

Comfort

Twin-story to "Hurt"

Von Gepo

Kapitel 3: Bittersweet feelings

„I can't believe it.“ Takao patted Kuroko's shoulder not exactly gently. „You actually did it.“

„We will continue to do so.“ He directed his gaze at Midorima. „Thank you for the game.“

„I can't believe you stopped that move.“ Those green eyes actually glared.

„Ah, don't pout, Shin-chan!“ Takao put an elbow into his partner's side. „Save those feelings for the next time we play them. Or for practice. Wait, no, don't save them for practice, that'd be the death of me.“

Kuroko could not help but chuckle at watching those two. Really, Midorima had always been a stoic, honest to a fault character, not interested in others. A pure egomaniac whose only social graces were the moral code his mother must have drilled into him. This Shin-chan though – Takao's personal version – wasn't so bad. Midorima alone was horrible but coupled with Takao, he was fun to be around. They'd make a cute couple. It was a shame that Takao was a Beta instead of an Omega or Alpha.

When Midorima turned, his eyes were glossy as if he was about to cry. Takao instantly turned his focus onto others, being loud and boisterous to give the other a moment to himself. He was a really attentive friend.

„Is Midorima crying?“ Kagami asked out loud.

Kuroko just sighed. That redhaired idiot was as inattentive as he was good at basketball. At least he was still oblivious regarding Kuroko's status. Other than Kise Midorima had made no jabs or barbs regarding their past relationship. If Kuroko had not overheard those two, he would have been sure the other was long over him.

The intensity of Midorima's feelings had certainly surprised him. Maybe this was what fate held in store for him. Not only beating all of his former teammates but also teaching them better. All those egoistical, I-play-only-for-myself characters should be humbled by teamwork. He wanted them to bow their heads, to acknowledge him as an equal. This would be his way to overcome his own trauma.

„Kuroko!“ Kagami pat his shoulder, smiling at him. „What has got you so serious? We just won!“

„That we did.“ He smiled in spite of his thoughts. „Thank you, Kagami. It was a splendid game.“

„Well, thank you. You just saved our asses, man.“

Yes ... that was new. Being needed instead of being a bit of flourish and extra cream on top. This was completely different from Teiko. Kuroko felt a honest smile tucking

at his lips.

Aomine.

He wished it did not have to be him next. Forgiving Midorima was rather easy, especially now that he saw him with Takao. He was a whole new person, one able to show his care and smile. He was also a lot less neurotic than before.

But Aomine was a completely different matter. Not only had he done far worse, he had switched so often between feeling sorry and enjoying the hurt he caused. Some days it seemed like he cared and Kuroko's heart still ached for those moments Aomine held him close, whispered words of love and worship into his ear and caressed his body. On other days he made Kuroko submit, forced him to choke on his cock and fucked him in the worst possible places, often making him miss lessons or even practice. He might not have proof but he was very sure that the last four aborted babies had all been Aomine's.

Aomine never cared much for the hunts, he simply fucked Kuroko whenever he found it convenient. Or rather, whenever he needed an emotional outlet. Kuroko had always let him, knowing what fueled those messy sessions that left him bloody and hurting. He was what kept Aomine alive. Just like Aomine had been what kept him alive in that time where one rape was followed by the next. He did it all for Aomine.

He had still lost him though. Aomine kept raping him but he took less and less pleasure from it until it seemed like hurting Kuroko had become his way of hurting himself, of hating himself more. It was then that Kuroko put a stop to it all, walking away from basketball and his former teammates. By now that was nearly a year in the past. Neither of them had moved on though. The chapter called Aomine was the most painful in his whole live, surpassing even those six abortions and the hunts that happened with the other four. And he knew well why: He had loved that man, a small part of him still loved him even now after all that happened.

Even after what Aomine did to Aoki. Kuroko held Nigou near, that small pup having to deal with all the pain and sorrow caused by the events that fateful day. For the first time in nearly two years, Kuroko allowed himself to say that name: Aoki.

If he had not lost their child, Aoki would be sixteen months old by now. He would be able to walk, would speak his first words, would make his first attempts to eat alone. If he closed his eyes, he had a clear image in front of his eyes. A tanned boy, dark blue hair, light blue eyes. Everyone always told him Nigou looked like him but whenever he looked at the Huskey pup, he thought he looked into his child's eyes.

For the first time in two years, he allowed himself to cry over that baby boy that would never call him Mama.

Seeing Momoi again was the first step in facing Aomine.

He noticed how everyone got jealous about the fact that the Alpha woman was all over him – everyone but Kagami. Kagami looked simply on edge, keeping a watchful eye on the situation. When Momoi asked to talk to Kuroko alone, he was the only one hesitating for wanting to stay with Kuroko instead of being all over Momoi.

Kuroko hadn't exactly expected that but it was nice to know all the same. Kagami really regarded him as his mate somewhere in the back of his mind. His fists clenched when Momoi had bitten Kuroko's ear while she held him from behind.

He knew Momoi did that on purpose to test Kagami. The only one completely oblivious was the redhead of course. Momoi was quick to mention it as well. Kagami was a lot like Aomine just ... more stable. He never let him down, never got violent

with him. He held him dear and never blamed him. Kagami was very much like that positive side of Aomine that Kuroko had loved. That side which Aomine had lost over time.

Of course he promised Momoi to try and bring that side back. That man who loved basketball more than anything, who loved life, who loved Tetsuya, his little shadow. On the other hand he feared to bring him back. Wouldn't it make him fall all over again? Or was Kagami enough to remind him to stay clear of Aomine? Because even if that positive Aomine came back, no one could tell how fast he would leave again. Kuroko could not go through all that a second time.

With all those thoughts running in his head, it was a miracle that he stayed attentive enough to notice the change in Kagami's behaviour. When he came to practice the next day, he was rather solemn. Maybe seeing Momoi had got him thinking? Hopefully not. That oblivious side was what Kuroko loved most about him.

But no, it was even worse. He had run into Aomine. Or rather Aomine had sought him out to test him and renew his claim on Kuroko. The only think worse would have been to tell Kagami the whole story.

„It sounded to me like you weren't just ordinary teammates. What happened between you two in middle school?“ Of all those questions Kagami could ask ... how should he ever answer this?

„It's complicated.“ He answered truthfully. „And a long story.“

„Well, I am not allowed to practice, so I have time.“

That he did. Oh well, no escape here. He did plan to mate with this guy after all. He took a deep breath before he began: „When I came to Teiko I was a very shy boy.“

„I can imagine.“ Kagami smiled encouragingly.

„I had this dream of joining a national basketball competition, so I signed up for the basketball club. But I was weak, really weak. The coach told me to quit.“ It still hurt to remember that, even though it was a piece of cake after all that happened afterwards. But Kagami seemed to get the mood, he stepped closer to Kuroko. He seemed to have already notice that this calmed Kuroko down. „I practiced until late at night, trying to get better. Aomine found me one evening and from then one, he helped and supported me. He gave me a chance to be noticed, he even threw his own basketball career on the line when they threatened to throw me off the team.“

„He sounds nice.“ Kagami offered when Kuroko stopped.

In that pause he debated with himself if he should tell Kagami or not. He finally decided: „I ... I fell in love with him.“

The redhead only nodded. So he wasn't completely oblivious after all. He did not look upset, only thoughtful, so Kuroko dared to continue: „I became a regular, we won and kept winning. In our second year Aomine began to change. No one was a challenge anymore, so he started to lose his drive. It got worse and worse. He stopped to come to practice, he even stopped playing with me because both made winning easier. In the end, he closed himself off completely, saying the only one who could beat him was himself.“

„What a prick.“ Kagami harumphed. „Did you ever tell him how you felt for him?“

„Yes ... he rejected me.“ That was a nice description for nearly killing him in a fit of rage. But that was a story he did not want to tell.

„I'm sorry.“ Kagami offered.

„It wasn't to be. I am not exactly over him but I don't think my feelings will get in the way when we play him.“ He hoped. Actually, he was sure his feelings would get in the way but what should he do about it?

„Do you want to win?“

„Of course I want to win!“ He had promised Momoi after all. He would try to bring back the old Aomine, no matter what it would do to himself. „I want that smug grin off his face and ... I ...“

Kagami put a hand on his shoulder in silent support.

„I want to ... I-“ Damn it, why was he crying? He hated Aomine. He had hurt him so much. Why did it still hurt so much? „I don't want him to stay lost. He lost himself. I want to bring back his smile.“ He closed his eyes, a sniffle breaking past his lips. „I am sorry.“

„You love him. I get that.“ They stopped with Kagami still holding Kuroko up with that hand on his shoulder. „You don't have to be ashamed of loving him.“

„I'm sorry.“ Kuroko took a step forwards, embracing Kagami and pressing his cheek against that broad chest. „Sorry.“

„You can't help who you love.“ The other put an arm around him as well, petting his head from behind. „Thank you for telling me. This will be hard on you, won't it?“

„I'm scared.“ Kuroko admitted with a small voice. „What if we lose? He won't change. What if we win and he really changes? What will that do to me? What if we win and he doesn't change?“

„I'll be by your side whatever happens“ Kagami promised.

„I'm sorry.“ He just couldn't stop crying. How could he tell him about another guy? He loved Kagami. Aomine had only hurt him again and again. Why was he still pining over that guy? He wanted his number one to be Kagami. Why couldn't he love just him? He did not want those feelings for Aomine.

„Don't worry.“ The other simply held him.

It hurt.

Losing hurt. It hurt so much, Kuroko couldn't believe he was able to feel this much pain. Losing Kagami hurt so much more than losing to Aomine. How could he ever have thought differently? Of course it hurt that he could not show Aomine how good he was, could not make him acknowledge him. He could not change him either, for good or for worse.

But all that paled in comparison to losing Kagami.

Kagami was his pillar, his rock, his light. He was all Kuroko needed. He hadn't even noticed how important that man had become. When had he last felt emptiness? When had he last felt shame and fear? At what point had he stopped hating himself and begun to heal instead? When had he begun to trust in Kagami so much that he felt brave enough to face his past?

And now Kagami had left him. Just like Kise had predicted, Kagami had left. He was gone to look for a way to become stronger himself, leaving Kuroko behind. He was alone again.

He was useless.

No, worse. He was used up. He had fulfilled his purpose and was left behind. He had been useful but he was unable to give his partner what he needed. Just like he had been unable to save Aomine. He had let him down. He had let Kagami down. There was nothing left for him.

Shame.

He was unworthy.

He was an Omega. He was a thing to be used until the other was fed up with him. That was how Alphas and Omegas worked. He would be left again and again. No Omega

would ever be able to be everything their Alpha needed. They could never stand beside them, they would always fall behind. Alphas were far superior to Omegas, so it was only right. They were amusements, inspirations on the side. He would never be more.

He was nothing.

„If you really don't think you can do it, at least tell Kagami.“

Kuroko blinked. Kagami? Why would he care? Kagami had already abandoned him. Why bother? The redhead would only ask why Kuroko felt the need to tell him. Kagami would not stop him. He was a burden.

„He believed in you. He told me you would take this loss as your drive to overcome your limits. Do you want to make him a liar?“ Hyuga shook his head with a smile.

„I- I'm ...“ Kuroko stottered, not really knowing what to say.

Kagami hadn't ignored him because he was fed up? He had been sure he would make a comeback and become stronger than ever before? Gods, he had been blind. How had he misjudged his friend like that? Didn't he trust in Kagami?

Kagami would never abandon him. He had promised.

Kuroko began to run. His heart called out to him, telling him to find his mate. How could he ever have faltered in his trust in Kagami? He loved him after all.