

Comfort

Twin-story to "Hurt"

Von Gepo

Kapitel 6: Cheers, it's a date

He still had not said a word to Kagami. He always found an excuse. Alex staying with him was a good one, because really – he could not take Kagami to his place. Could he? No, no, that was ... he could not do that.

"Good luck for your game today!" His mother said excitedly.

"Thank you." He smiled back at her while putting on his shoes.

"You know ... I am really happy you went to this school."

"Huh?" He looked up in surprise.

"You looked so unhappy and exhausted when you went to Teiko. The last half year, you were like a ghost. I was afraid you would never be happy again. But you have been smiling a lot lately and you get up in the mornings full of energy. I like seeing you like that. This new school, the new team, they are good for you." So she had noticed. Of course she had noticed, she was his mother.

"Um ... thank you?" He smiled shyly. "You know, mom ... there is someone ... special." She squealed, doing a little cheering dance right in their entrance room.

"He doesn't know yet. I haven't confessed."

"Why not?" She asked, all fired up.

"Because ... I don't know, it is never the right time. I was thinking about inviting him. Would you meet him and tell me what you think? Just don't tell him anything about my feelings, I want to do that myself." Hopefully this would work out. But she was a nice person, Kagami would like her.

"Sure, invite him." She hugged her son standing on her toes because she was even shorter than him. "This is how it should be. You should be able to choose, ask for advice and then make a decision."

"I'll ask him to come tonight, okay? I'll send you a message if he does. He eats for at least ten others, no joke."

"Growing boys do." She grinned. "Growing Alphas at least. He is one, right?"

"Yes, he is." Kuroko smiled shyly. "And don't you dare say anything about sons-in-law, grandkids or whatever. He is thick but not that thick."

"Ah, the muscle without brain type." She teased him, poking his cheek. "Is he reliable?"

"He is very reliable." H was sure of that. Even if for his mother, someone who wouldn't run at hearing their mate was pregnant was most likely reliable enough. Well, she had raised him well in his opinion. But sometimes he could see her loneliness in her smile. His father had taken her only chance to be with someone after all. She knew what was important. Someone who would weather everything thrown at him was the man one

should want. Good thing that came with great looks in Kagami's case.

"Go get him, Tetsu."

"Kagami? Uhm ... would you come to my place tonight?" Huh. Wow, that had been hard. He had finally done it.

"Huh? What about training?" The other looked at Alex.

"You play Tatsuya tomorrow, you need rest." She waved him off. "Don't do anything too exhausting at his place."

The rest of the team snickered. Oh, man. Did they really think ... of course they did. Kuroko specified: "It is a dinner invitation. My mother wanted to meet one of my friends."

"Oh, splendid!" Alex grinned and slapped Kagami's shoulder. "Go leave a good impression, will you?"

"Eh ... okay." The other scratched his head. "Food always sounds good."

"My mother is a great cook." Though Kagami might be on par with her but Kuroko wasn't about to tell him that. "I'll send her a text."

"Will you be alright?" The redhead asked his teacher, always the reliable one.

"Sure, sure, have fun, have a sleep-over." She took out her phone. "I'll help you with your game tomorrow by inviting Masako for drinks."

"Masako?" Riko asked.

"Yeah, Yosen' coach. It's been a while since I've seen her. She played for the Japanese team when I was active." Alex grinned. "Always such a stickler for rules, really."

"We'll cheer for you, Kagami." Koganei said with Izuki and Mitobe nodding along.

"Huh? What for?" Kagami asked, resulting in a collective sigh. "Oi, what do you mean?"

Thick as always. Kuroko had to smile fondly, watching his big idiot. His. Everyone acknowledged him as that. Even his quasi-mother had just given her blessings. Hopefully Kagami would take it well. He was still at odds with Himuro after all, maybe he wanted ... no, then Alex would have reacted differently, wouldn't she?

"Let's go and win today's game." Hyuga finally said, making everyone drop the topic. Sometimes Kuroko asked himself if they might have wages going when Kagami would finally take the hint. They had decided not to openly tell him after all which Kuroko was thankful for. Riko flashed him a smile and ruffled his head while Teppei sent him a thumbs-up. Everyone wanted them to be a couple. Hopefully Kagami wanted to as well.

"We are home!" Kuroko shouted to the kitchen, only noticing in that moment that he already included Kagami in "being home" when he was actually a stranger.

"Welcome back!" His mother answered from the kitchen. "Come on in, I can't leave the fish right now."

"Smells good" Kagami noticed, smiling at the promise of food.

"Follow me." He took Kagami's hand, directing him to the kitchen. He wasn't inclined to let go, so he simply did not. They had an open kitchen with a small table in the middle. Their whole apartment would have fitted in Kagami's living room but it had never seemed cramped. With the redhead standing in their kitchen though, it looked infinitely small.

"Oh my!" His mother exclaimed. "Now I see why you said I'd need to buy ten times as much food." She blinked in awe. "Are you still growing?"

"I ... guess." Kagami answered, a bit surprised by that greeting. "I am sixteen after all."

"Six... wow. You'll go through the roof with that growing speed." She let the fish be

after all, taking a step nearer to look him up and down. "It is very nice to meet you. I am Tetsu's mother."

"Kagami Taiga." He tried to bow but it was awkward with a person who reached his lower ribcage at best. "Nice to meet you. Thank you for inviting me." He owled at her for a moment. "You are ... very tiny."

"Kagami." Kuroko admonished him.

"Ah, I am sorry, I was just surprised!" Kagami shrunk away from him. "You know, with all those basketball guys around, I forget what normal looks like." He scratched his head. "This is what Japanese apartments normally look like, right? I've never been to one."

"Yes, Mister American immigrant, this is Japan." Kuroko replied in an annoyed voice. "We don't have much space and the average Japanese man is 172 centimeter. So it is normal you don't fit through a door."

"Uh, sorry." The other scratched his head. "Can I help with something?"

"Oh no, just sit down." His mother had returned to cooking. "Tetsu, get the side dishes from the refrigerator, please."

He did so, already sneaking some of them into Kagami's mouth behind his mother's back. She acted as if she did not notice and the redhead grinned in mischief. They made light conversation until the fish and chicken was ready while Kuroko began to serve rice.

"Thank you for the food!" They said in unison before digging in. Well, Kagami did, the other two ate at a more sedate pace. It was always amazing to watch how much one single human could eat. Even his mother looked astonished. Even though she had cooked for ten, this seemed to be stranger than she had expected.

"Kagami, your parents have to be rich if you always eat like that." She fished for information after a few minutes of silently handing him more food.

"Uh, yeah, I think ... my mom pays for food, my dad for the flat." He stopped shoveling in food. "Your cooking is really good, I can't help myself."

"No, please, dig in! It's not like my son or I could eat this all before it turns bad." There was a moment of silence where Kagami's eyes scanned the table, then Kuroko and his mother before slowly continuing to eat. "What do your parents do?"

Oi, was this turning into a marriage interview? He had asked her for her opinion but wasn't this too forward? Kuroko decided to stay silent though, he was interested as well. Kagami was rich as far as he knew. His allowance for the next few months would go into paying him back after all.

"My dad works as an architect here in Tokio. I think he's doing something at the airport right now, I am not sure ... he sleeps at his workplace mostly." Kagami explained between bites. "My mom is an actress back in America. She lives in Los Angeles."

"Are your parents divorced?" Too forward! But she did not catch his glances.

"No, they are still married. But they don't like each other much, I think. They work best if they don't live too closely." Kagami looked a bit sad at that. "Well, they like me though. So it's okay. They can agree on that, at least. I think it's cool to be able to fly freely between Japan and America."

"I've never been to another country. How is it?" His mother asked before those two fell into a discussion about the pros and cons of America versus Japan.

The ease of the conversation stopped when Kagami finally asked: "What about your father, Kuroko?"

They boy stayed silent, quietly asking his mother to elaborate.

"He left when he heard I was pregnant. We were never married, so he was able to leave without taking responsibility." Remembering always brought sadness to his mother's voice.

"I am sorry." Kagami said quietly. "That must have been hard."

"Well, a lot of Omegas are single parents." She patted Kuroko's head. "I am happy my boy turned out alright."

Shame. He did not. He had just taken the easy way out and chose not to have his kids. Most of them anyway. But he would not tell her, he'd only make her cry.

"He turned out great." The redhead said, flashing her one of his devil-may-care-smiles. "Thank you for raising him so well."

Kuroko felt himself flush. Gods, who said something like that? Kagami could be so corny sometimes. "You are embarrassing me."

"Oh no, thank you for the compliment. Tetsu, get the dessert for this nice young man." His mother enthusiastically said. Trust her to glow at such a comment. "And you should have told me he is from America! Hopefully you still like my ice-cream, I thought it was something you teenagers might like. I fear it won't be as good as what you know from over there."

"You already won me over with that great buttered mackerel and the tempura. I am sure your ice-cream will be delicious." God, how could a man so thick be so smooth with compliments? He was a poster-boy son-in-law. If he had not already decided on Kagami, his mother would gift him to Kagami on a plate.

He took the bowl out, arranged some smaller bowls and tried to get out the ice-cream with a spoon – well, so much for that. It was completely frozen. He turned to his mother saying: "Sorry, I am unable to serve that."

"Oh, let me." Kagami was at his side in a second, taking the spoon and testing it. "The trick is to heat the spoon beforehand. Sit down, I'll do it."

"I can't let a guest serve us. That is against the rules, Kagami." The other's answer was to ruffle his hair, not exactly taking him serious, so Kuroko tried to grab the spoon – Kagami was just faster. "I demand that spoon."

"Ice-cream is an American dish, so I have to serve it."

"Ice-cream is Italian and that argument is invalid anyway." He tried again to grab it but Kagami held the spoon up. They ended up standing front to front with the other bemusedly smiling down on him.

"You are very cute when you pout. When you hold me up even longer, the ice-cream will have melted enough that you can serve it. But I'll be starving by then."

"It is not cute to use your height against me." Kuroko deadpanned, trying to ignore the compliment that wanted to make him blush again.

"You are more stubborn than Riko sometimes." With a sigh the other caved in, giving the spoon to Kuroko. "Good thing I like your obstinacy."

"Says the guy more bullheaded than anyone I ever met." He heated the spoon under the water. "We should not fight, it will be a disaster."

"I have heard enough fights for the rest of my life." Kagami took over when Kuroko still had problems, filling the bowls in a few seconds. "Want to serve it now?"

The blue-haired boy did so with a satisfied smile. His mother knowingly smiled back at him. He did not have to ask what she thought of Kagami.