Marco (the tiger) to stop him from raping Mike and sending the pair of them off to

god knows where to be sex slaves. Neither of the boys seem too beat up about killing him after the fact.

- **Come for the X, Stay for the Y:** Sure, it's got erotic elements, and unfortunately a lot of people looking for literature in the furry fandom are looking for spank material. Tai's story begins simply enough, with framing like a coming of age story involving a young romance. Or, you know, boys meet, they fuck; a typical cub porn story in a nutshell. Yet not only are the characters likable, they're fleshed out, relatable, and vibrant. There's also the sudden, well foreshadowed twist of Eraline being a spy that kicks the plot into full gear. It's worth noting that Tai's Story was originally submitted to Cub Central and the initial scene between Mike and Tai was put there to meet the requirements to have material posted on the site, so a bit of the early rockiness is from that. Tai's Story is more than porn with plot, and anyone who gives it a chance would realise that very quickly.
- **Crapsack World:** Or, something of a real world setting, anyway. There's spies and a sex-trafficking criminal syndicate. It's also invoked during a flashback scene involving Robert and Thomas, Tai's father.
- **Cycle of Revenge:** Darron has Eraline killed because he mistakenly believes she murdered his mother in cold blood, when Eraline was actually trying to disarm the knife she had, and ended up stabbing her. Then he discovers that Tai is Eraline's child, and tries to kidnap him and force him into the sexual slavery he grew up in. And later, when Tai escapes, he even goes so far as to try and murder Tai himself with a sniper rifle.
- **Despair Event Horizon:** Two in the story. The first, chronologically, is when Darron witnesses Eraline kill his mother. The second is when Tai sees Eraline die in the hospital.
- **Did Not Die That Way:** When all is being revealed, Tai learning of Eraline's job, it's made clear that Mike's mother, Haley, really did die in a car accident, and that Tai's father, too, really died in a boating accident. Though, the latter may end up being a subversion..!
- **Dirty Business:** The catalyst of the story, with Eraline and Kayla, Darron's mother meeting in the alleyway. Eraline is trying to secure Kayla and her son away from the sex-trafficking syndicate for exchange of information, but the wolf's boss is aware of it, and is forcing her to try and kill Eraline in order for her son, Darron, to be spared.
- **Distress Ball:** Jake arguably juggles this so Mike and Tai can be kidnaped by the thugs sent by Darron.
- **Earn Your Happy Ending:** Considering everything Mike and Tai had to go through, they damned well better have an awesome birthday party for Tai at the end, Police honouring and all!
- **Fakeout Escape:** In order to escape the criminals holding them, Tai orchestrates a plan that involves tricking their watch guard into thinking they escaped through the air-vent by making a loud noise. In reality, they were hiding behind the door and shoot right out of the room and steal the guy's phone on the way!

- **First Kiss:** Mike smooches on Tai a few times, and there's plenty of it back and forth between them. But the real big one comes during the ending. There's even a picture of it.
- **Flash Back:** Most of the backstory is revealed naturally through flashbacks from Robert's point of view. Thomas, Tai's father, is shown for the first time outside of his wooden overcoat in one as well.
- **Foreshadowing:** There are several small moments from Eraline's perspective – scenes at her job - that make greater sense during a second read-through, as well as the fact that Robert was already listed as an emergency contact at school for Tai. This wasn't as apparent in earlier versions of the story.
- **Free Range Children:** A light example, Mike takes Tai for a walk around the neighbourhood early in the story, indicating that Robert has faith in his son's abilities and intelligence. It says something that the only time we see Robert angry with Mike is when he steals a few bucks from Robert and sneaks out to Central Park to take an endangered, thoroughly morose Tai outside to try and cheer him up.
- **Furry Fandom:** Naturally.
- **Harmful to Minors:** Though he was mistaken, Darron witnessing of his mother's murder at the hands of Eraline is the crux of the entire plot. Later in the story proper, Darron has Eraline killed by Nate, and tries to kill Tai as well.
- **Intimate Healing:** Played for laughs near the end of the story. While Tai is recovering from his gunshot wound, Mike gets some time alone with him in the room, and he playfully gives Tai a few gropes.
- **Kids Are Cruel:** Zig-zagged. The bullies in Tai's flashback are quite mean, but they mostly back down except for the main bully, a cougar named Ken, who could audition for a Stephen King bully. Then there's Wayne, who genuinely felt bad for chasing Tai with Darron.
- **Lonely Funeral:** The funeral for Eraline is attended by Tai, Mike, and Robert, as well as a handful of people Tai doesn't actually recognise. One of them is the CIA boss, with whom Robert has a chat.
- **Most Writers Are Adults:** Intentionally averted by the author, though there are some readers who were surprised, or did not buy the way Mike talked or how Tai and handle some problems. Also literally averted – Kichi started writing TS when he was 16.
- **No Escape But Down:** Tai, twice! Both times from Darron: First, he leaps off of the roof of a car park and somehow manages to land in an old mouse woman's shopping cart, resulting with just a broken ankle. The second time he manages to get away from Darron by rolling off of a boat ramp and into the water below.
- **Open-Minded Parent:** Robert clearly has *some* idea about his boys' relationship, and he doesn't have a problem with whatever it is he suspects. He casually brushes away that Mike and Tai were sleeping naked together in one early scene, joking that they lost their clothes in their sleep. Though that may be a case of Children Are Innocent on his part.

Eraline is the opposite, as Tai remembers, in narration, a time he was ‘experimenting’ with a friend in a closet, and he was screamed at for it after being caught.

- **Parental Neglect:** Eraline outright ignores Tai on purpose, and at times feels as if he’s a burden on her. She’s shown to be conflicted, and that she does love and care for her son, however.
- **Parental Obliviousness:** Again, Eraline. This is less about her son’s relationship with Mike, but more his emotional distress and anxiety. Not so much with Robert, who seems to be the complete inverse: a parent who pays attention to his son as well as being open-minded (see above.)
- **Parents Walk in at the Worst Time:** Tai and Mike are walked-in on by Robert, carrying two mugs of hot cocoa. Luckily, Robert was too busy being careful with the mugs so they wouldn’t spill, and Mike was quick enough to hide Tai’s *tied up paws*!
- **Pay Evil Unto Evil:** Though it’s much less straight to the trope’s definition, the satisfaction Mike and Tai get after Marco, the hulking brutish tiger’s death, is pretty well deserved. See his entry in the character section.
- **People Are Bastards:** Espoused by Tai several times over the course of the story, most notably when he breaks his ankle and no one even bothers to help him and just gawk.
- **Pizza Boy Special Delivery:** Inverted and lampshaded twice. First by Tai deciding to remove his shirt in front of Jake – who he successfully perceives as checking him out. The second time is by Mike, who openly starts groping at Tai to elicit a reaction from Jake. Both times, the poor teen is standing at the door, and, the second time, he ends up fleeing and has to pay for the pizza himself.
- **Posthumous Character:** Tai’s father and Mike’s mother. Haley doesn’t get any flashback scenes, however, so this mostly applies to Thomas.
- **Scenery Porn:** Tai is described as something of a romantic: he loves nature and the outdoors and the snowy hinterlands of Alaska where he grew up. The opening paragraph of the novel describes Tai taking in the breadth of New York City during light snowfall. Even if he’s uneasy about being there, the description is a gorgeous, memorable moment.
- **Shotacon:** Furry shota, or ‘cub’ at least. Mike and Tai are both under eleven.
- **Shout Out:** To *Aliens*, by Eraline: “Get the *fuck* away from my son!”
- **Sickbed Slaying:** Robert defenestrates Nate. Had Nate not been seriously injured, it might not have gone so well.
- **Spy Fiction:** Stale Beer Variety. The life of a spy is far from glamorous from what little we do see of Eraline’s work. It’s played very realistically, especially in the scene where she goes to Robert’s apartment and just *weeps* after inadvertently getting someone killed.
- **Tear Jerker:** With just how much Tai goes through, the tragic, friendless past, the devastating loss of *both* parents and the blatant, raw emotion displayed by Tai particularly after Eraline’s death... yeah. Then there’s Mike’s story: he lost his mother in a car accident when he was younger, was raped by a ‘mugger’ *in his own home*, and spent

years pretending like it didn't bother or affect him. The moment he unleashes that bottled up emotion is just as raw and powerful as Tai's weeks-long grief for Eraline. That's not to mention the very sweet and heartfelt moments between Mike and Tai, which, maybe in contrast, can make some weep with joy. Especially the ending. Talk about an Emotional Torque.

- **Teens Are Monsters:** Played straight with Darron, if not a little subverted with how well-rounded he is as a villain, but ultimately subverted by Wayle.
- **The Big Damn Kiss:** The ending! Damned well warranted too!
- **Waking Up Elsewhere:** When Mike and Tai are kidnapped, they awake in a dingy, darkly lit room with Darron for company. As well as a trolley of sharp things.
- **Would Hurt a Child:** All of the villains and the main antagonist. Just check out the Trauma Conga Line in poor Tai's character entry..
- **You Are Not Alone:** The basic premise behind Mike and Tai's relationship, if not the heart of the story itself. It's especially relevant from Tai's perspective. Having a friendless background, Mike comes along in his life and serves as his first true friend, and more. When Tai loses his mother, it's Mike who helps him cope over time. He even sneaks Tai out to Central Park a few weeks later to try and cheer him up. And it isn't just one-sided: Mike only opens up to Tai about how he had kept the trauma he felt after being raped by Nate bottled up. They're Living Emotional Crutches for one another. Certain scenes with them, especially the moment on the roof, easily count as a Crowning Moment of Heartwarming. The only way that scene could be more perfect is if it was accompanied with Cristo Redentor, at least in this troper's opinion.
- **Youth Is Wasted on the Dumb:** Defied by the author. Tai's Story was written with this trope in mind, and it was defied at every single step. Mike is shown to be very competent, clever, and intelligent and Tai as well is shown to be intelligent despite his poor grades. A running theme among the ending is just how often the criminal syndicate underestimates Mike and Tai's cleverness.

==Characters: *Tai's Story*

Tai Sundafyllison

"Can we wait a little while? I want to look at the no-stars for a little longer."

The titular main character, Tai is an attention starved, bullied, and friendless eight-year-old tawny fox. He moves from an abject shack in Alaska to an expensive apartment in New York City with his emotionally distant mother at the start of the story.

- **Action Survivor:** Both he and Mike definitely fit into this trope during their kidnapping. They only escape with their wits and because the criminals underestimate them.
- **Break the Cutie:** Many readers adore Tai and feel for the tragedy that he goes through over the course of the story. The case could be made that this is an inversion – that he goes from already broken, then to *pieces*, and then being put back together.
- **Desperately Craves Attention:** See Parental Neglect below.
- **Determinator:** Perhaps not the hardest of examples, but Tai does manage to climb back up a flight of stairs he had recently been thrown down in order to save Mike from a behemoth tiger. Also, he probably had a few broken ribs *before* he started climbing those stairs the first time! Damn!
- **Disappeared Dad:** Tai's father died in a boating accident when he was very young.
- **Dude Looks Like a Lady:** He's short and petite - if not lithe - even for his age. It's heavily implied that he's probably malnourished, having needed to skip meals due to the poverty he grew up in. Needless to say, he's mistaken for a girl a few times. His hair doesn't help the matter.

Then there's this bit from Officer Jameson after Tai is rescued by the police after he jumped off the car park roof while fleeing Darron, "*We had reports of a 'little fox-girl' being chased through the mall.*"

- **Friendless Background:** It's established quite early on in the story and shown in a flashback that Tai had very, very few friends in Alaska and he was often bullied for various reasons - either for being poor or looking feminine. He had trouble keeping what few friends he had at that: being the constant target of bullies, suffering parental neglect, and outright exploding at his friends because of these reasons - not that he even realised it. He's even distrustful of Mike for quite some time once he meets the older boy due to the bullying he was put through.
- **Green Eyes:** Leafy green in fact; just like his father's.
- **Happily Adopted:** Officially adopted by Robert at the end of the story... which leads to... Brother-Brother Incest! But they're Not-Blood Siblings... so technically not *actual* incest! Only lawful incest. Uh...

The incest angle is evidently incidental, but Word of God states that the potential views from the 'incest' tag weren't overlooked either.

- **Heroic BSOD:** Twice. Tai witnesses his mother's murder, seeing her get *shot* by an assassin, and is then he's present at the hospital when she dies. While she was neglectful, Tai and Eraline still loved one another, and he becomes absolutely catatonic afterwards, spending weeks with the Donaldsons, sitting alone and saying nothing. He slowly begins to get better after several scenes of this, but then slips into the HBSOD once again, when Darron has Marco and a few thugs break into the apartment to kidnap him and Mike. Tai just blanks out, doesn't put up a fight, and spends a fair amount of the time in a Troubled Fetal Position on the floor of the warehouse they're taken to.

- **Living Emotional Crutch:** Mike & Tai *both* can be seen as this for one another. Tai fits into this trope for Mike in a less obvious, more subtle way than Mike does for him. It's best demonstrated once they've killed Marco and Mike breaks down and has his Beneath the Mask moment, opening up to Tai about how traumatic his rape by Nate actually was, and how he just nearly relived it. (See 'Beneath the Mask' and 'Rape as Drama' under Mike's section.)
- **Major Injury Underreaction:** Justified. Likely because of adrenal shock, Tai doesn't notice that he's been *shot in the chest by a fucking sniper rifle*, and remains confused for some time before he's taken to the hospital.
- **Mutilation Conga:** Let's see... Tai breaks his ankle – *only* his ankle – when he jumps off the roof of a car park at the beginning of the story. He gets thrown down a flight of stairs by Nate, his mother's assassin, near the middle. Then he meets Darron for the third time at the end of the story and is thoroughly beaten with the likely results of a few broken few ribs. Then he gets thrown down some stairs *again* by Marco, and is ultimately shot in the chest by Darron with a *fucking sniper rifle*. Jesus christ!
- **Orphan's Ordeal:** Surely present as a major element of the plot, but somewhat underplayed in the narrative itself. While we see Tai's grief for several scenes (see Heroic BSOD above.), it's actually from Mike's perspective as he witnesses Tai's depression and tries to help him through it, as he too lost his mother. (See Bonding Over Missing Parents in the main list.) That isn't to say that the actual event of his mother's death isn't a *major* impact on the story as a whole, however.
- **Parental Neglect & Abusive Parents:** Eraline became perpetually distant from Tai after the death of his father. It's so bad that she makes a point of aggressively ignoring him most of the time. In one of the few scenes from her perspective, we learn that she doesn't care all that much that she leaves him alone at the apartment all day and night, knowing full well he wants, if not *needs* her around. She briefly becomes disgusted with herself from this thought, but it doesn't seem to trouble her all too much. This neglect is a major cause for Tai's attention craving with Mike and his overall emotional distress: her emotional distance puts him in a state of loneliness that's compounded by his lack of friends and bullying. Once he meets Mike, he more or less falls head-over-heels with him – elated to have someone who shows him attention and affection.
- **Peek A Bangs:** His long hair is frequently falling in his face, solidifying his case of 'dude looks like a lady.' Just look at [Manafox's reference art!](#) (nsfw)
- **Shower Shy:** Briefly touched upon when Jake takes him and Mike to an indoor pool and they need to wash the chlorine out of their fur. Of course, [Mr. Fanservice](#) Mike quickly helps him get over it.
- **Shrinking Violet:** Perhaps a light example, Tai is shown to be incredibly shy around strangers and people he doesn't know well in general – but opens up rather easily to people who give him attention, such as the police officers who drive him to the hospital

after the first chase scene. He could even have some form of social anxiety, considering how nervous he is at his birthday party at the end of the novel.

- **Trauma Conga Line:** If anyone fits this trope, it's Tai. Let's look at it. First, he's mostly friendless, lost his dad, and is moving to a new city across the country, and he's so sure and anxious that he'll be bullied at his new school that he practically begs his mother to let him stay home. Then he's harassed by teen thugs and breaks his ankle getting away from them. Tough, yeah, but he'll get over it, surely. But then he sees his mother get *mortally wounded by an assassin and later watches her die*. Then he gets kidnapped by the same thug, beaten viciously and probably cracks a few ribs, and has to swim in the sewer to escape. And then he gets *shot by a fucking sniper rifle*. Holy shit!
- **Troubled Fetal Position:** Tai certainly goes through enough to justify the very few times he ends up in this position. See Heroic BSOD above.
- **Iron Woobie:** One need only look at Trauma Conga Line and Mutilation Conga Line to see that he deserves the IRON!

Mike Donaldson

"He got me alone in my apartment, just downstairs. I was real afraid... the guy spoke very softly. He told me not to fight back, to let him have his way and I'd be alright. Then... he pounced!! He pinned me down. He was so much bigger, stronger, older, and I was too scared to move. He lifted up my shirt with one hand... and he spoke so, so softly when he said...He said... He said...tickle time...."

Bark-brown furred and home-schooled, Mike is a ten-year-old fox who lives with his father in the same apartment building that Tai moves into. He becomes a close friend of Tai's once the younger boy moves into the same apartment building, and the two quickly become more than just friends.

- **Action Survivor:** Both he and Tai definitely fit into this trope during their kidnapping. They only escape with their wits and because the criminals underestimate them.
- **Brown Eyes**
- **The Charmer:** Mike certainly has hints of this, at least with Jake and especially Tai, who just adores Mike. It's safe to say that Mike is capable of pushing Tai's buttons very easily. And a certain cheetah he knows from his swim meets.
- **Dirty Kid:** Mike certainly qualifies with how he approaches Tai, but he only has the lightest shades of this trope at best. He's more flirtatious and teasy, than outright filthy.
- **From the Mouths of Babes:** Has a lot of this with Jake, and a lighter (not sexually-charged) variation with his father. It's even mentioned in the extras that Robert likes how sharp Mike is, and *'enjoys verbally sparring with his son.'* He has minor

snarky moments as well, but not enough for that particular trope to apply very strongly to him.

- **Homeschooled Kid:** Homeschooled by his father, a college professor no less!
- **In-Universe Catharsis:** Once he's saved from nearly being raped a second time, Mike has his Beneath the Mask moment, and he lets all of the bottled up, raw emotion out to Tai over just how much he had been going through, pretending it hadn't bothered him when Nate raped him.
- **Living Emotional Crutch:** Mike & Tai *both* can be seen as this for one another. For Tai, Mike is the first true friend he ever makes, and the kit *adores* him. Mike provides constant support for Tai, especially after Eraline's murder, where he brashly steals money from his father and sneaks out of the apartment and go to Central Park. It's best surmised in that, in the theoretical soundtrack, Amazing by Janelle was used to demonstrate how Tai feels for Mike. As sappy as it is...
- **Missing Mum:** His mother died in a car accident when he was younger. It's heavily implied that it's still something of a soft spot for him, but as usual, doesn't let on.
- **Mr Fanservice & Shameless Fanservice Boy:** His swimmer's physique is often flaunted and he's got no problems bearing it all in public. He doesn't have anything on Nick from *Astray* in terms of his number of shirtless scenes, though.
- **No Social Skills:** Averted/Defied. Mike is shown to be completely competent and has several friends through his father's friends and his swimming meets. The group that's shown in the story even has their own section below!
- **Only Friend:** To Tai at first; he has plenty of his own, and he's glad to share them with Tai, too.
- **The Smart Guy:** Mike has *shades* of this at best; and not in the 'Five-Man Band' variety. He's shown to be quite intelligent and rather clever, and even described as a language *genius* in the Extras. Though it's a complaint some readers bring up about him (and even Tai) being too smart – it's completely justified in that kids *can be* and often *are* indeed smart. Not to mention that his father, who home-schools him, is a *college professor* to boot. He doesn't go around speaking with sesquipedalian loquaciousness... at least not in the final version of the story. In early versions, he had a lot of bad Little Professor Dialogue moments that were excised from future versions rather early on. The only remnant of this can be seen while he and Tai are walking around their neighbourhood early in the novel.
- **The Tease:** With Jake. A lot. Though, unlike the exact definition of the trope, Mike certainly *would* want to go all the way with him. Jake gets his revenge in *Years in the Making*.
- **Rape as Drama:** Justified. Mike was raped in his apartment when he was around eight and never learned who the rapist was until his assailant murdered Tai's mother. The rape left an impact on Mike that, over time, resulted in his Dirty Kid characteristics, and

eventually his interest in Tai and the events of their first meeting (his quote above). He tends to play it off as something that didn't bother him; happy that he wasn't killed, and glad that the rapist was gentle. But it *did* affect him very deeply, and he eventually has his Beneath the Mask Moment.

- **Beneath the Mask:** Despite having been raped only *two days* prior, Mike overtly shows more concern for his father's injuries than his own emotions. These are injuries that he *didn't even know* were the results of Robert going after the rapist. He goes so far as to underplay his feelings concerning the event for *two years* in order to not upset his father over them. It takes an attempted second rape by Marco to pierce through his façade, and he finally breaks down with Tai after they kill him.
- **Straight Gay:** Intentionally invoked by the author for Mike. While Tai is a bit effeminate, he isn't campy, but he's more sensitive too. Mike is portrayed as being a kid who's interested in sports and games like any other boy, and doesn't seem to be interested in Gay Culture. Contrast to Tai's sensitivity, Mike even acts rather stoic, in a way, over *being raped*. His sexuality is utterly incidental to his character.
 - **Word of Bi:** The author considers Mike to be bisexual. Jake even considers it himself when musing over Mike in narration during *YITM*.

Robert Donaldson

"I'm thankful you reconsidered your position on Tai's adoption. I don't think he'd be able to handle being taken away, emotionally speaking. What made you change your mind?"

"Seeing you wouldn't change yours."

Mike's father, Robert is a college professor of literature who home-schools his son. He's from the United Kingdom and came to the United States after his college years, where he met Mike's mother. He is revealed to have something of a connection with Tai's parents.

- **Career Ending Injury:** While by no means a career sportsman, Robert suffers a sports-related injury to his knee that comes back to bite him when he meets Nate.
- **Open Minded Parent:** Robert clearly has *some* idea about his boys' relationship, and he doesn't have a problem with whatever it is he suspects.
- **Papa Fox:** Once Nate rapes Mike, he tracks him down and corners him on a rooftop, only to be targeted by a sniper that created a diversion for Nate to escape. When Nate returns and kills Tai's mother, he defenestrates the assassin from his hospital room window. And, once Darron has both Mike and Tai kidnapped, Robert pulls all the strings he can with his boss in the CIA to get a SWAT team down to the docks to rescue them. And when Tai is *shot* by Darron, he rips after the wolf and nearly gets himself killed. Papa fox indeed.

Eraline Sundafyllison

"I asked you earlier, Tai, if you knew what your mom did at work."

Tai's distant mother. After the death of her husband, Eraline withdrew from all things, including her son and with the exception of her work. Both she and Tai lived in poverty for several years after the incident before finally moving to New York with her young son to pursue a job.

- **Action Mum:** At least behind the scenes. She is shown to be an exceptionally good fighter, going up against Nate, injuring him severely and easily disarming Darron's mother in a flashback. The Extras even mention martial arts among her likes.
- **Hot Mum:** Eraline is often described as 'beautiful' passingly in narration, and as 'hot' by Nate in a flashback. Wonder where Tai got his looks!
- **Icy Blue Eyes:** Eraline is described as having these, indicating her cold demeanor.
- **Mama Fox & Heroic Second Wind:** Better late than never. Not even a bullet wound will stop her from throwing your ass down a flight of stairs if you point a gun at her son.
- **Parental Neglect & Abusive Parents:** Eraline became perpetually distant from Tai after the death of his father. It's so bad that she makes a point of ignoring him most of the time. We learn in one of the few scenes from her perspective that she doesn't care all that much about leaving him alone while knowing full well that he wants her around. She briefly becomes disgusted with herself from this thought, but it doesn't seem to trouble her much. It's revealed throughout the story that the major cause for her neglect is indeed the loss of her husband as mentioned above – and that she's been withdrawn from anything other than, ironically, working to try and make the world better for Tai. He, along with her past with Darron's mother, (see Dirty Business on the Main Trope List) are her primary motivations. YMMV on whether this is justified or not, but this ultimately makes her a complex and sympathetic character regardless.

Jake

A seventeen year old Alsatian, or German Shepherd, Jake is one of Mike's oldest friends. Both he and his family are close, trusted family-friends with the Donaldsons.

While he's important to the story, unfortunately, Jake isn't actually very tropey. He's a side character and doesn't actually have any *character* tropes that I can identify. This doesn't mean he's bad or he's flat, but that he just doesn't follow any 'official' tropes hard enough for qualification.

- I will add, however, that he falls into a common series of (non-TV Trope) tropes among furry fiction, especially cub stories.
- I'll call these "Babysitter Setpiece" and "MAP-Panic."
- He plays a babysitter or caretaker role - and it falls into the aforementioned Pizza Boy Special Delivery trope -- wherein Jake is often the target of the younger characters'

interests. Unlike other stories, it's played realistically and he has trouble accepting their advances due to the age differences. Most stories with the 'babysitter' set up will either have the sitter be the instigator or have the cub wear them down - so this is something of a subversion, but not uncommon. He does eventually break this in *Years in the Making*.

- This also falls into some MAP-panic, which is/are trope(s) that are present in serious fiction like Tai's Story and Astray, but not present on TVTropes due to their policies. The age difference is a significant factor regarding the relationship between him and Mike, and even Tai later in the story. It's taken seriously and not done for laughs or to demean Jake's attraction.

Darron Mathews

"I've wanted to talk to you for so long, Tai. Since before I knew your ass was even alive."

A teenaged wolf with stormy grey fur, Darron is a thug who often gets into trouble with the police. He is the primary antagonist, but his role against Tai expands from merely being a bullying thug to something far worse.

- **Alas, Poor Villain:** Justified. Darron's death is ultimately tragic.
- **Bewildering Punishment:** To poor Tai, who has *no* idea why Darron hated him so much. At first.
- **Dark and Troubled Past & Troubled Backstory Flashback:** It's revealed that Darron and his mother were more or less sex slaves 'in the deep south.' His mother tried to deal with the CIA to get her and Darron out, becoming an informant. But things went sour when she was discovered and was forced to attempt to kill Eraline, her contact. The vixen proved much too skilled for Kayla, and ended up accidentally killing her in the fight – which Darron saw from a hiding place, having followed his mother.
 - **Start of Darkness:** The boss of the traffickers takes pity on Darron and adopts him as his own son, and Darron becomes another member of the syndicate. Because of this, he more or less becomes another wheel in the cog of what his mother was attempting to fight against.
- **Driven to Suicide:** When Robert confronts him with the case file concerning his mother's death and the dealings with Eraline. His entire story is tragically ironic; see 'Troubled Backstory Flashback' above.
- **Irony:** Darron's entire story is about getting revenge for the death of his mother at the hands of a CIA agent, Eraline, which he witnessed first-hand. He ends up having her killed and becomes a high ranking member in the same system that his mother *died* trying to get him out of. Tai, In turn, witnesses his mother being fatally shot, and is present when she dies in the hospital. Then Darron kidnaps him, beats him mercilessly, and shoots him – all for revenge. All before learning *why* his mother was killed, and what she was trying to do for him.

- **Rape as Drama:** Justified. Both he and his mother were sex slaves in the ‘deep south.’
- **Redemption Equals Death:** Darron’s actions and suicide ultimately cost the criminal syndicate their entire operation in New York. The extras imply this was intentionally invoked from his part.
- **Revenge Before Reason:** He makes a few mistakes, being completely motivated and blinded by his lust for vengeance and underestimating Mike & Tai. It’s implied by some mooks beneath him that he’s considered something of an incompetent, dumbass kid.
- **You Killed My Mother:** Darron’s primary motivation.

Marco

“I know, I know, you’ve got to try at least once. But you’ll get it soon, kid. No escape and all that shit. You’re screwed. Soon you’ll just lie there and take it. Just like the last, I dunno, twenty or so.”

An *enormous* tiger thug working under Darron.

- **Attempted Rape:** Very nearly rapes Mike before Tai introduces him to the crowbar.
- **The Big Guy:** A villainous example, Marco is described as being *behemoth* in size.
- **Complete Monster [YMMV]:** He follows this trope to a T, murdering an unnamed girl that somehow escaped the traffickers, throwing Tai down a flight of stairs and attempting to rape Mike. Marco has ZERO sympathetic traits or moments.
- **Death by Falling Over:** Courtesy of Tai and Mike with a goddamned crowbar to the crotch and head, and a square kick to the face.
- **The Dragon:** At least in the structure of the story; his actual rank in the criminal syndicate isn’t stated.

Nathan (‘Nate’) Silverman

“You raped a little boy just to conceal what you were really after. I see now, you have no conscience at all.”

A ferret, Nate is an assassin hired by Darron to kill Tai’s mother. It’s revealed that he had old ties to both Robert and his target, Eraline.

- **Complete Monster:** *Way* worse than Marco in terms of his direct impact on the story and the characters. Nate murders Eraline, who is implied to be a former acquaintance. Before that, he *rapes* Mike, the *child* of Robert, a former friend, to cover up what he was doing breaking into Robert’s apartment. And that doesn’t even cover what he did in Africa as a member of the CIA’s Special Operations Group. Unlike Marco, however, there are

implications that paint Nate in the faintest sympathetic light. So, maybe he's not as bad as Marco is, as a person... just in the framing of the narrative.

- **Disney Villain Death:** Courtesy of Robert.
- **Hero Killer:** As a soldier-spy and member of the S.O.G., he had the training and skill necessary to kill Eraline and, in spite of his injuries at the time, nearly kill Robert.
- **Leave No Witnesses:** Implied why Nate tries to kill Tai. If Tai had been sleeping and stayed in his room, Nate wouldn't have gone after him.
- **Only One Name:** Robert only ever knew him as 'Nathan.' Word of God states his last name as 'Silverman' in the Extras.
- **Professional Killer:** Maybe. It's ambiguous just why Darron (and by extension, the criminal syndicate) know about Nate.
- **Signature Scent:** Often described as smelling astoundingly rotten. Either Evil Smells Bad, or it's just because he's a ferret.
- **Turn Coat:** Against the CIA and Robert. It's never explicitly revealed *why* Nate turned against the CIA, but Robert believes it might have been blackmail.
- **We Used to be Friends:** He was friends with Robert and heavily implied to have been friends, or at least acquainted with Tai's mother and father.

Wayle

"Look, okay? I can't say sorry enough, alright? I couldn't believe the things Darron had me doin', and I always wanted to apologize."

A skunk and a member of Darron's school gang.

- **The Atoner:** Comes back to Bradley's store to apologise, and ends up getting a job working in his store.
- **Character Development:** Something of a foil to Darron, Wayle manages to get his life together and tries to make himself better, ultimately apologizing to Tai and Bradley for the incident, whereas Darron just became worse and worse.
- **Teens Are Monsters:** Subverted by Wayle. It's shown that he ultimately felt bad for chasing Tai with Darron, and for shoplifting in Bradley's store.

Mike's Friends

"C'mon, Tai! Let's go! You've gotta meet these guys! I think you'll find Ernie pretty funny; he's a jackass."

Mike's friends from swimming meets and through his father: Ciaran, an artic fox, Ernie, a donkey and the twin ringtail lemurs, Millie and Aaron.

- **Advertised Extra:** Ernie, unlike the other three friends, gets a little bit of build-up before he's introduced with them, which is where the quote above comes from. Then he isn't present at Tai's birthday party at the end of the story despite this. (See 'Put on a Bus' below.)
 - **Aerith and Bob:** Ernie, Millie, Aaron, Mike, and the suddenly Irish *Ciaran*.
 - **Put On a Bus:** Ernie was absent from Tai's birthday party near the end of the story, despite getting a fair bit of build-up when Mike's friends are introduced. It isn't explained in the story why he's not there, but Word of God states that Ernie was sick. ... Word of God has also stated that he just doesn't like equines.
 - **Theme Naming:** Ciaran. Kichi has a naming trend in most of his stories wherein he has a character with a name that's unusual for the setting or relative to the rest of the cast; something unique that isn't easy to pronounce or read unless you're already familiar with it. For those who don't know, '*Ciarán*' is Irish and is pronounced 'KEER-awn' or 'KEE-ar-awn.' It's often spelled with a K instead of a C when Anglicised.
 - **Those Two Guys:** Millie and Aaron. They are twins, after all.
 - **Word of Gay:** Ciaran is gay, or possibly bisexual.
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==**Nightmare Fuel**

- **Adult Fear:** In spades. Both Eraline and Robert have to save their respective children over the course of the story. Not to mention Mike and Tai being kidnapped with Jake present.
- - The assassination sequence, wherein Tai's apartment is cast into darkness, Tai wanders outside of his room to see what's up, and is suddenly attacked by Nate in the dark. The description of having the gun placed to his head is chilling.
- The flashback scene where Robert corners Nate on the rooftop and *feels* the sniper trained on him. The sensation of the hairs standing up on the back of his neck, and that he just barely dodges in time is genuinely scary and startling.
- - Having the sanctity of your home invaded by a malicious stranger is incredibly scary all on its own. It's even worse for a young kit who no doubt views his home as a truly safe place. And it happens twice to Mike over the course of the story. Once in flashback, and then near the end when Mike and Tai are kidnapped by the criminal thugs led Marco. His reaction is chilling, and the way he's just punched in the solar plexus by Marco and conks out is cruelly realistic.

==**Heartwarming Moments**

- **And the Fandom Rejoiced!:** Once the final version was uploaded. Tai's Story took over ten years to write, after all!
 - - Almost any scene involving Mike and Tai is bound to be one of these, combined with a WAFF. Special mentions go to the bathtub scene, their moment on the rooftop, and the ending, of course. Even Mike taking Tai to Central Park is a genuinely sweet gesture, if incredibly reckless on his part.
 - - Tai's 9th birthday party near the end of the novel. All of Mike's friends that he met at the Renaissance Fair show up (except for Ernie) with their families, and he's even honoured by the police, including the two officers that rescued him from Darron after he jumped from the car park from earlier in the novel. The best part? Mike suddenly grasping Tai's paw out of nowhere. Tai's reaction is just beyond adorable, and, on Mike's part, it's an incredibly sweet gesture, considering how nervous the shy Tai was during the whole thing.
 - - The ENDING! While Mike and Tai have shared a few smooches and kisses, the novel ends on a real, deep, loving Kiss.
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==YMMV: Your Mileage May Vary

- **Catharsis Factor:** Tai's Story is a very emotionally driven novel. It may end up being about spies and the dangerous legacy laid out for the children of the spies, but the story is primarily about Tai himself and his relationship with Mike. It deals more with being friendless and the loneliness that brings, as well as the intense grief of losing a parent more than it does espionage and intrigue. The author has stated that he's received several e-mails and been contacted by readers who were very emotionally touched by the story – those who could relate to Tai and the difficulties he faces. Tai's experiences with bullying and just how anxious he is in his new school, his moments of withdrawn ennui and reflection, as well as the very well portrayed moments of grief resounded very strongly in many readers. This is to say nothing of the loving friendship between him and Mike, nor Mike's own plight revealed at the end. This might as well be the heartwarming moment of the trope article.
- **Gut Punch:** Eraline's death. Can also count as a Shocking Swerve, but *only* in much earlier unfinished versions of the novel that lacked the better foreshadowing.
- **HSQ:** Tai's mom just got assassinated?! What? She was a SPY?! Robert works for the CIA too?! And the guy who killed her was Robert's friend, and he was the person who raped Mike?! Eraline killed Darron's mother?! **HOLY SHIT!** So the guy who bullied Tai earlier in the story was actually the son of the woman Eraline killed, and now he's unknowingly bullying her son?! That's weirdly convenient!

- **Signature Scene:** Arguably, the scene with Mike and Tai on the rooftop. It's even the cover art. Eraline's assassination as well as Darron's talk with Tai and the subsequent beating at the end of the story could both count as well.
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==**Trivia**

- **Artist Disillusionment:** Kichi's gone through a variation of this, on and off. He's voiced his concerns with struggling to get views on his novel-quality works such as Tai's Story, Astray, and Space Rats on websites that primarily care about artistic renderings of porn, where most works of literature barely receive a portion of the views of visual art. Not to mention that most of said literature on those websites often get more views while mostly being flat porn material at best. Not that there's anything wrong with porn for porn's sake, but it can be disheartening nonetheless. It's more often than not poorly written in comparison, too.
- **Attention Deficit Creator Disorder:** Tai's story was started when the author was 16, and was finished nearly a decade later. Part of that was in part due to trivia listed above, but other projects also caught his attention, such as Astray, another novel-length project and Soulflower, a longer than average porn-with-plot story. In fact, Astray is currently suffering from this, but thankfully due to Kichi's interest in writing Space Rats, another novel-quality story, he's starting to get back into it.
- **Bonus Material:** Tai's Story Extras was released in August of 2014, giving previously unreleased details on several characters, including things like Nate's last name, and details about Tai's father and a few hints about the sequel there. It also had a theoretical soundtrack with youtube links and lyrics, as well as a trivia section that mentions this trope article (which, wow, I've been working on and off on this for that long?!) Kichi likes turtles.
Kichi has also started releasing weekly Patreon updates that include smaller variations on this – mostly articles or 'journals' about how he researches his stories.
- **Website Hop:** An unusual, internet-story example, but Tai's Story started off on Cub Central, gained a larger audience on FurAffinity, and was ultimately finished on InkBunny due to FA's rules on cub characters. Needless to say, many other writers (and artists) migrated from FA to IB, and Kichi isn't the only example. It's unusual in that there are no literature examples on TVTropes's own page. Doubly weird is the site's lack of Fanfiction examples, given the hops from LiveJournal to Fanfiction.net and AO3, which are very similar situations... But I digress.
- **Deleted Scene:** The entirety of *Years in the Making* is the full-on erotic scene between Mike, Tai, and Jake that was cut from near the end of the novel. It starts off where the novel cuts off, after Jake tickles Tai while they wait for Mike to return from a swim meet.

- **Write What You Know:** Kichi has admitted several times in various journals that aspects of Tai's Story are at least somewhat influenced or inspired by his own childhood, mostly scenes of bullying. This is also applicable to *Astray*, too.
- **You Keep Using That Word:** The skillet stab! As mentioned in Tai's Story Extras, in early versions of the story Eraline stabs Nate with a skillet, and not a knife. You know. A frying pan.

Written by Tumelo