

Not good enough

Von Gepo

Kapitel 7: What is love?

Tatsuya knocked on his own door and gave Murasakibara a slightly loopsided smile when he opened the door. His goal had been to crash on the bed but he was unable to even reach it. The room was a mess. Clothes, toiletries, everything was on the floor.

"What the hell have you done in here?" Tatsuya shook his head.

Murasakibara just hung his head.

He stepped close to him and looked into his face from below. He was met with silence. After a moment of calming he decided on an ultimatum: "Well, you can either tell me the truth and I might decide on a lesser punishment or you stay silent. In that case you will have to get everything in order by yourself and you won't get sweets for three days."

"I was hungry," his friend mumbled.

"Yeah?" Tatsuya tapped his foot.

"So I wanted to buy food." Murasakibara looked to the side. "So I was looking for money."

"You thought I might have hid money between the clothes?" Where exactly was the logic in that?

"Mom hid sweets between her clothes. She thought I wouldn't find them there."

Tatsuya just shook his head and explained: "For one people normally don't hide things between their clothes. Secondly it is very rude to snoop through someone else's things. And even if you do that, which you should not, just throwing clothes out is very mean. Now those clothes will have to be ironed and refolded."

"All of them?" The lavender-colored eyes widened.

"Yes, all of them. And that will be your job if you want your candy like normal."

Murasakibara looked close to tears, gnashing his teeth in frustration. It made the Omega feel bad for a moment but the supervisor had warned him not to let his friend's tears, pleas or angry outbursts make him falter.

"You knew I would be angry, right?" Tatsuya sighed. "Why haven't you started on refolding the clothes at least?"

He was only met with silence. Murasakibara had balled his hands into fists. Just like a scolded child that did his very best not to run away in anger and slam a door. Tatsuya took pity on him and enfolded one of those hands in his. He felt his friend relax slightly at the gesture, so he offered: "I'll help you, okay? Go stand at the table, I'll bring you the clothes and I'll put them away after you folded them."

Those lavender-colored eyes looked at him for a moment before his friend nodded and went to stand at the tall but small table at the side of the room. Tatsuya picked up the first shirt that would not need to be ironed and brought it over. One by one

they put the shirts in order, then the shorts, the jeans, the pullovers ... it was a damn lot of work. Murasakibara had ripped everything from wardrobe, even his own things. How desperate must he have been? How hungry?

"I tried," Murasakibara mumbled into the silence.

"Hm?" Tatsuya was just picking up their toiletries.

"You asked why I did not start to put everything back. I tried. I just ... got lost. I didn't know where to start," his friend finally admitted.

Tatsuya blinked in surprise for a moment before he patted the other's head and said:

"Next time just tell the truth. If you apologize, people won't be as mad."

"I'm sorry I made a mess of your clothes."

"Very good. Now let's iron the rest and then we can go to bed."

Murasakibara nodded. Both of them ignored his growling stomach. Tatsuya just made a mental note to speak with Coach Araki about the food allowances. Three portions just weren't enough for the giant. So they ironed clothes at ten in the evening while Tatsuya asked himself how he had fallen for this guy.

Coach Araki consulted her food allowances sheet the next morning, then her notes on each individual player before apologizing and saying: "I miscalculated his food expenses. I'm sorry. I'll take responsibility and pay the rest from my own money."

"Really?" That was no small amount. "You know ... I thought about that myself but it's really a lot."

"I'll try to get it back from the school. It was my mistake. But I don't want my students to go hungry. Thank you for looking after him like that."

If she only knew. He had two and a half hours of refolding and ironing to show for that. Oh well, it was how it was. It wasn't like Murasakibara had had a phone and could have called him. He also wouldn't have gone out to ask others for money. He had been told to stay in the room, so he did. Just like a hungry, caged animal. Tatsuya knew that the other tried his best not to do wrong. So he didn't whine when people told him he had enough. He didn't go begging others for money. He just held his cramping stomach and tried to endure.

"Hey, Murasakibara." The other looked up. "Coach said it's okay to have more food today and for the rest of the trip. I hope you won't go hungry again."

"Thank you, Muro-chin." He smiled his wide and happy smile.

"No worries." Tatsuya petted his hair before sitting down himself and enjoying his breakfast.

They had two games that day. Both weren't too hard and they were starting to move and act like a team more and more. They just left Murasakibara under their hoop, it seemed to be a good strategy. At lunch Himuro charmed the event's caterer into giving him an extra lunchbox, so that Murasakibara could have two and the rest of his. As those were actually made for bulky basketball players he was unable to finish his own. His friend happily shoved food into himself. Adding the four dinners he got they finished the day in satisfaction. Tatsuya could read a bit of his book and Murasakibara played with a box of Lego.

From time to time Tatsuya watched him do it. The supervisor had said that his friend had Lego to learn some fine motor skills and regulation of his strength because the very small pieces easily broke or got lost. Building something with them seemed quite the challenge and he heard the other swear more than once before sending him a fearful gaze if he would get scolded for it. Most likely he should scold him but he

found it much too endearing. Just like when he played robbers and cops with his self-build police car – which only loosely resembled a car, let alone a police car – and his stuffed panda.

The next day found them playing a rather strong school whose video they had watched yesterday evening. Tatsuya had taken note of the taunts they threw, so it wasn't unexpected when he became a target at warm-up.

"Look, it's the team's bitch. Hey, beauty, wanna suck my cock too?," one of them leered.

He simply continued practice. His team was there, his Murasakibara was there. No reason to get upset. Though the next part was a bit harder to ignore: "I bet your ass feels nice and wet. Though it won't be tight anymore with those guys pounding into you."

He sunk another three, taking up another ball and sinking the next. Just ignore them. He was above such petty comments. He knew his worth.

"Aaah ... guess you know all about handling balls with those delicate hands. I bet you remember all the guys you sucked when you hold one in your hands."

His shot missed. But he felt Murasakibara who had stretched behind him until that moment get up to his full height and ask: "Can I crush them?"

He was tempted to say yes. Oh so tempted. But then his friend would be banned from the court and they could not afford that. So he answered: "Crush them with your basketball skills. Do you think you are able to block every one of their shots?"

Murasakibara just smirked and went to ask their coach for a hair tie. It was how Tatsuya learned that for one his friend looked stupidly sexy with his hair drawn back and secondly that he had a much higher gear than he had shown them up to now. They ended the game 87-0.

He heard the other team whisper how Murasakibara was a monster, a freak, a beast. Whispers, disgusted glances, snorts. So the giant had to live through the exact same shit he did. He looked up to see if his friend listened and yes, he did. His stoic face showed nothing but Tatsuya could see the tightness around his jaw. So he got onto his toes, kissed said jaw and whispered into his friend's ear: "Today you are my hero." It was only fair, right? Murasakibara defended him, he defended the other. His friend grinned and said with a finger pointing at himself: "Atsushi."

"My hero Atsushi?" Was this his way of asking him to call him by his first name? The other nodded vigorously and smiled as if Christmas had come early.

Coach Araki asked him at dinner if she should plan to talk with Atsushi this evening about his offer. Tatsuya was still riding his high of having his friend defend him like this today but did he really want him as a boyfriend? Sex, future prospect and everything? He suddenly felt shy. He had had one-night-stands but he had never had a real relationship. Should he really start with someone that needed so much attention to keep his life in order? They would never be equal partners. He would always have to care for his friend. He was only sixteen, should he really make such a weighty decision at this age?

He wasn't deciding about mating with him right here and now. Being boyfriends was kind of like a trial phase. And yeah, he wanted to try. He wanted to know what it was like to be loved by Atsushi. He wanted more than just talking and pats on the head. He wanted Atsushi's hands in his hair, on his body, in his ... oh well. Yeah, he was in love. He recognized all the signs. He would never get it out of his system if he did not try. He nodded to his coach. She asked again if he was sure. So he said: "I am not sure, I am

fucking scared. But I want to try. Maybe this will go wrong spectacularly, maybe it will ... I don't know. I am not even sure what is scarier. That it goes wrong or that it goes right? Because if it goes right, then ... I might even decide to spend the rest of my life with him. That thought scares me more than anything. But I want to ... to see if an "us" can work. I want to know. Even if it might work out."

His coach just looked at him for a long moment before nodding. So back at the hotel she asked Atsushi to speak with her. His friend send him a fearful glance, so he nodded encouragingly. He even whispered: "Don't worry, I haven't told her about yesterday."

It made Atsushi follow her with a smile.

Tatsuya felt his heart break in tiny pieces and glue back together. Atsushi was so damn cute. His hero Atsushi. Gods, it was so wonderful and hurt so much to think about him. It was even worse than when Taiga left. Love was such a horrible thing. Tatsuya felt like giggling like a middle-school girl.

He sat on Atsushi's bed biting his lip. Would his friend say yes? Would he like to be his boyfriend? Should he have gone with their coach? No, he would have only influenced his friend just by sitting there. But he wanted to know! Would Atsushi say yes? Did his friend like him that way? He was protective and he found him beautiful, that had to mean something, right? Gods, please let Atsushi say yes. Maybe she should have timed this better. What if Atsushi said no? Could he even look the other in the eye? Tatsuya bit his nails before reminding himself that nail care was an important thing for shooters and he had stopped the habit eight years ago. No nail-biting! Gods, he wished Atsushi would come back. Just what were they talking about? What took him so long?

Tatsuya let out a shaky breath and stood. If he wanted his nails to survive he would have to pace the room. Up, down, up, down, one circle, two, three, this room was too small. Had he done all he could? Maybe he should brush his teeth. Yeah, if Atsushi wanted to kiss him it would be much nicer with brushed teeth. He went into the bathroom and prepared the toothbrush. But what if Atsushi came back now? Did he want to greet his boyfriend with toothpaste-foam? How long would it take? He just shook his head and began to brush his teeth. He made sure to rinse, gurgle, check between his teeth, even massage his tongue with his toothbrush.

Where was Atsushi? Why did it take this long? Maybe his coach thought he would wait downstairs and they were searching for him an- the door clicked. Tatsuya came out of the bath with a smile. There was Atsushi – looking as stoic as ever – and coach who smiled. Smiled! Tatsuya grinned, looking from one to the other. Was this a positive answer? He came to stand in front of Atsushi.

"Eh~ ... what do I do now?" Atsushi scratched his head.

"Do you want to be my boyfriend?" Tatsuya bit his lower lip.

"Yeah?" The other tilted his head.

"Then you may kiss me." He looked up and stepped on his toes.

Atsushi not only met him, he held him with one arm around his waist, another in his hair to angle their faces. Tatsuya felt stupid that he knew nothing better than to lay his arms on his boyfriend's – boyfriend! – shoulders. Wherever had Atsushi learned to kiss like that? God, he was good. Tatsuya moaned into the kiss.

"I see I am not needed. Don't be too loud, boys. The walls are thin," their coach said before the door closed.

If someone had asked him right now he would not have been able to remember what

their coach had just said. He was completely lost in that embrace, the hot mouth on his, the tongue that – oh god, that sinful tongue – gently teased his own. He felt his knees go weak but Atsushi held him up without a problem. More than that: the arm around his waist lowered itself to his ass and picked him up. He immediately slung his legs around Atsushi's waist. Suddenly his boyfriend drew back and had to take deep breaths.

Tatsuya dazedly watched him with a goofy smile before deciding to pepper his jaw with kisses. When he reached the ear he asked: "Where did you learn to kiss like that?" "I watched Akashi" - deep breath - "Kuroko got red after those kisses."

"Have I blushed?" He felt like he had.

"Yeah." Atsushi grinned proudly. "Must learn to hold my breath longer."

"There's a trick how to kiss and breath." He pecked the other's lips. "You'll learn with practice. That kiss was really, really good."

"Boyfriend-good?" He still grinned. Gods, it looked so cute.

"Super-boyfriend-good." They shared a hug, just smelling and feeling the other, listening to each other's crazy heartbeat.

"I really like Muro-chin."

"I like you too, Atsushi. Do you want to call me by my first name as well?"

The giant blinked at him.

"It's Tatsuya," he reminded the other.

"I know." Atsushi still seemed to think though. "Tatsuya. Tatsu. Hm ... I like Muro-chin better."

"Why?" He tilted his head.

"Kuroko's name is Tetsuya. Akashi and Aomine called him Tetsu. You know when ... when they raped him."

Oh gods. Oh dear gods. Tatsuya embraced the other again and said: "Sorry. I didn't know. Of course you can call me Muro-chin. I like the name. Only you call me by that name, so it's special."

"Good." Atsushi kissed his temple. "I like Muro-chin."

He drew back and kissed him full on the lips again. One of those drawn out, sensual, immensely intimate and sexual kisses. Everything was better than saying the words that had been on his tongue. He was falling too hard. He didn't know if he wished he could stop.