

Comfort

Twin-story to "Hurt"

Von Gepo

Kapitel 5: Daring, a matter of trust

He still did not.

He knew he was a coward but this was getting out of hand. How many wake-up calls did he need? He had to tell Kagami, end of discussion. He told himself that every morning and still whenever he opened his mouth, nothing came out.

It should not have come as a surprise that his final wake-up call was a blue-haired, tanned, young man but Kuroko had shoved that reminder to a faraway place. He also had not expected to meet him in an Onsen of all places.

Kuroko started to shiver when he noticed they were alone. Why had he sent Kagami to get him a drink? What if Aomine attacked him here? Would the others heard him scream? Would they come if they heard him? Would he even be able to scream loud enough? His voice had gotten louder but he was not sure he could scream. He had never screamed back then, not even in pain. Where was Kagami?

Aomine leaned against the wall across. Kuroko told himself not to panic, to rein in his pheromones. Panicking would only make him a target. He was in control, he kept a tight leash on his pheromones. Bad thing was, Aomine had never cared for his pheromones, he had simply taken him whenever he felt like it. What if he felt like it now? Kuroko could not outrun him, his circulation was still off.

Aomine was making conversation. That was new. Maybe he was safe. Maybe the other had his eyes on someone else, had lost his interest. Kuroko noticed with a bit of surprise that he had lost interest in the other. Aomine smelled nice, sure, but his feelings were rather normal. Looking at the blue-haired man, he felt sadness, regret and fear. That burning longing, that desperate need, that sexual emptiness craving to be filled, it was all gone.

Aomine took a step nearer, making Kuroko flinch and shrink. He would hurt him. God, it would hurt, hurt so much. Aomine always bit down and he did not wear a collar, he would be claimed, he would be enslaved, he-

Kagami. Kuroko took a lungful of his scent. Kagami was here, he would protect him. He would show Aomine his place. Kuroko was drawn to his side, standing next to the one who was his everything. This was where Aomine could have been if he had not lost himself. But he had and now it was too late. Kagami had taken that space in Kuroko's heart – and filled it quite nicely.

He had sworn to himself to tell Kagami the very next day – only to hear that Kagami had taken off to America. Really, was he so out of luck? Maybe he should ask

Midorima for a lucky item. That pen had worked quite nicely, maybe he had something for chaining Alphas to him that did not involve actual mating.

Of course he had to get a call from Akashi before Kagami came back. Just his luck. He definitely should ask Midorima. The coach was nice to sent Furihata after him, she must have noticed how stiff he was and sensed the danger. One never knew with Akashi. He might just call a hunt then and there, so it was good that Furihata was with him, even if he could do nothing.

Again, Kagami showed up right when Kuroko felt like having a panic attack. Did that guy have some kind of radar? How was he able to sense Kuroko's need? Or did he just have an unbelievable timing? Even if Akashi wasn't happy with him showing up, Kuroko was. Who knew what that man had-

Oh God.

Had he just attacked Kagami with scissors? He knew Akashi was weird but this ... this ... what if Kagami had not dodged? What if he had been injured, had been unable to play? This was sick. Kuroko wanted to face-palm for a moment. Sick? He was talking about the guy who had invented Omega hunts as prices for well-behaving Alphas. Was he really freaking out over an attack with scissors?

And what did he mean by promise? What promise had those five made? And why was he here if the others had made a promise Akashi wanted to confirm? Did he have to do anything with it?

Kuroko blanched.

Was he a price again? Was that promise about him? Whoever won the WinterCup would ... have a go at him again? Was that what this promise was about? He stared at Midorima, silently begging him to say something. Akashi left while the others stood stock still. Even Aomine seemed uneasy. Only Murasakibara was unaffected, snacking on his chips.

"Would anyone care to enlighten me what this promise is about?" Kuroko asked, a certain venom in his voice.

"You seem able to guess correctly" Midorima answered monotonously.

"Really?" His hands balled to fists, his voice accompanied by a slight tremble, his lids drawn to slits. "After all this time? Have none of you learned?"

"You must know I do not want this" The green-haired man said. Right. Midorima had Takao. Of course he wasn't interested.

"Yeah, that's not what I want either" Kise admitted, scratching his nose while looking like a kid caught at stealing.

"Tatsuya would be mad" Murasakibara offered, turning to leave right afterwards.

Only Aomine stayed silent. Did he really want Tatsuya as a price? Really? Had he sunken that low?

He would tell Kagami his feelings. Further, he would ask him to claim him as soon as they lost, no, before. No way in hell that he would give himself to any of them just because they won a basketball tournament. He would be Kagami's. Kagami would protect him. No matter if they won or lost, he would be Kagami's tonight.

They won.

Gods, Kuroko could not believe the relief that brought him. They won, that meant Aomine was out. No way in hell that Aomine would claim him now. Even better, he had seen a glimpse of the old Aomine and it only brought him joy. No regrets, no pining, no nothing. He was free. His heart belonged to Kagami.

All that pressure finally crashing down made him swoon like a princess, falling into

Kagami's arms right in front of Aomine. In another life he would have been embarrassed but right that moment, it felt incredibly good to be caught and held by his Alpha. Hearing said Alpha lecture his ex-lover-slash-rapist was even better.

It was time to close that chapter. He held out his hand, received his fist bump and let go. Bye bye, first love. Bye bye, baby Aoki. Sorry you hadn't been born, it had not been meant to be. It was time to let go, so no other sibling would ever meet the same end. He'd rather have a brood of redheads with mean eyebrows and sharp teeth who would at least know they were loved. He should still protect himself, it was easy to get him pregnant and they had the rest of the tournament in front of them. He did want to kick Akashi's ass after all. He was not a prize to be given to anyone.

Of course it did not work out. After that attack, he had not asked Midorima for his scissors, so of course fate had thwarted his plans. Not only had everyone come over to Kagami, they had been poisoned by their coach and lost consciousness. Would he ever be able to confess?

No. This was just like that situation with Himuro. When he finally made up his mind, some extremely attractive person with a claim on Kagami had to show up. Why was an Alpha blonde bombshell in his bed? Why was ... why was she kissing him? Why ... his basketball teacher? Really? That sounded like the worst excuse any guy could have when he was caught with a sexy blonde in his bed.

Would this be his future fate? Finding his mate with beautiful Omegas, naked Alpha women and ... kids maybe? Trust Kagami to forget he had a whole family stashed away somewhere. Kuroko bit his lip. He had to tell Kagami. But what if he said no? Or what if he said yes, they mated and Kagami stayed exactly like that? He thought nothing about kissing women that stayed over and slept in his bed. How could he take such a carefree man? Maybe he should wait after all.

Yes, maybe he should get his own things in order first. There was something he had to do before he could even think about mating someone. He had to make peace with his past. Sudden inspiration struck, so he took Kagami aside and said: "Kagami, can I ask a favor?"

"What is it?"

"I need to borrow money. I don't know how much it will be yet but it might be a large sum."

"You know I don't have any spare money, right? I am broke every month because of food costs." Kagami's eyebrows had risen.

Kuroko simply sent a glance at that very expensive looking flat.

"Well, okay, I have savings. But they are meant for college."

"I'll pay you back before you go there" Kuroko promised.

"Well, okay, sure." Kagami looked at him for a minute. "This is something important, huh?"

"Yes, it is very important."

"You can have as much as you want."

Good. He would buy a tombstone for Aoki.

Buying a grave and tombstones was surprisingly easy. No one asked if he was old enough to put his signatures on all those papers. He paid by credit card and no one asked if that was his name either. Because Kagami was underage, they all went only by PIN anyway and the other had had no problem to even tell him those. Kagami trusted him infinitely.

So he should trust in himself. He dialed Aomine's number, asking him to meet him and

telling him it would hurt. It took nearly half a minute before the other cautiously replied he would come. But somehow Kuroko was sure he would not be in danger. He even had an inkling that Aomine's words would not touch him, even if he lost it.

He was still arranging the stones when he felt Aomine's presence. So the other had not turned tail, even though the coordinates for their meeting place were in the middle of a graveyard. Kuroko shot the other a look, pleasantly surprised that he had even brought a water bucket from the entrance. Aomine set down the bucket without a word and took a step back. Kuroko took it instead, watering the six tombstones and the Jizo in their middle before he prayed.

Aomine had not budged, waiting to be addressed in silence. Losing in basketball seemed to have brought back his conscience. Or rather his ability to stay in touch with it. Kuroko had sometimes caught him sneaking apologetic glances in his direction but whenever the other noticed, those had turned into a leery grin.

"I would have named him Aoki. The moment I found out I was pregnant, I knew there was no other name for him. I did not even know he was a boy but I somehow felt it. I don't think I have ever been happier. I knew you were suicidal at that time. You were on the edge of killing yourself, always tempting fate and lashing out at everyone. Still I thought we could be happy. Even if your own family was horrible, I thought I could be your new family and make you happy. You, me and Aoki. I got lost in that dream, too high to really think about your feelings."

"That does not excuse me" Aomine admitted.

"No, it does not." Kuroko looked over his shoulder. "You killed our baby. I don't think I can forgive that."

Aomine closed his eyes and stayed silent.

"Well, it is over now." Kuroko stood, saying a toneless goodbye. "Our son finally has a gravestone. Feel free to visit if you ever want to."

The other followed him without a word.

In front of the graveyard, Kuroko asked: "Are you up for a bit of basketball? I want you to teach me how to shoot."

Aomine just trailed after him, having regressed to his grumpy, slightly childish self.