

Comfort

Twin-story to "Hurt"

Von Gepo

Kapitel 4: Claim, a question of belonging

„You aren't mated yet?“ Takao blinked in surprise. „Jeez, I had been sure Kagami would have already claimed you. How long have you been together now? Half a year?“ „It is not like that.“ Kuroko averted his gaze, trying to get some serenity from looking at the guesthouse's inner yard. „We are only teammates. Kagami and I aren't like that.“

„Yeah, but ... I know it's the prejudice talking but ... he is an Alpha, you are an Omega-“

„That is exactly why I won't have a relationship with him.“ He shot the other a blazing look. „Does your team know about Midorima and you?“

„Yes, they know.“ Takao leaned on one arm and sighed. „I told our captain right away.“

„You ... what?“ Really? He knew Midorima was honest, too honest for his own good but Takao had always seemed like the one able to interpret the world to his partner and Midorima to the world. He must have known that telling his team he was going out with their ace would have negative consequences.

„Well, not exactly right away. But Shin-chan kissed me in front of all of them in practice, so I had to. He doesn't get the meaning of a taboo.“ Takao chuckled.

Well, that sounded a lot more believable. Midorima was oblivious on a whole different level than Kagami. He wasn't oblivious of certain aspects of life – like love relationships – but whole life domains. Like social interactions and people in general. Midorima did not get those things at all.

„How did they take it?“ It must have had a good end or Takao would not sit next to him in his club's summer camp.

„They threw me off the team.“ The other shrugged his shoulders. „Next day they begged me to come back because they could not stand an unfiltered Shin-chan without me.“

„Well ... there's that.“ Kuroko had to smile in spite of himself. „I can't reproduce that with Kagami.“

„I don't think your team would think any less of you. They know you are an Omega. Kagami is all over you anyway. They call you light and shadow. Would it really be awkward if you added sex into that mix? I am sure they expect you to turn up bitten any day now.“

„Well ... maybe.“ Maybe Takao had a point. Kuroko always got the seat next to Kagami now, the team kept their distance when they were talking and they had given Kagami and him the only two-bedroom they had booked. „Yes, I think they believe we

have sex."

„You want to, don't you?"

Well, yes. He had wanted to since Kagami's presence got stronger than his haunting memories. When he was with him, the background noise of pain and fear simply quieted. Especially since Kagami had made it clear how much he trusted Kuroko. That whole Aomine-drama ... it had been painful but at least it had showed Kuroko exactly where he wanted to belong.

„Is it ... um ... no, please forget I said anything."

„Ask away." Takao grinned. For someone who was here for a training camp he was pretty relaxed. Midorima was practicing in the front yard and Kagami was still out running.

„I don't think you are able to answer the question. Or if you are, I don't even want to ask. I just wondered how it is to have consensual sex."

„Con ... woah, yeah, that's kind of a hard question. No, I have never been raped, I can only imagine how horrible that must be. You really never had sex that you wanted? Not even once?" There was a crease between Takao's eyebrows but at least he was able to stand the conversation. Kuroko had tried to talk to another Omega once but that one only told him that everything that felt good was alright, so there was no raping an Omega. That had been disturbing.

„I just thought ... well, you are a Beta, so maybe Midorima isn't brutal with you. Sorry, that is a horrible topic." Kuroko slumped and drew his legs to his body. He should not have said that. He was talking to Takao about his boyfriend and how that one had brutalized him. That was horrible.

„Shin-chan is completely different from what you saw of him." Somehow Takao's voice was steady, not even a hint of doubt. „He told me in detail what happened with you because he could not keep it in, it traumatized him as well. When he is with me, he can let himself fall without fearing to lose control. That is consensual sex, you don't know what exactly will happen but you know it will be alright. You can trust the other that he will not hurt you."

Trust. He trusted Kagami. But could he trust any Alpha to stay in control if he did not keep this tight a leash on his hormones? What about their ruts? Even if he wasn't in heat, did they not have their own circles? „Has he never hurt you?"

„Only once. An Omega released all her pheromones. Shin-chan ran, I followed him and he assaulted me. But he was able to control himself shortly after, so nothing really bad happened. I only got a glimpse of what you had to go through."

A glimpse. How could one ever know? There was so much. The fear while he ran, the desperation when he was caught, the pain, humiliation, shame, those long fingers around his throat, suffocating, dying, gasping for breath, dying, clawing at that hulk of a man, dying, dying, dying-

„Kuroko!" Someone shook him. „Breathe, man, come on. Slowly. Stay with me, do you hear me?" Takao. It was Takao. „Right, just like that. In. Out. Slowly. You are doing great, Kuroko. In. Out. Just like that."

Oh God. A panic attack. He had had them so often in middle school. They had stopped when he left the team. Why did he have one now? It was over. It had been over for so long. He remembered his breathing exercises, calming down his breath.

„Are you back?" He nodded. „Did I say something wrong?" He shook his head. „Did you have a flashback?"

Kuroko blinked in surprise. Was Takao some kind of psychologist?

„I read a lot about trauma and autism for Shin-chan. It's not like he would ever go to a

professional, so I try my best as his friend. I heard you can have panic attacks when you flashback."

"Does Midorima have them as well?" Kuroko asked in honest astonishment.

"No, he has guilt trips. He remembers some things suddenly sometimes but he doesn't have such flashbacks as you do." Takao, who had come near to anchor him in reality, returned to his former seat leaning against an outer pillar on the veranda.

"How often do you have them?"

"I ... not really often. This was the first time since I ended it all."

"Hm." The other blinked, seemingly unsure what to say. "Is that now good or bad?" They stayed silent for a moment, neither coming up with an answer. "Do you think you should consult a professional?"

Kuroko immediately shook his head.

"Why not? You are clearly traumatized. At this rate I am not sure sleeping with Kagami would be wise, even though you want to. You would be devastated if anything went wrong, wouldn't you? That's a lot of pressure for something meant to be fun."

"Fun?" Kuroko blinked.

"Yeah, fun. Sex is meant to feel good, an activity you can do together that makes you feel all tingly and pleasantly worn out. It's a lot like basketball actually."

"Really ... my Teiko teammates play basketball like they fucked. Brutally with no regard to the other. I hated it. Basketball with Kagami makes me all tingly and happy. If sex with him feels like that, I don't have to be afraid." He smiled, trying to imagine feeling that good if they got intimate.

"Well, basketball with Shin-chan makes me damn proud of myself. Sex too if I may say so."

"Sorry, I cannot imagine Midorima being a careful lover. He was the worst of them all, even though he was the nicest when I was out of heat. Akashi controlled himself best but that was even more creepy because when he used me, I know he fully intended to do so." Kuroko sighed. "I know Kagami would never hurt me intentionally but what if he loses control? What if I feel too safe and let go of my pheromones too much? Even if he can control himself, what does control mean to him? Aomine raped me even if I wasn't in heat. He said he didn't want to hurt me and then he did it over and over again."

"Kuroko, if you don't want to talk to an professional, talk to Kagami at least. He might be unsure about some answers but I cannot imagine he would ever force you in his right mind. You have such a good control over your pheromones, even Shin-chan begins to relax around you. Tell Kagami what you are afraid of."

"I can't." Never. He would never tell Kagami. Never tell a soul, no one could ever know. Except for Takao, he was told by someone else, so it was alright. But no one else.

"Why?"

"I can't tell him what happened." Kuroko shook his head. "I can't ever tell him about ... about-"

Aoki.

His baby had had a name. Even though he was never born, he was named. He was loved. He was missed. Kuroko felt the traitorous prickle in his eyes.

"You can tell him what you are afraid of without telling him why you are afraid." Takao startled him with a hand on his shoulder. "You don't have to confess everything that happened. Though it might be best, but talking about your fears is a good first step." Kuroko looked into the other's eyes for a long moment before he carefully nodded.

Takao was right. If he ever wanted to mate with Kagami, he had to take this one step at a time. Talking was one of those.

He just couldn't do it.

In summer camp Kagami had been drained every evening. Back home, they never were alone. If they were, they were out eating or playing basketball or something else. It was never the right time. He could not ask Kagami over or go to his place to talk about something like that. How should he open such a conversation? Hey, Kagami, can we talk about sex? Kagami did not even know he was thinking about that. Most likely Kagami had not even noticed yet that he was an Omega. What if that worsened their relationship as friends or teammates? No, he should wait.

So he waited until fate punched him in the face. That punch came in the form of the most attractive Omega Kuroko had ever seen – a guy going by the name of Himuro Tatsuya. An Omega that was apparently not only best friends but nearly a brother for Kagami. A man he had grown up with, a man he wore identical rings with. Their whole behavior screamed of mates, there was an unbelievable sexual tension between them. So Himuro's behavior had suddenly changed in middle school, he pushed Kagami away and told him he did not want to be his brother? One really had to be as dense as the redhead not to notice the pheromones leaking out when they recalled that event. Himuro wanted Kagami as his mate, the idiot just didn't get it. At least the Omega did not notice that Kagami simply misunderstood him.

Kuroko did not plan to enlighten any of them. But could he really do that? Wouldn't Kagami feel betrayed if he ever found out about his friend's interest in him if he was mated to Kuroko? Could he really keep silent about that? But then Kagami began to stumble, to mutter ... this was going bad far too quickly. He did not want to lose Kagami, he could not lose him.

So he did the worst he could think of in that situation: He took up Nigou and held him up to Kagami's face. It totally snapped his mood which was good for now. But how should he proceed? What if – after their game – Himuro decided to openly confess his feelings? He could not do the same. Kagami would feel obliged to answer to him, even if he would have wanted Himuro more.

Who could blame him? Himuro was a premium Omega, he played as well as an Alpha (at least if he could really take on Kagami), he was tall and well-built and about everything Kuroko was not. He was self-confident, he was more beautiful than any guy Kuroko had ever seen and he was obviously vying for Kagami's attention.

Maybe that was why Kagami never made a move on him. His subconscious knew there was someone far better waiting for him. Just like with how that guy brushed over Murasakibara ... an interesting guy? If not for his lacking brain power, Murasakibara was a premium Alpha. Even with how sophisticated, intelligent and mannered Akashi and Midorima were, Murasakibara's pheromones even put Aomine to shame. With how easy-going Himuro regarded him, it was plain to see how many Alphas that guy must have strung along.

But he wanted Kagami.

The only one Kuroko had ever wanted for himself.

He was never more glad to see their old team's giant, even though he was obnoxious. He had grown even more, easily going past two meters. What was much more important though was how Himuro and him reacted to each other. Himuro immediately gentled down. And had Murasakibara just said that he had come with him to show him Tokio? He did not even stand up if he wasn't bribed with food. It was

plain to see what had brought him here. Murasakibara wasn't what you would call a lovesick puppy but his focus was Himuro and that one was clearly reacting. Thank the gods, Himuro seemed a lot more smitten with Murasakibara than with Kagami. He had hope left.

But listening to those two behave like three-year-olds made him question Himuro's taste. Kagami was bad enough but Murasakibara? That was just plain weird. The guy might smell like every Omega's wet dream but Kuroko preferred someone who might be able to hold a job. One had to think practical these days.

Seeing Himuro leave without asking for Kagami's number was a relief. But this was a wake-up call. He should tell Kagami.