

# Once

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*Mild shounen-ai. One-shot. Knives x Vash. "Shameless, and yet so very proud..."*

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# 1 - Once

A/N: Kay....My muse suggested something totally different when I asked for an idea, and somehow, I got this. It's not very good, but Kage calls it 'cute', so I guess I'll let you decide. I guess this takes place sometime during the period where Vash is pretending to be Erix (is that how you spell it?). But it's very AU...considering I don't even remember who it was who told him to act like a dog....

Warnings: Knives x Vash. Knives' POV. AU-ish. Mild OOC. Shounen-ai. Twincest. Angst. Drabble. Half-asleep writer (meaning mediocre writing and things that may not make any sense at all). Shifting tenses. First Trigun fic. Excessive warnings. And a partridge in a pair tree (no, not really).

Disclaimer: If I owned Trigun, Erix would not have been Vash in disguise.

Once

This man...he was like a living memory. My brother, as he might've been, perhaps should have been. They way I might have been.

And rather the way I remember him, when we were boys. Shameless, and yet so very proud. I believe he would have done anything for me, in his naiveté. Neither of us knew better, nor did we care.

I loved him so, but I knew he couldn't know, not then. Not ever.

I miss him, much as a I try to deny it. He can't find out about that, either.

Now, as I watch this mirror of him forsake his dignity, I long to hold him. Just to see him again, to pretend that everything is going to be alright.

"I had a brother, once." I find myself saying, to my surprise, as well as his. My voice is low, and calmer than I've heard it in a very long time. "Once." I murmur. "Once."

Overwhelmed, memories flood my mind, and my body has made the decision for me. Before I know it, I've taken his scarred form into my arms. And suddenly, I holding him close and pretending he's Vash and never wanting to let him go.

"Vash..." I whisper. It doesn't matter. He'll never hear me.

"Knives." It's HIS voice. I can hear it, as though he's right there. My mind is playing tricks on me. But I don't care.

And I realize that he IS right there. I've been fooled. But it doesn't matter. I'm sick of running. Especially from the past.

So I just hold him. And he doesn't pull away.