

Hurt

A realistic Omegaverse

Von Gepo

Kapitel 5: Getting a home

The decision to move was an immediate one that Miyako and Kazu discussed in detail with Shin-chan only occasionally giving an opinion. They decided on a big room next to Shin-chan's old room they would move into. Kazu called Kagami, asking him for help with the moving, after explaining to Miyako that Shin-chan wasn't allowed to lift more than a book. He found himself opening his door to Kagami, Aomine and Kise the next morning. Shin-chan's mother stood right beside them and told him she had persuaded her husband to get a transporter from a friend and drive them. She had also organized twenty cardboard boxes which she sent the boys to get from the transporter. Kazu simply asked in surprise why Shin-chan hadn't inherited those very useful practical life-skills to which she smiled apologetically. So Kazu stayed in his flat packing boxes, she organized the boys to take apart and carry the furniture and Shin-chan oversaw the reconstruction in their new room.

It was late evening when they were all sitting on Shin-chan's veranda drinking soda that Kagami had gotten from the next combini that Aomine asked: "So why did we do all that? Why are you moving in with Midorima, Takao?"

"Yeah, what does it mean, Midorimacchi? Normally you move out instead of in with your parents."

"I happen to be pregnant, so it was a practical decision." Shin-chan answered in his usual bluntness.

"What?" Kise nearly screamed while Aomine looked at his old teammate with wide eyes and down-turned lips. "That's not a joke?"

"I don't see anything funny about lying." Shin-chan had tensed up considerably.

"I knocked him up accidentally, so I am moving in here to live with him and our daughter. That way we can continue to go to school and might even be able to continue basketball."

"Good thing your parents are that supportive, Mido-chin." Aomine said, his eyes turned down, his body seemingly relaxed but he gave off a high-tension feeling as well.

"If they weren't, Kazu would still have taken responsibility. He is a fine man after all." Shin-chan's voice had a cutting edge.

"I am sorry for what I did, alright?" Aomine exploded. "I talked it through with Tetsu, he forgave me. Shouldn't that be enough for you?"

Kise who sat between them looked miserable. Kazu wanted them to stop as well but this might actually be very important and it wasn't his place to interfere. If he had to,

he would jump in to protect his boyfriend, even if Aomine looked close to murder right now.

But it was Kagami who grabbed Aomine's shirt, pulling him close in an instant until there were only centimeters between their faces and said lowly: "You do know you are talking about raping my mate in front of me?"

Well, that made Aomine cower instantly. When it came to Alpha presence, Kagami surpassed even Akashi by now. If there was one guy nobody would mess with, it was Kagami. Kuroko had made a good choice with him.

"Sorry." Aomine said again, this time in a much different tone.

"I am sorry as well." Kise added. "I don't know how much he told you and I know he wouldn't classify what we had as rape but I still slept with him. I doesn't seem right in hindsight."

"It was a hunt and it was rape, no matter you gentle you were and even if he forgave you. I can understand Kagami's anger." Shin-chan said. "It doesn't matter that Kuroko gave his permission beforehand and afterward, it still wasn't right. And no, Aomine, I will never forgive you. If Kuroko forgave you, I will not openly antagonize you but what you did is and will always be despicable in my opinion. So no, it is not alright with me just because the injured party forgave you. No matter your reasons, it was horrible."

"What did you do?" Kagami asked, not relaxing his grip on Aomine's shirt one bit.

"Please don't make me tell you." The other one actually begged.

Whatever it was it must have been really, really ugly if the proud Aomine begged like that. Kise had averted his gaze again, as if trying to be somewhere else. Shin-chan sat rigid, his gaze intent on Kagami. He wanted Aomine punished, that much was clear. Kazu didn't know what to think about that. Should he intervene?

"Midorima tried to kill me for it and he wasn't even Tetsu's mate. I know that what I did is unforgivable but I still don't want you to kill me. Even Tetsu would not want that. Please, Kagami, don't make me tell you." Bit by bit, Aomine was panicking.

"Kagami?" Kazu finally intervened. "I don't know what happened but I know it was something so horrible I couldn't even imagine it. I know you want to protect your mate but Kuroko said he closed the chapter on Aomine. If you hurt him now, it will only hurt your mate as well because it will bring back the memories. So please let him go."

Kagami did so, though he kept his gaze on Aomine. By now tears of pure terror were running down the other's face. Kazu had never seen anyone so broken. It seemed Kuroko was not the only one hurt by what happened which was most likely why Kuroko wanted to let this go.

"Shin-chan, I want you to apologize. I know that your reaction is most likely warranted but setting Aomine up so that Kagami hurts him without Kuroko here to intervene, that is cruel. I know you are angry but this isn't the right way to deal with it." Kazu told his boyfriend.

Shin-chan simply got up and left. Kazu made a mental note to talk this through with Kuroko. They had something to do about this. All Teiko members were still scarred from their experiences.

"He won't think so for the next few days but you are good for him." Kise said, a slight smile grazing his lips again. "He is asking too much of himself in his need to be perfect and he is asking too much of others." He lay a hand on Aomine's shoulder. "What this guy did was horrible but he wasn't thinking straight in that moment. Sometimes you do things on impulse that you regret afterward. That is a concept Midorimacchi is

unable to comprehend.”

“I do a lot of dumb things on impulse too.” Kagami sighed and relaxed. “I am thankful for Tetsu that he keeps me from making too much damage.” He took a handkerchief from his pocket and held it out to Aomine. “Here, take it. Thank you for being the Tetsu-like voice of reason in this, Takao.”

“It's what friends are for.” Kazu took a deep breath. “Thank you all for helping with the move. Sorry we got into this kind of situation in the end. I fear Shin-chan might be a bit more moody than before due to the pregnancy.”

“When is he due?” Kise asked.

“Most likely in two months. He ignored his condition a bit too long.” Kazu shrugged.

“What? Wait, doesn't that mean he was pregnant in the Winter Cup?”

“Yes, he was. He plans on beating you full strength in the next Winter Cup. So go train.”

“Takao.” Aomine looked up, having dried his tears. “Do you think there is a way to make him less angry with me?”

“I'll talk with Kuroko, we'll come up with something. It is his wish to free you all of your middle school traumata after all. Beating you all was only the first step.” Kazu smiled. “Again, thank you for helping us move. You did come because Shin-chan called you, didn't you?” The other nodded. “The fact that he called you makes me hopeful. He'll get around some day.”

“I hope so.” Aomine stood. “I haven't been able to smile without immediately thinking back ever since. I wish I could erase it all.”

“Kuroko knows and he is still the most important one here.” Kise followed. “Come on, Kagami, let's leave the lovebirds to their quarrel.”

The redhead nodded to Kazu and followed the others.

Shin-chan did not talk to him. What a great way to start living together. Well, it was better than being screamed at. At least he still came into their bed and even cuddled up to him. It was better than nothing after all.

“I am still angry.” Shin-chan suddenly said into the darkness. “But not at you. You were right to call me out like that.”

“I am glad you can be this mature about it.” He kissed the green hair. “Just imagine what would have happened if I hadn't stopped it. Would you have been happy if Kagami hurt Aomine?”

“No.” The arm around his chest tightened. “I'm sorry. I just get angry whenever I see him.”

“Do you want to tell me about it?”

The other only shook his head. It seemed to be really horrible if Kise and even Aomine said the same. Would it hurt Kuroko to ask him about it? Most likely but ... oh well, thankfully Kuroko was quite the strong character. He would call him tomorrow.

Said and done, he did so right the next day at lunch break. He warned him that he wanted to talk about something hard and waited for Kuroko to allow him to. Then he related everything what happened the day before. The other told him he had already heard most of it from Kagami and that he was glad Kazu had phoned him. The other asked him to bring Shin-chan to a specific place in the afternoon which he promised to do. So later that day he drove the rickshaw to a temple, happy that Kuroko seemed to have some kind of solution ready. He only got uneasy when he noticed it was a temple dedicated to Jizo, god of the unborn children. They were a bit early, so they decided to pray for their own child first. Kuroko arrived at the time Kazu was buying a talisman

for the health of their child.

"Good afternoon." Kuroko smiled, bowing in front of them. "And congratulations on your pregnancy."

"Thank you for noticing." Shin-chan smiled back. "It was still a bit too late. The doctor said they would have to do a Cæsarian in the seventh month."

"A good reason for praying. I am sorry to hear but hopefully it will turn out alright."

"Thank you." The taller one nodded. "Kazu told me you wanted to show us something. I feel a bit surprised that we meet up here."

"It was the nearest location that was easily identifiable. What I wanted to show you is over there." Kuroko pointed to a wooden wall that divided the temple from what lay behind. They left the place and found themselves in front of a wooden entrance.

"A graveyard?" Shin-chan asked the most likely possibility, tensing up completely.

"Yes. I wanted to show you a grave. Several in fact." Kuroko stopped at the entrance, waiting for them to follow.

The green haired stood rooted to the spot. Kazu couldn't really get himself to push the other either. A graveyard next to a Jizo temple had exactly one reason of existence: It was dedicated to children who died before their birth. Several graves meant that Kuroko had made graves for every child he had aborted. Even Kazu couldn't bring himself to face that. But when Shin-chan stepped forward he immediately followed. If his boyfriend would face that, he would as well.

Kuroko took a bamboo bucket and filled it with water, Shin-chan doing the same right after. Kazu simply followed them, feeling a bit like he was intruding on something sacred. They went to a burial spot with a Jizo and six engraved rocks in front of it. Kuroko carefully put a spoon of water on every one of them before he watered the Jizo too. It was only then that Kazu noticed that there was a name engraved on the Jizo as well. Shin-chan did the same afterward while Kuroko started to talk.

"Akashi changed in our second year. He came up with the idea of hunts and I stupidly agreed to it, thinking it would only be training as well. When I was pregnant right after the first hunt, I was scared but told no one about it. I forged my parent's signature for the abortion and went through with it. I was conflicted about continuing but somehow I thought I could control what would happen, now that I knew what to expect. Of course I couldn't. So I aborted again and went to Akashi to tell him I wanted to stop. First he seemed to agree but then he mentioned it would have been Aomine this time. I was ... I loved Aomine back then. So I told Akashi I wanted to continue. I can't really say what I thought at that time but I was losing him back then, he was losing himself and somehow I thought I could make it alright. When I found out I was pregnant, I was actually happy about it. I went to Aomine and told him I wanted to keep our child, that I wanted to quit basketball and be with him. Somehow I thought he would smile as he used to and be happy."

Shin-chan had finished watering the six stones. He seemed to pray for a moment before he continued with the Jizo and started praying afterward.

"Instead he completely lost it. He took a right hook to my stomach that ended the pregnancy right there and told me to get back to practice." Kuroko took a deep breath. "Midorima attacked him, Akashi stopped them both from taking out each other and finally Midorima took me to the nearest hospital. I was bleeding profusely and had to get a blood transfusion in the end."

Kazu couldn't breath. He couldn't think. He could simply stare at Kuroko in horror. He had thought it was bad? Try worse. Dear gods, this really was more than he could ever have imagined. How could Kuroko stand to look at Aomine?

"After that I simply did not care anymore. I let them rape me, aborted children, I felt dead inside. I finally ended it all by quitting the team. Even after that it took me half a year to piece myself back together enough that I could go on living." Kuroko took a deep breath. "After I met Kagami, I began to return to the living. He gave me hope, he helped me find a reason to keep on living and without even knowing, he helped me heal. I asked him for money to buy this graveyard spot and the stones and he gave it to me without even asking why."

"Aoki." Shin-chan read the name on the Jizo. "You named it after him even though he did that to you?"

"Love is a strange thing." Kuroko knelled next to him. "Has Akashi ever told you how he came up with the idea for the hunts?" The other shook his head, so he continued. "On that one day I ever skipped practice, I went to talk with Aomine. I know he had lost his spirit, lost his motivation. I had pep-talked him so often, I thought I could do it again but I couldn't. So I went to Akashi to ask him what to do. Akashi told me we should give up on Aomine." Shin-chan's eyes widened at that. "He told me a plate was still usable if it had cracks as long as it wasn't broken."

"I am beginning to think Akashi was worse than Aomine could ever be." There was bitterness in his voice.

"Yes, the other Akashi was a cruel being." Kuroko nodded. "He then suggested the hunts as a way to motivate Aomine and thereby chain him to the team."

"He used your feelings." Shin-chan balled his hands, barely keeping in his anger.

"He did. It may have been the right thing though." The other took one of those hands, enveloping it his own smaller ones. "You remember that day Aomine ran out of practice and our coach decided he did not have to come anymore?" Shin-chan nodded. "I found Aomine afterward, trying to kill himself. That was a month before the whole hunting idea came up."

"Aomine was suicidal from our second year onwards?" Shin-chan seemed stunned.

"Yes. Of course I was horrified, angry and disappointed about what he had done. But I also could not forget how close he was to killing himself. Aomine was very sick and not in his right mind when he attacked me."

Shin-chan hung his head, understanding dawning on his face.

"It does not excuse him. I may have forgiven him but I will never forget. Even though he is stable now I will never trust him again. And I am happy I fell in love with Kagami who is much more reliable than Aomine, even though they are similar in other ways."

"Kagami is a stable personality." Shin-chan stood and helped Kuroko up. "It seems what happened back then hurt all of us. It might have been better if we never went to the same middle school."

"If anything changed, we wouldn't be here now, would we?" Kuroko smiled. "You might be without Takao. You might be without your child. Even though we experienced something that hurt us, we all found happiness, did we not?"

Shin-chan blinked in honest surprise. Kazu simply shook his head in amazement. If the Generation of Miracles were monsters, Kuroko was the most monstrous of them all, basketballwise and emotionally. He did not think he could have gotten over that. And here Kuroko was excusing Aomine who got suicidal over losing his love for basketball. Kuroko's reason for being suicidal sounded a lot more convincing. But he had experienced Aomine's pain firsthand and he could not forget about his broken voice.

"Have you told Kagami about this?" Kazu asked.

"No. I wanted him to stay as carefree as he was. But he pieced everything together himself anyway." Kuroko touched his neck where the redhead must have bitten him.

"He is normally slow but he can be sharp when it is about me. That is an annoying habit."

"He wants you to tell him." Shin-chan said in a surprisingly small voice. "Even though he might know everything by now, he wants to hear it from you. He is hurt that he has to find out from others."

"I fear you are right." Kuroko took a deep breath. "I'll jump over my shadow and tell him. What about you?"

"Me?" The other inclined his head.

"Can you let go of your anger now?"

Shin-chan seemed stunned for a moment before he nodded. Kuroko merely smiled. They left the graveyard in silence, saying their goodbye in front of it.

Shin-chan had silently cried for hours. It hurt so damn much and at times, Kazu had simply cried with him. Just imagining what Kuroko must have gone through, how he must have felt ... it was too much. For a tiny moment he just wanted to believe that all Omegas were sluts and enjoyed Alphas preying on them. It would be so much easier if that were the case. But they hurt just like everyone else, being victims to their own nature.

Still, how could Aomine do that? Even being broken and suicidal, how ... there was a blockade in his head, stopping him from even trying to imagine what that guy could have thought in that moment. He didn't want to. He wanted it to be simple, to hate Aomine for what he had done. Shin-chan had wanted it simple, he had been angry with Aomine, not even trying to understand. Kazu was just like that right now, he did not want to understand. But he couldn't forget the pain and regret that had oozed out of the blue-haired boy. There was no question that if he could turn back time, Aomine would. He had a sudden urge to call Aomine, just to hear his voice and know that he was alive. That conflicted a lot with his anger.

It must have been even worse for Shin-chan who had lived through it all. He must have been there the whole time, hearing that the baby was dead, Kuroko was dying, that he needed a blood transfusion, all because of Aomine. He was unable to imagine that despair, it was ... he kissed his boyfriend, internally thanking him from trying to keep him from all that. Shin-chan had tried to protect him from that knowledge and he had been right in doing so. Because naturally he imagined that situation with Shin-chan, having him lying in his blood, losing their baby – he tightened his hug. Shin-chan simply cried through it all, not responding and just holding him close. Neither of them slept that night.

Kazu suggested they stay home for a day but his boyfriend refused. For one he needed his external structure (something he knew well, Shin-chan got lost without rules) and also, he wanted to tell the team. Kazu hinted that they might not be in the best condition to do so and was shocked by the reaction he got for it. Shin-chan actually swore. In all their time, all moments of anger he had never heard anything remotely vulgar from his boyfriend but today seemed to be an exception. Shin-chan told him that today was the perfect day because he would not take shit from no one about his pregnancy and only return to be being his pristine self tomorrow. Kazu nodded in astonishment and followed him out to drive the other to school.

In the afternoon Shin-chan had mellowed down a bit, looking as exhausted as Kazu felt. He still wanted to get it over with, so Kazu agreed to talk to the team today. When they entered the gym, Miyagi immediately jogged over, stopping in front of them with wide eyes and asking: "Should you already be here again? You look

exhausted.”

“It wasn’t the best of nights.” Kazu smiled tiredly. “We have something important we need to tell you. Could you get the coach and the team together? Just the regulars though.”

“Even the coach?” Their captain – an exact image of his older brother, just not so strict – asked but went anyway. Not that he had far to go, the coach was already coming over, having sensed that something was amiss.

“You look horrible.” He said in an unusually blunt way for him. “Is it something serious?”

“Well.” Kazu took a deep breath. “We would like to tell you and the team together.”

The blood seemed to drain from his face. No wonder, they were the only ones used to playing on the main team. Losing them both would finally break the neck for them. The others gathered, the coach gave some orders to the rest of the students and they left for a conference room next to the gym. It was where they normally watched other teams on videos and discussed strategies.

“Good afternoon everyone. Please excuse us for interrupting practice like this.” Kazu bowed to them while Shin-chan took a seat at his side. They should really have stayed at home, his boyfriend was close to collapsing. “As you have been informed, we were unable to come to practice due to a medical condition. Well ... I don’t know how to say this, so I’ll be blunt. As you know Shin-chan was not at his best the whole Winter Cup. That was due to the fact that he is pregnant. We found out last week and the planning and organizing have been quite hectic.” He debated waiting for their questions but decided against it. Everyone looking at him seemed disbelieving to stunned anyway. “Shin-chan is not allowed any sports until birth. That will most likely be two months from now as he will not be able to carry the child to term. After that he will need another two months of healing and a third one until he is allowed to play again. So we have to count him out for at least five months, seven at the maximum.”

Everyone was silent. They all simply stared before looking first at Miyagi, then at the coach to see what their reaction should be.

“That is a surprise.” The coach finally said, composing himself. “While it is very unfortunate for the team, congratulations on your pregnancy, Midorima.” He turned to the team. “I know that as staff I should not encourage students to get pregnant, so please note that as an official I am hereby scolding those two heavily. Well ... that said, how are you, Midorima?”

Kazu had to keep himself from grinning like a fool. That was the most interesting “scolding” he ever had. Shin-chan seemed too exhausted to laugh though and answered honestly: “Tired.”

“You look like it.” The coach nodded. “You are of course excused from practice. If you want to watch, you are welcome to but you do not have to force yourself. If you are interested though, you can always act as my assistant coach.”

Shin-chan gave an unintelligible noise which his boyfriend translated to: “He thanks you very much and will think about it as soon as he is awake again.”

Even the coach had to smile at that, the others snickering.

“As you are not pregnant as far as I heard, I expect you back to practice tomorrow.” He said to Kazu. “I do understand that you might not be in the right mindset to play at the InterHigh but as none of us can see what the future holds it is always best to be prepared.”

“Of course, coach.” Kazu bowed. “Thank you very much.”

The others still looked at Miyagi to see if his reaction would differ from the coach but

after scratching his head he said: "Well, if players are injured, they need half a year of rehab as well. This isn't so different I guess. Seirin played the InterHigh without Kiyoshi Teppei and they still won the WinterCup. If all goes well and we magically beat Seirin at the InterHigh preliminaries, Midorima might be back with us for the Nationals."

"Actually, Kiyoshi Teppei needs a surgery and will not join the Seirin team at the InterHigh games at all. It is not impossible to win the preliminaries." Kazu said.

"I'll cheer you on when you go against Aomine." Shin-chan mumbled from behind, his voice heavy with sarcasm. "Kimura's younger brother can face both him and Kagami. Best of luck."

That one went white as a wall.

"You are in a foul mood." Kazu chided the other. "Keep silent if you can't say nice things."

The others grinned at their antics, by now quite used to them. Only Kimura the younger – a first year with a lot of potential – still blanched. The coach told them to go back to practice. Miyagi, the younger as well as their old teammate had already graduated, came over and congratulated him in the name of the team before he left with the others. He only told Kazu though with a slightly scared look to Midorima who gave off an uninviting aura.

Kazu decided not to comment that and said instead: "Let's go back home."

"That went surprisingly well today." Shin-chan mumbled while Kazu held him in the bath so he would not drown in case he fell asleep.

"Much too smoothly. I'll find out what their real reaction is tomorrow."

"I hope I'll be better then. I want to take coach Nakatani up on his offer."

"It is quite the honour, you know?" Kazu smiled, kissing the head lying on his shoulder. "That wasn't a request just because he did not know what to do with you, he meant that. If you can't play, he wants your input."

"I was surprised about that as well. I remember that he did not like me much in the beginning." Shin-chan continued to speak lowly and slowly due to exhaustion.

"Well, you were a little shit in the beginning. You made so many socially inept comments that he kept you to three selfish requests a day. How long has it been since you needed them? You have adapted yourself to social rules well."

"You have adapted me to it." He blinked, looking up at Kazu with those beautiful green eyes. He hoped their daughter would have those eyes. "Without you no one would want me around except for basketball games. In the beginning, I had a lot of arguments at Teiko but we somehow got along. In the end, we hated each other and my only pastime was playing Shogi with Akashi. Here it just continued, everyone could barely stand me. How long has it been since I counted steps, jumped over lines or touched strange places on walls? I mean, I still want my lucky item and my rules but I think my behaviour is acceptable. Strange maybe, but okay, right?"

"Of course. You're doing great." He held up his hand, watching some droplets fall to Shin-chan's chest and running back into the bathing water. "All the new first years will think you act strange on hormones and get horrified later when they see you are normally like that." He grinned playfully to show his boyfriend he wasn't serious.

"Idiot." Shin-chan turned to lay on his side, sinking deeper into the water. "Love you."

"You too." He smiled happily. "Shin-chan? Um, Shin-chan? Hey, don't go to sleep on me! You're too heavy to carry out of here!"

"Welcome back." Miyagi greeted him with a smile in the locker room. "Where have you left your better half?"

"He went directly to the coach. I am expecting the hardest training session we have ever seen. Shin-chan is merciless." Kazu still grinned. "But this way he can work through his hormones' crankyness by driving us all nuts instead of just me."

"My brother told me that an unfiltered Midorima is a nightmare and to always keep you by his side. He actually told me I should not let him play if you weren't there." Their captain looked insecure, lowering his voice. "Is he really that bad?"

"Somehow it is nice to have a new generation to play with." Kazu smiled while pulling of his shirt. "You mostly don't know that nightmare version of Shin-chan that your brother told you about." He threw the shirt into his drawer, happy not to have to fold it as his boyfriend wasn't around to scold him. "He is better now. He is a fast learner as you know. He is learning social interaction by observing me. The Shin-chan you know has one year experience on the one your brother knew."

"I'm sorry but I think I am unable to even imagine that." Miyagi the younger was a second year and had joined their training as a first string member last summer. He had not have much contact with Shin-chan though because he had not gone with them to the summer camp.

"It is better not to know." One of their bench players who was a third year said. "He wasn't exactly bearable."

"He was lovely for a social bulldozer." Kazu grinned. "I liked him though. He had his cute moments."

"I don't think I'll understand what you find cute about him either." Miyagi had finished changing and came to stand next to him. "When you came out to everyone, my brother was very disturbed and kept muttering to himself the whole evening."

"If you understood I'd have even more rivals. So I'm totally okay with you not seeing Shin-chan's beauty."

"Beauty?" Miyagi blinked in confusion. "I'd understand handsome, he is an Alpha after all ... girls are beautiful, how can guys be beautiful? Does one have to be gay to understand that?"

"No, one has to look for beauty in a soul instead of a face." Kazu finished as well. Most others had also done so but stayed behind to listen. "You'll understand if you are ever in love."

"Oi! I have a girlfriend!" The other argued.

"Yeah." Kazu turned to face him. "I had some of those as well. It is not the same."

"I really don't understand you." Miyagi sighed.

"As long as you can still like and play with me, that is fine."

"Yeah, well ... I don't get the why or how but I have eyes. You love each other. And now your boyfriend is pregnant ... that does sound strange, not even counting the fact we are talking about Midorima. I didn't know males other than Omegas could get pregnant."

"We didn't as well." Kazu shrugged. "I don't regret it but if we could have planned we would have had kids later I think. We only turned seventeen after all."

"Yeah ... strange that." Their captain still turned and walked towards their training ground, all the others following. "Can you even marry?"

"That's not allowed in this country. I'm not even sure I can legally be a father to the child if the mother isn't an Omega or a woman." Kazu's mood turned sour but he reminded himself to brighten up. "Well, anyway, what have you done the last two weeks? Anything special?"

"Nah, mostly basics. Coach was especially into passing exercises. He said he wanted us to make you proud by the time you came back with how good we could pass balls. I'm not too sure how he came up with that but that is what he said."

"Last summer I complained about Shutoku's abysmal passing skills. Even though the old team practised like crazy their passes were still ... well. It is good coach focussed on that. New players, new luck, maybe one of you becomes decent at passing."

"What's wrong with our passes?" The other complained.

"You remember the Rakuzan game and how I passed into Shin-chan's hands when he was already jumping?" Some nodded. "I expected everyone from the old team to pass like that."

Miyagi spluttered and said: "Y- you- wha- are ... are you serious?"

"Yes." Kazu grinned. "And remember: I'm the lenient one compared to Shin-chan. Let's enjoy the next months with him as our coach!"

The astonishment on their faces slowly turned to dread.

"He's the devil incarnate." One of their bench players said between two deep breaths. "If you can still talk, you haven't trained enough." Shin-chan admonished him. "Five laps around the hall."

Two others silently mouthed the question "How could he have heard that?". Kazu only grinned. Shin-chan was extremely sharp, it was why crowds bothered him so much. He heard everything at a much higher volume. Mostly that was a curse instead of something useful.

„Just why did you have to knock him up?" Miyagi asked when they were safely out of earshot. "Have you seen that smug expression on the coach's face? He knew Midorima would grill us."

"That training regime is what Shin-chan asks of himself. He's not so good because of magical abilities, he is so good because he trains like crazy. Just like he had me do this last year."

Some others looked at him with fearful eyes, one of them saying: "You must really love him if you accept such a training regimen from him."

"I don't do it because I love him, I do it because it works. Even Akashi from Rakuzan told me he was impressed with my skills. I have Shin-chan to thank for that. So if you want to win against Seirin at the InterHigh, don't grumble, listen to him. Shin-chan knows what he is doing. And I promise it gets easier after a month or two."

"Sure he wasn't impressed by how you handle your boyfriend?" Miyagi said while slumping onto a bank in the locker room.

"Not likely, you saw how Akashi has enough charisma to handle the whole Generation of Miracles. Shin-chan is definitely enough for me. Though when we were at a party together, he told me that the whole Miracle group was nerve-wrecking and handling Rakuzan was much easier by comparison."

"I guess one has to be a Miracle's boyfriend to casually meet people like Akashi at parties." Their captain shook his head and sighed in exasperation.

"Actually, I was invited because I delivered someone to the host's house who then invited me to help with the decoration. It's not like Shin-chan would ever come up with the idea that I'd like to come along to such events. I had to sneak in on my own."

"I think I would develop a complex if my girlfriend was that important." Kimura the younger said. "Doesn't it hurt your manly pride?"

"Nah ... it would if I was with someone like Akashi. That guy is good in everything. But Shin-chan has strengths and weaknesses just like everyone else. His strengths are

outstanding, but his weaknesses are as well. I am able to compensate some of those weaknesses and that makes me feel strong." He began changing. "And just because someone is very good at something doesn't mean you are bad just because you can't do the same. I don't need to see others do worse than me to feel proud of myself – especially not my boyfriend."

"Sometimes it is very annoying how mature you are." Miyagi had crossed his arms, still simply sitting, too exhausted to even change. "I can't see Midorima raising a child ... I mean, at all. It is simply impossible to even imagine. But I have no problem picturing you with a kid."

Some of the others nodded.

"Well, Shin-chan is the one giving birth." His smile dimmed a bit. "You are right that he's most likely not good being a mother though. But I am sure he can be a decent father. It just means I have to fill a motherly role. I'll do my best."

"Honestly ... doesn't that annoy you?" Their captain had a serious expression on his face. "Your boyfriend is socially inept, so you spend all your time with him alone, not meeting your friends anymore. You are the one who has to be the diplomat all the time, so people get along with Midorima. Now he is pregnant which means that you have to raise the child. Have you even planned how you'll go to school like that? Even if, are you able to continue with basketball? I mean ... I can't imagine you don't have any hobbies that you would like to do sometimes. Your whole life revolves around your boyfriend. Sorry if that is too personal but ... I couldn't imagine that pressure for myself."

"Thank you for caring, captain." He actually wasn't sure if he should be relieved or annoyed. "But I am happy with the way I live my life. You'll most likely live like that as well in ten or fifteen years. I am just starting a settled family life earlier. It doesn't mean I am unsatisfied."

Miyagi looked like he wanted to ask further but at the same time he seemed to accept those words. Kazu was thankful their captain had an older brother who he had been friends with for a year. It gave the impression as if he was some kind of an older brother figure as well and one tended to think of those as stronger, more mature personalities.

When he stopped out of the changing room, he found his boyfriend leaning on the wall next to the door. Of course he had heard everything, Kazu should have known. He silently took the other's hand and turned to go. His boyfriend followed him without another word.

Shin-chan was silent on their way back. Kazu knew it was because Miyagi's words had hurt and disturbed him. His boyfriend was a worry-wart anyway and hearing that everyone thought Kazu crazy for being with him would only set off his fears. Normally the blackhaired boy would drive to the next basketball field now but that was out due to the pregnancy. What to do? What made Shin-chan relax except for basketball and sex? A bath? Yeah, he could draw a bath for his boyfriend, give him a massage and kiss him senseless. That might assure him.

"Welcome back, boys." Miyako greeted them.

"We are back home." Kazu greeted back. "Do we have enough time for a bath before dinner?"

"Of course, dear, I hadn't started yet." She smiled.

"Thank you very much." He bowed. "I'll go and prepare the bath, Shin-chan."

"Yes." The other answered.

He had just adjusted the temperature when Miyako ambushed him in the bathroom, asking: "What happened? I haven't seen him look so dejected for a year."

"He overheard a conversation." Kazu got closer, knowing of his boyfriend's habit to hear every-thing. "Our captain told me he would not give up his youth for a partner or a family and could not understand why I would do that. Especially with someone like your son. I made it clear that I thought differently but ... well, Shin-chan is still unsure now."

"What an idiot." Miyako proclaimed, making Kazu wide-eyed. "You gave up your home and came to live with him, threw away your career thoughts for him and he does not trust you? I have to have a stern word with him."

"I am sure he trusts me." He had to smile, seeing a normally serene woman so furious. "I fear he does not trust himself enough."

"Kazunari." She took his face in her hands. "You are the son every mother would want, the man every woman with a shred of common sense would marry and I am happy that you decided our son was your one true love. I want you to stay with us, just like Shin-chan wants. Don't let his doubts and fears get to you."

"I won't." He had to keep himself from crying. "Thank you, mother. Err, I mean, Miyako."

"Mother is alright, I told you so." She had a big smile plastered on her face. "I am sorry your own mother died. How long has she been gone?"

"I don't really remember her. I was still very little. We had some neighbors then where I was allowed to play, the woman there was like a mother to me. I can't remember her face though. We moved a lot."

"What about your father?" She asked while he turned off the water that was slowly filling the bath-room with steam. They stepped into the anteroom.

"He kept moving. I refused to come with him at the age of ten, so he left me the flat. I have to contact him to cancel it."

"He doesn't know you have moved in with us?" She seemed mildly shocked.

"We don't really keep in contact. I haven't seen him for a year." He contemplated telling her a bit more and decided to do so in the end. She was a kind soul and would not reject him for it. "My parents had me because it would have been strange in our family-oriented society if they did not have children. But they never wanted me and caring for me always seemed too much for both of them. So I wasn't really sad about either my mother nor my father leaving. We just never made a connection." Her eyes were suddenly teary which instantly made him feel bad. "There were other people I liked like neighbors or my friends' parents. They showed me what family meant and I was okay with that. They gave me enough love to make up for my parents, don't worry."

"I see ... so that is why you love Shin-chan so much." She smiled even though tears had begun to roll down her cheeks. "He has a beautiful, passionate soul that is full of love. If he gives it, it is an unconditional gift and he doesn't hold back."

"Exactly." He grinned. "The others will never understand because he does not show them that side of him. So I don't really care about their opinions. Is that clear, Shin-chan?"

There was some kind of indefinable noise from next to the open door. Of course his boyfriend was eavesdropping again. Miyako chuckled, dried her tears and stepped out to talk to her son: "I'll leave you to your bath then. Enjoy!"

"Thank you, mother." He passed her and entered, his cheeks still slightly reddened. He lay some clothes on the washing machine. "I brought a yukata for you. For ... after the

bath.”

“Thank you.” Kazu leaned forward and kissed him. And again. And ... oh well, he had planned on kissing him senseless after all, right?