

Comfort

Twin-story to "Hurt"

Von Gepo

Kapitel 7: The art of confessing

"This is ... tiny." Kagami looked at Kuroko's room in astonishment. "Where do you sleep?"

"I lay out a futon." He pointed at the free spot in the middle. "My mom has less space. Do you think you can fit?"

"Uhm ... sure. But where will you stay?" Kagami took a sitting pillow from him and sat down beside his low table he used for doing homework. It was not even half the size of Kagami's couch table.

"I don't take too much space." He took a deep breath. "I ... wanted to tell you something. I have been wanting to tell you for a long time."

"I am listening." Kagami went all serious in a second, sensing that this was stressing the other out.

"I don't know where to start." Kuroko admitted.

"Midorima seems to be the easiest one, Aomine the hardest. Right?" Oh God. Dear God. Wasn't Kagami thick? How had he noticed? How did he know? How much did he already know?

"I ... I can't. I am sorry, I can't." He felt tears well up, clouding his vision, breaking his voice. His hands clenched at his trousers. He stared at them, trying to will Kagami away.

"Okay." A big hand entered his vision, gently unclenching one of his and enveloping his in warmth. "You don't have to tell me." Kagami tucked at his hand, an open invitation to sit nearer.

Kuroko scooted closer, sitting right in front of Kagami, his hand still warm in the other's. He wanted to tell. It was only right. But how could he ever tell someone what happened? Kagami wouldn't understand. Even worse if he understood – he had done it all for Aomine, his unrequited love, who had tossed him away every time he had let him in. It had been such a destructive path to go down with him.

"Kuroko?" Kagami squeezed his hand. "Please don't shut me out."

Oh God. He was doing the very same thing to Kagami. He was stringing him along, never letting him in, afraid of being hurt, afraid of being abandoned. How could he do that? Wasn't he just as bad as Aomine?

"I love you." He blurted out as all words inside his head had begun raging, forming nothing but chaos. "But I am very afraid of you."

"Afraid? Of me?" Kagami's eyebrows rose up. "What's to be afraid of?"

"How much Kagami can hurt me if I allow myself to love him." Kuroko only whispered,

his gaze on the ground.

The other gently tucked at his hand again which made Kuroko look at his legs at least. How should he come even nearer? He was already sitting so that his knees nearly touched Kagami's shins. He could only ... did Kagami want him to sit in his lap? Should he follow that invitation? Kagami would not tell him he did not feel the same with Kuroko sitting in his lap, right? He cautiously patted his way forward, being helped to find a comfortable position by Kagami. He ended up sitting on one leg, leaning sideways against the other's upper body. The redhead was as hot as a furnace. A warm hand gently pressed against his cheek, inviting him to lay his head on Kagami's shoulder.

"I don't know what happened and I will not ask. Tell me whenever you are ready. But I understand that others have hurt you. Aomine most of all if I guess correctly. I can't promise to never make you cry, I am bad with that, but I can promise to never abandon you. Kise once told you I would toss you away some day. I don't plan to and I am mad at those guys to make you think like that." The arms that had loosely embraced Kuroko before tightened around him. "Don't listen to your memories of them. You have already taught them better."

Kuroko felt the tears that had threatened to spill run down his face. He hiccuped, clenching Kagami's shirt with one hand. God, this wasn't what he had planned. Kagami had known all along, hadn't he? He wasn't thick. He was much too smooth for a thick guy.

The other heaved a big sigh. "There, I already made you cry. What do I do now?" He actually sounded lost. Well, maybe Kagami was just a very straightforward guy. He simply spoke what was on his mind. Knowing that made his previous words even more precious.

"Hold me" Kuroko advised him, snuggling against him.

"I've already kinda been doing that."

"Continue." He smiled, soaking in the warmth. Being held by Kagami felt unbelievably good. This was so not what he had expected when he had thought about confessing. He had expected the other to blush and stutter and put it all on Kuroko to sort through.

"Would a kiss help?" Kagami sheepishly asked him.

"Only if I blow my nose first." He felt the other look around, leaning over to pluck a tissue from the table, holding Kuroko steady with one hand. The shorter one dried his tears and turned as far in the embrace as he could to blow his nose. "Now I feel kissable."

He looked up into those red eyes for the first time since they had sat down. Kagami was looking at him with concern, interest and astonishment. He had to smile at the mix. The other hesitatingly smiled back. Gods, this was nothing like he had ever experienced. Even that kiss was gentle, careful, only a shy touching of their lips before they parted only to be drawn back in by a force neither could explain. Was this what love felt like? Because in that case he had not loved Aomine at all. This was so much better.

Kagami's hand was lazily playing with his hair, stroking his head and neck. His kiss had not turned hungry at all, staying comforting and nice. There was no force at all. Kuroko had always thought it had to hurt to be real. But this wasn't painful, it was like being wrapped in a warm blanket. He felt relaxed. He felt cherished. Kagami had changed to stroking his face, his cheekbone, his jawline, his lips when Kuroko laid his head back in the shoulder.

"I thought I was in love with Aomine" Kuroko very quietly said. "I can't say exactly what it was. I wanted to be there for him because he was hurting so much. I thought I could save him somehow. I was very dumb back then."

"You were just a good person, I'm sure" Kagami admonished him.

"No, I ... made a lot of mistakes. I let people hurt me. I thought if I hurt, I could make it better for him. It made no sense at all. I always found excuses for his bad behavior. I allowed things to happen that ... it hurts to remember."

"You are still taking the blame." There was a crease between the red eyebrows, a frown even. It made Kuroko feel good to see that.

"I was responsible for letting it happen and not putting a stop to it. I should have done that when I noticed it got out of control. I healed enough to see that I am neither innocent nor the only one responsible. It takes two for an abusive relationship."

"Well ... true." Kagami huffed. "I don't have to like it though. I'll beat Aomine the next time we play."

"You already beat him" Kuroko reminded him.

"I don't care, I'll do it again."

"Do that." He kissed the other's cheek. "I'll be by your side to help."

Kuroko awakened with a shock and stiffened up completely. He could feel a hot breath on his neck. It took a moment to remember that this was Kagami behind him. It was alright not to wear a collar. Not only was he alright with being bitten, Kagami would also not do so without asking. They had simply slept like that – the other spooning behind him, offering his arm as a pillow. He was so unbelievably warm, Kuroko could not imagine sleeping without him ever again. In winter Japanese flats tended to get very cold, every bit of warmth was welcome. He looked at the clock, deciding to simply stay like this and enjoy it while it lasted. Kagami snored lightly, it was kind of adoring.

His mother silently opened the door half an hour later, blinking in surprise at their sleeping position. Seeing that her son was awake, she tiptoed in and sat down near his head. She glanced at Kuroko's neck, sending her son a questioning gaze when she saw no bite mark.

"He is decent" He whispered.

"A bit too much of a gentleman rather." She lay her head to the side with a sigh. "Secure him before someone else does. You won't come about another one like that in a decade."

"I know." He felt Kagami stir behind him, drawing his nose through Kuroko's light blue hair. "He's waking."

"I made breakfast. Get up, you two." With a smile she stood and left the room.

"Have you heard, Kagami?"

That one just grumbled and drew Kuroko near with one arm to take a deep breath of his scent. The other told himself to relax. It was Kagami. Kagami was allowed to bite him. That one mumbled into his neck: "You smell better than breakfast."

"I am not food though."

"I feel like eating you up." Kagami still sounded half asleep.

"But you still need me for today's game." Kuroko felt a certain something poking his behind, trying not to imagine how amazing it would feel inside him. Damn. He had a fast-track mind sometimes. What was that about Alphas ravishing poor defenseless Omegas? He felt like pinning down his Alpha instead.

"Was your mother in right now or did I dream that?" Kagami had his eyes half-open

and blinked lazily.

"She was in to tell us to get up for breakfast." Kuroko turned, pecked the other's lips and sat. "Come on, today is a big day. You need to be well fed for the match."

"Food sounds good." The other sat as well before leaning in for another kiss. The redhead smiled afterwards for a few seconds before he sobered and seemed to finally wake. "Wait a moment, does that mean your mother walked in on us sleeping like that?"

"Don't worry." Kuroko leaned against him. "She actually asked why I did not have any marks and all my clothing still on."

Kagami's face went as red as his hair and he stuttered: "That's not- I mean ... she can't mean- I would not- no, that's-"

Kuroko simply kissed him to shut him up. His soon-to-be-mate was adorable. But he wanted Kagami to chose him with a clear mind, so first they had to play Yosen. The other had to resolve the matter with his brother before anything further should happen. Kuroko could wait. He trusted Kagami to return to him.

Winning against Yosen was great but the most important moment for Kuroko was what came after. Hearing Murasakibara tell Teppei that he only played because of Himuro convinced him that his hunch had been right. One did not have to love basketball to enter the Zone, one simply had to completely devote himself to something related to basketball. In Murasakibara's case it was clear as day what or who that was. He would not give up on basketball as long as Himuro played.

And the other knew that. The moment Himuro ruffled the bent over Murasakibara's hair was when he knew how this would go. That beautiful, graceful Omega would return to be Kagami's brother because those disturbing feelings he still held would vanish as soon as those two Yosen players could find a room.

Murasakibara had finally been able to touch Himuro's heart. It was quite a feat for him to have lasted this long in winning the other's affection. It was so out-of-style for Murasakibara that one had to admire the tenacity and willpower it must have cost him. When an Alpha was ready to go that far for you, you just had to answer to that. Much like Kagami was not only fighting for himself but for Kuroko and their team as well. He had already gone far beyond expectations to prove that. Kagami had kept faith, had been his pillar and wings. He had given Kuroko the means to rise above all that haunted him.

He would answer in kind – just like Himuro.

So he gave Kagami back his ring and bid him fare-well, trusting his Alpha to come back to him even after sending him off to be confessed to by an Omega who knew him longer, had a more intimate relationship with and was far more alluring than Kuroko. After all, who would want a shadow if they could have a rising star? But he trusted Kagami. He gave him free to become a harbor he could return to.

And Kagami did in the most spectacular way possible. He took Himuro's confession – who was already mated at that point – right before the Rakuzan game, then stood by Kuroko's side without a doubt and won over the last darkness that clouded his soon-to-be-mate's life by showing the whole world how intimately he trusted Kuroko. He dived into that special connection they shared without the slightest doubt that Kuroko would follow him.

The second they were out of the camera's sight, he used all his strength to pin Kagami against a wall and kiss him senseless. The whole team cheered and even hollered in support, making them blush to the roots as soon as they came back to reality. And

what a reality! This was it. Kise had become serious, Midorima had stopped blaming himself, Aomine had come back to life, Murasakibara had found his passion and that cruel side of Akashi that had subjected Kuroko to all that abuse had been vanquished. Kagami had made his peace with Himuro.

There was nothing left in their way to being mated - except that Kagami was an unbelievable gentleman and Kuroko had no idea how to even breach that subject.