

The Bet

Von mie-van-cha

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Kapitel 1: Chapter 1

I thought it was the happiest time of my young life.

I thought it would last forever.

I really thought that.

Now I know it better.

Now I know how stupid that thought was.

Silly me.

I should have known then, that my childish me was already starting to cause life changing troubles.

"Ohayou, everybody!" Tegoshi said with his big shining smile as he stepped into the NEWS dressing-room.

"Ohayou~" it came back three times. Of course Kei-chan was already there. He sat between Massu and Shige on the grey Sofa and was trying to get Shige's attention, who seemed pretty interested in a music-magazine. Massu was eating happily his Bento, which was actually supposed for lunch. And it was 9am.

"Ryo-chan and Pi not here?" Tegoshi asked as he threw his bag on the floor and squeezed himself somewhere between Shige and the end of the sofa.

"Do you expect Yamashita-kun to be here in time?" Shige asked, which made Kei-chan pouting. "Nande~?" he moaned. "Why are you reacting to Tegoshi, but totally ignoring me?" Kei-chan waited for a response, but got disappointed after Shige continued flipping his magazine as if he didn't heard a thing.

Tegoshi laughed. "Maybe you should stop being so instructive." he suggested and got a not so friendly gaze from Kei-chan.

"Maybe" Shige began. "Maybe you should stop sounding so superior."

"Again?!" Kei-chan was shocked. Then he started to poke Shige's cheeks. "Talk to me!" he demanded. "I've already apologized for yesterday! Hey, talk to me~!" Tegoshi watched that scene with amusement for quite a while, and Massu was all busy with his bento. Just when Shige gave up, throwing away his magazine and shouting: "Holy crap! Okay, I am talking! But take your finger out of my mouth!" Ryo and Yamapi came into the dressing room.

"Ohayou~" both said taking off their sunglasses. Massu was chewing down a big onigri and Shige was grumbling with bright-smiling Koyama, so Tegoshi was the only one who turned around and greeted back. "Ohayou!" He said with his big puppy-eyes. Ryo-chan grinned at him and Pi just nodded with a friendly, heartbreaking smile. Both gazed at Tegoshi, who today wore a black Jeans and a white, at the top unbuttoned Shirt with a red, flimsy tie. Of course Tegoshi noted their stares and tried to deflect them. "Sweets?" he asked pointing at the lollipops in Ryo-chan's hand. "I thought you don't like them."

"The theme for our photo-shooting today. One of these ladies out there gave them to me hoping I would appreciate it." Ryo said and threw them to Tegoshi.

Yamapi laughed. "He just said 'Arigatou', smiling awkwardly and then turned around without glancing at her again. Poor little girl had a face like this." He made a grimace looking as he would start to cry. "You're so rude, Ryo-chan." And pat his best friend on the back.

"She was completely not my type." Was Ryo-chan's answer. Then he looked at his Band members. "Why aren't you dressed?" He wanted to know from everyone.

"Don't tell me you spent time again just staring holes into the air." Yamapi teased as he placed his bag next to the sofa and stroked through Tegoshi's light brown, soft hair.

"But you just came in a second ago!" Shige said, after he had stopped arguing with Koyama.

"That has nothing to do with it, baka." Ryo-chan responded and went to the dresser, where he took the clothes meant for him.

"Don't be so mean again." Pi scolded him and went to take his clothes as well. "Massu, put away your food. We shall be ready in ten minutes." Unwillingly Massu closed his bentobox and stood up.

All six guys put on their shooting outfits and checked their hair, though Tegoshi had to do it three times, because Yamapi and Ryo-chan had pretty much fun ruining it every time Tegoshi just had it done. Finally Manager-san rescued him, as he told the group to come out. Both Ryo-chan and Yamapi pouted, but Tegoshi smiled in relieve. He looked like a broom now, but without his bandmates in his hair he felt much better. In a row NEWS went to the big bright studio, where the set was already built up. It was decorated with a lot of hyper dimensional candies and sweets. Immediately Massu ran to a big choco-cake twice the size of him. "I am in my wonderland~" He mumbled and rubbed his cheeks at the big plastic cherry at the bottom of the cake, while everybody else in NEWS just said "sugoi~" in an admiring voice. After greeting the staff-san and the lady, who gave Ryo-chan the sweets before, going crazy over him, the shooting began and everybody posed like hell. Manager-san had to tell Yamapi three times to try a smile, before he gave up, Ryo-chan grinned his brightest smile into the camera, Massu was head over heels for the set around him, Kei-chan tried to open his eyes as much as he could, before Ryo-chan could tease him again,

Shige was so serious that everyone bursted out into laughter and Tegoshi made everyone go wild over his babyface. Like a cute little child he got everybody's attention when it was his turn for solo-shoots.

"Kawaii, deshou?" Ryo-chan said quietly to Pi who stood next to him.

"Can't help me, but I really want to hug him, when he looks like this." Was Pi's respond and looked at Tegoshi's jolly, smiling face.

"Not when I can hug him first." Ryo-chan grinned at his best friend, before he went to Tegoshi and laid his arms around the small shoulders. "Time for couple-photo's" he said and both Tegoshi and him were smiling like dorks. Immediately the Koya-Shige-Couple paired up and Ryo-chan looked like he wouldn't leave Tegoshi alone for a while, so Yamapi sighed and turned around to gaze at Massu, who was still fascinated by the big cakes and cookies that surrounded him. While posing with Massu Pi threw a look at his best friend and Tegoshi every now and then. They looked good together, he had to admit. Tegoshi with his innocent, beautiful face and big eyes, and Ryo-chan, who was smiling non-stop. He seemed high, because he got Tegoshi as partner first, and Pi clenched his teeth because of this fact. Of course he knew Ryo-chan would use every opportunity he could get to be near to Tegoshi. But Yamapi had his own strategy. He wouldn't attack Tegoshi with all his might, he would approximate him slowly, doing this and that for him, doing him a favour and being so sweet to him, that Ryo would be looking so low-grade compared to him

Yamapi and Ryo-chan were best friends. Till it got to Tegoshi.

Kapitel 2: Chapter 2

After the shooting was over everybody wanted to see the photos. They gathered together around a little monitor and without being noticed both Yamapi and Ryo stood at one side of Tegoshi.

"Pretty good, Pi!" He shouted and pointed at a picture, where Yamapi sat on a Brownie, holding a big Lollipop behind his back and looked like a caught kid. Ryo-chan threw a gaze at proudly grinning Yamapi, who said: "Thanks, but yours are good too, ne?"

"I know." Tegoshi answered and Ryo chuckled.

"Self-conscious as always."

Tegoshi turned around and gave his sweetest smile to both Yamapi and Ryo. "That's why you like me, ne?" He joked, not knowing that he hit a risky point. Ryo-chan narrowed his eyes and Yamapi's face froze immediately. But Tegoshi didn't notice it. He was already with his mind somewhere else, trying to go away.

"Where are you...?"

"Toilet." Was the answer to Pi's unfulfilled question. As soon as Tegoshi left, Yamapi said: "You seemed happy at the shooting being with Tegoshi."

"Jealous?" Ryo-chan grinned.

"A bit." Yamapi admitted.

"You know that our bet didn't include how we win his heart."

"And you know that I will win, no matter what?" Yamapi stared death-seriously into Ryo-chan's eyes, both trying to defeat each other with pure gazes.

"Eh? What's wrong?" Tegoshi just came back and found this scene between the two people he thought were best friends for life. Both jumped away from each other, as Tegoshi asked his question with such an innocence in his voice, both their hearts missed a beat or two.

"Nothing." Ryo-chan answered, smiling a bit too bright.

"Everything's perfectly fine." Yamapi added, a bit too calm. Tegoshi looked from him to Ryo and back, but decided that it was better not to interfere. "Koyama and Shige are going to have lunch in the restaurant nearby, Massu anyway. Will you two come too?" He asked instead, his hands deep inside the pockets of his jeans. He noticed the little gaze Pi and Ryo changed.

"Of course." Both said absolutely synchronic and took Tegoshi in their middle.

Little Tegoshi felt uncomfortable between them. First: Yamapi was taller than him, what wasn't bad, but made Tegoshi feel so tiny. Second was Ryo-chan's face, doing the killer-smile. And last but not least: of course Tegoshi felt the tension between the guys and he really wished to not be there, where both Yamapi's and Ryo's power collided.

Yabai... he thought. If something is gonna happen right now they'll probably kill me in this position...I don't want to die yet...

But poor Tegoshi didn't know, that he was the one and only reason for Yamapi's and Ryo-chan's fight.

~A week ago~

"You know what?" Ryo-chan asked, laying on the floor in Yamapi's living-room, an empty bottle of beer beside him.

"What?" Pi let himself fall over so that he placed his head right next to his best friends one. The two of them were drinking and having fun till the late afternoon, first walking from pub to pub with the NEWS-members, and after that continuing at Pi's apartment.

"I love NEWS!" Ryo-chan shouted and started to giggle.

Pi said, chuckling and stroking his full stomach: "I love Shige."

"And Kei-chan!"

"And Massu."

"And of course Tegoshi!"

"Yes, Tegoshi most of all!"

"I love Tegoshi more than you do!" Ryo-chan teased and grinned at his best friend, who pouted badly. "I love him more!" Yamapi said and fixed Ryo-chan's eyes. "His cute baby-face. His soft hair. His adorable smile, his skinny shoulders, his laughter and how he calls me 'Pi-chan'"

"I call you like that too." Ryo-chan lifted his face. "But I love his round puppy eyes as well. And his sweet blushing cheeks, when he realizes that he did something wrong and wants to cover it up. I love when he tries to be funny and to catch everybody's attention."

"I love how he wants to be a hardrocker and fails so badly with his sweet behaviour. And his superior talking. And I love his angelic voice."

"I love his mother who fans him so much."

"And I love his grandma." Pi wanted to better Ryo.

"So? I love his style."

"I love his underwear."

"I even love his tweety-socks."

"I...I love everything that concerns him."

"I do so too!"

"But you're drunken." Pi said and poked Ryo-chan's cheeks.

"You too..."

"But I, at least, can think clearly."

"I do so too!"

"And why are you always repeating me and saying what you're doing too?"

"I do so too!"

"See? Exactly what I just a second ago mentioned."

"You too."

Yamapi rolled with his eyes, sighed and turned onto his tummy. "You're really pointless when you're drunken, you know." He said and poked Ryo-chan's blushed cheeks, who giggled like girl, over and over. "You really...!" Pi didn't finish his sentenced. Once a long time ago he swore himself to not insult helpless persons. And Ryo-chan was very helpless right now in his opinion. "Your luck you're like this. Otherwise I would believe you that you're in love with Tegoshi."

"I am." Ryo said, suddenly with a clear gaze and without a lame tongue from drunkenness. "I truly am."

Yamapi narrowed his eyes. "You gotta be kidding me."

"If it's for Tegoshi I would never lie." Ryo-chan said sincerely and looked deep into his best friend's eyes. "Not matter how much I drank, I would always know for which person my heart is beating for. I would always know which person is the dearest to me

and who I would protect, even risk my life for."

"Tegoshi." Yamapi said with the feeling that speaking out this name now would lay mountain-heavy stones into his stomach.

"Tegoshi." Ryo-chan affirmed with such a doubtlessness, that Yamapi's heart missed one painful beat. "You too...?" he whispered and glared at his best friend, suddenly fearing him and what his love would bring to him.

"Tegoshi's mine." Ryo-chan answered.

"Why?"

"I am a more suitable lover for him, you know."

"How can you be so sure?" Yamapi asked and didn't even blink once as Ryo nearly ice coldly said: "Cause he'll love me back more than you."

Yamapi stared at him in disbelief. His worst nightmare seemed to built up right in front of him in Ryo's presence. Yamapi's own impersonated hell. He tried hardly to stay cool. "That's your argument?"

"Of course." Ryo-chan nodded seriously. He was damned sure that Tegoshi would someday be his boyfriend, his, all alone.

Yamapi bristled with anger. "That wouldn't help you. In order to be loved back you first need to love with all your heart and soul."

"I do."

"Would you give up everything for Tegoshi?"

"I would."

"Would you leave the city, even the country for him?"

"I would."

"Would you even give up your greatest dreams for him?"

"Damn! I would." Ryo-chan replied, already annoyed by all the questions Yamapi asked.

"Then...would you even stop loving him if it would be necessary for his sake?"

Ryo stopped in his answer and thought for a little while. Then he said: "'No, I wouldn't."

Pi sighed. "See...I would."

"Good for you. So you can just do so, because I will win Tesshi's heart."

"We'll see." was Pi's simple answer.

"Wanna bet?" Ryo's eyes twinkled in confident of victory. Pi hesitated. "Afraid to lose?" Ryo-chan teased, exactly knowing that his best friend couldn't resist stupid things like that.

"Of course I'm not." Pi held out his hand, throwing away all his doubts and fears, and Ryo grabbed it. "Well, so it's settled?" He wanted to know as he shook it. Yamapi nodded. "I won't lose."

"We'll see." Ryo-chan answered, using the same words as his best friend, and now greatest opponent, said just a moment ago.

Kapitel 3: Chapter 3

"Oy, Tesshi!"

"Mh, nani?" Tegoshi turned around, facing Ryo who was heading towards him. "He had his hands dug deep inside his pockets and looked kind of shy as he finally stood in front of Tegoshi.

"I just wanted to ask..." He began and rolled his eyes to a point next to Tegoshi's right ear. He had the feeling that his heart had to beat so loud, that Tegoshi must heard it clearly. "Do...D-Do you want-t t-t-to...eh...Why am I stuttering?" Ryo grumbled and tore his hair out. "Gomen ne." he said glancing wailfully at confused Tegoshi. "I'm kinda nervous right now..."

"No problem. Try to breathe calmly. Cool down...Better?"

Ryo nodded and Tegoshi smiled. "So now, what's the matter?"

"Etoooo..."

"What do I want to?"

"Next week, ne?"

"Oh, where our concert tour starts?"

"Hm. For the hotel rooms...How do I put it? ... Koyama and Shige said we should try combinations, or something like that...And Shige paired up with Massu...And...Argh! So embarrassing~" Ryo turned his head away. He felt much more comfortable not looking into Tegoshi's innocent, sweet face. "And I always share a room with Pi...so this time..."

"What?"

Ryo took a deep breath and dug again his hands into his pockets. "Do you want to pair up with me?"

An awkward silence filled the dressing room, where the two of them were the last ones in. Ryo didn't dare to say a thing or even to look at Tegoshi. Then, after a while that Ryo thought would last forever, Tegoshi chuckled. "Sure. I don't know what's so complicated about that question, but that's no problem at all. Of course I will share a room with you."

"Hontou?" Ryo-chan whirled around, his brightest smile on the lips.

"Mh. You know I hate lies. And why should I lie to you right now?" Tegoshi laid his head to the side. "You're happy now?"

"Super happy!" Ryo answered and bore with the desire to jump up. "So it's settled?" He still couldn't believe it.

"I already said so, didn't I?"

"Yupp." Ryo grinned so much his cheeks hurt. Following a sudden impulse he hugged little Tegoshi. "Oy~" Tegoshi squealed as Ryo touched his ticklish sides. "Gomen, but I'm so happy!" Both laughed as Ryo finally let Tegoshi go. "You're weird. Totally weird today, Ryo-chan!" he said as he patted Ryo's back. "But I think that's what I like about you. Jya...I have to go now, ne~ See you!" And with this words and a last smile over his shoulders Tegoshi went out of the dressing-room. Ryo-chan was left alone with his fast-beating heart... "Yatta~~~!" he screamed and jumped into the air various times. "I did it! I really did it!"

Tegoshi just headed outside of the Jimusho, when suddenly Yamapi stepped out of a hallway.

"Oh, Pi! You surprised me!" Tegoshi said, patting his heart and jumping two steps back.

"Gomen." Yamapi answered with a serious look on his face. He really seemed to have waited for him all the time.

"No, it was just that I didn't expect you." Tegoshi smiled up to Yamapi.

"Isn't that pretty much the same?"

"Maa...I think you're right, ne?" Tegoshi admitted and scratched bashful his head. Yamapi chuckled and laid his back against a wall. "Ne, Tegoshi...I have a question."

"Nani? I am really popular today, ne?" Tegoshi laughed and didn't notice the change in Yamapi's facial expression. "You are?" he asked.

"Yes, Ryo-chan just talked to me." Tegoshi pointed backwards. "I've just left him a moment ago."

"Really? What did he want?"

"Nothing in particular." Tegoshi shrugged. "But what do you want?"

"I? I wanted to ask whether you would like to share a hotel room with me during the concert tour."

"Oh." Tegoshi made and looked sad up to Yamapi. He had the suspicion, that something was wrong between Yamapi and Ryo. Usually they would talk about what they want to do, so it was unexpected for Tegoshi, that they didn't talk about this hotel-room-thing. "I am really sorry." he said and his voice had no doubt in not believing his words. "You know, ne, that was is what Ryo already asked me. And I said

yes to him."

Yamapi's stomach cramped in pain, but he really tried to look like he didn't care that much. Yet his heart ached and he was so mad at Ryo that he clenched his teeth.

"I am sorry, Pi. I didn't know you wanted to ask me too..."

"It's okay." Yamapi replied with a stiffened face. He really wanted to know, for whom Tegoshi would have decided, if he would've known that he wanted to ask as well. "No problem. My bad that I am too late. Daijoubu."

"Gomen ne."

"You don't need to apologize, Tegoshi."

"But I feel so sorry for you." Tesshi's cute eyes were filled with pity and Yamapi felt guilty for making little Tegoshi unhappy. "Don't worry." He said and forced a smile. "There's always a next time." He stroked through Tegoshi's hair, who didn't look satisfied at all. "Hey." Yamapi chuckled and poked Tegoshi's cheeks. "Don't look so sad. Smile!" He pulled the corners of Tegoshi's mouth up and his face ended up in a pouting grimace. "Kawaii~" Yamapi looked into Tesshi's puppy-eyes.

"Are you making fun of my misfortune?"

"No, I would never do that!"

"But you are!" Tegoshi pouted even more. "What am I supposed to do? I can't reject Ryo now, so I have to reject you. That's not fair. I hate it..."

"Geez~ I said you shouldn't worry, deshou? I am okay, see?" Yamapi did his sweetest smile, but this time from the bottom of his heart. "All I want to see is your happy face. Can you do me at least this favour?"

Tegoshi tried to smile, but it ended up in an awkward face.

"Maah, that's not happy at all! Motto!"

"I can't."

"You can!"

"No."

"Argh, Tesshi, don't be so stubborn! You don't wanna make me use harsh methods, deshou? I know your ticklish spots."

Tegoshi looked shocked into Yamapi's face, little panic in his eyes.

"So, are you smiling or are you not?"

Tegoshi made a tiny sigh, but smiled as well as he could.

"Motto-motto~~" Yamapi demanded and adored Tegoshi's concentrated face. It was something between pouting and grinning, but it still looked awkward. "You have to do it properly."

"Damn, I am trying, deshou?! But it's complicated to smile if you don't feel like doing it."

"I know." Yamapi chuckled. "But it's cute watching you."

"See! You're making fun of me again!"

"Are you mad now?"

Tegoshi thought for a moment. "Maybe. I am not sure." He said honestly.

"Well, then think about it." Yamapi replied, poked Tegoshi's little nose and turned around.

"Think about what?" Tegoshi wanted to know as Yamapi wanted to leave.

"What your feeling about me is."

And with this last sentence Yamapi left Tegoshi back in confusion.

Tegoshi was exhausted. With arms and legs spread away he lay on his bed, eyes closed and tried to dim his headache. He'd enjoyed the photo-shooting today, but there were so many emotions in his chest which whirled around in there since Yamapi and Ryo-chan stepped into the dressing-room that morning. Emotions he hold secretly and sacred deep inside his heart, closed away from everything else. But it was so damned hard to suppress them. Every time he saw them, they rose up again and again, and he had to stay quiet with all his might. That being his normal self could be so difficult. Never once he had thought it. But it was impossible for him to confess, too big was his fear that he would ruin everything with his stupid feelings. And why? Why couldn't he say a thing? Why was he doomed to stay silent? Why had to beat his heart so fast it almost hurt every time he saw him? Why was the power of love so painful? Why?

"I hate me because of this" he whispered and turned onto his tummy so he could dig his head into his pillow. He so wished to cry out everything, cry hard out and then maybe even feel better. He so wished...But he couldn't. He simply couldn't. The risk was too big. It would be more than he could endure if it would be his fault wen NEWS, his best friends, would live in awful uncertainty because of him.

I just want to be loved back, he thought. Is this demand already too much?

Kapitel 4: Chapter 4

The tour-bus was already filled with Massu, Koyama and surprisingly Yamapi, when Tegoshi came in in addition. "Ohayou~" he greeted with a smile and threw his bag into the baggage cart. Yamapi moved up to the window, so Tegoshi could sit beside him. With a wide grin he patted on the empty seat. "Kochi, kochi!"

"Arigatou~" Tegoshi said with a smile and plopped down. "Ryo-chan not here?" he asked and looked around the van.

"Shige lost his train ticket and his bike is broken, so Ryo went to pick him up." Koyama explained. "They're joining us in Yokohama."

"And Ryo's car?"

"Probably he's gonna leave it there. Maybe he has some friends there or whatever."

"One of his siblings lives there." Yamapi said with a slight cold voice.

"Really?" Tegoshi lifted his puppy-eyes up to Yamapi. "I didn't know that."

"There are a lot of things you don't know about him." Yamapi mumbled to himself and stared out of his window. Finally he got Tegoshi nearly alone for two or three hours and all what's on the other ones mind is, was Ryo. He felt that bitter punch deep inside his stomach. Beside him, little Tegoshi yawned.

"Didn't you get enough sleep?" Yamapi asked as Tegoshi rubbed his eyes. "You don't look really fit."

Tegoshi shook his head. "I thought too much this night." he admitted and couldn't avoid yawning again.

"About what did you think?"

"This and that." Tegoshi replied evasively and smiled a bit nervously. Yamapi watched him closely and wished to wipe off away the tiredness from Tegoshi's angelic baby-face. He looked so hurt as his sorrowful eyes moved around the van again. "Are you okay?" Yamapi asked and Tegoshi twitched. "Of course." He said with a smile Yamapi didn't trust in. "I am just tired, that's all."

Yamapi didn't believe that was all, but he didn't want to force an answer out of Tegoshi, who really seemed not in the mood to say anything. So he stayed quiet. After a while he felt a little weight again his shoulder and looked down. Tegoshi was sound asleep and his head lay against Yamapi who smiled. He looked like an angel, the eyes closed, the lips slightly opened and breathing calmly like a baby. He could feel Tegoshi's breath against his arms. It felt so warm against his own skin. Tegoshi sighed in sleep and lifted worried his eyebrows.

I wonder what he is dreaming about, Pi thought and brushed some dyed hair out of Tegoshi's forehead, who smacked and then moved further to Yamapi. With two small fingers he clung onto Pi's shirt. Kawaii~

Yamapi marvelled at Tegoshi's adorable face, which reminded him once again of a little puppy. He resisted the desire of hugging Tegoshi. First because of the fear to wake him up, and second were still Koyama and Massu in the van. Tegoshi lying against his shoulders asleep was nothing unusual. Everybody had once lay against the other one or even on his lap (Ryo was a genius at it) but tightening the arms around him would be too obvious.

Would Ryo do it? Yamapi wondered and looked down at Tegoshi's fingers that still grabbed his shirt. Maybe...

They drove along the highway and Tegoshi stayed where he was, sleeping like a baby against Yamapi, who enjoyed the younger one's warmth and near.

Koyama and Massu were looking every now and then, but didn't say a thing. Even they didn't want to disturb Tegoshi's sleep, who still looked completely exhausted with his troubled face.

The hours passed and they arrived in Yokohama. Yamapi felt the stones inside his stomach again. Never once he did not want to be with Ryo. Never once he did not look forward to see his best friend. But right now he just wished Ryo would stay away and leave him and Tegoshi alone. He finally got the chance to be more or less near to the younger one. He knew he didn't start to win Tesshi's heart yet. But he didn't want to rush things. He was pretty sure, that if he took it calmly Tegoshi would get to know him better. Ryo was always so impulsive, and Pi thought that was the point where he could better him. He knew Ryo so well... Too well... And that's why he feared that Ryo would take Tegoshi away from him. Scary if you can exactly follow the mind of your worst enemy.

"Oh, there they are!" Massu shouted suddenly and Tegoshi twitched. "Mmmh?" he made and lifted his head. "Doko?" he asked and rubbed the sleep out of his eyes. "What happened?" He looked completely lost as he scanned the van, before he realized, where he was.

"You fell asleep." Yamapi explained and moved his shoulder, which he didn't do all the time Tegoshi slept in order to not wake him up.

"I did?"

"Yup." Yamapi smiled at Tegoshi's confused face. His hair was all messy and he didn't seem awake at all.

"Why didn't you wake me up?" He wanted to know and stifled a yawn.

"You simply looked too cute. And you said yourself that you didn't get enough sleep tonight, so I thought it would be better to stay quiet."

Tegoshi smiled a warm smile. "Arigatou~" he said and lay his head to the side. Thoughtful he tousled through his hair. Yamapi just wanted to ask, what was on his mind, when Koyama shouted: "Ohayou, Shige!" Tegoshi whirled around and Yamapi did the same. Shige entered the van and right behind him climbed Ryo in. "Ohayou." he said and nodded to everybody. Tegoshi last, on whom his eyes stuck on and narrowed, when he noticed how close he was to Yamapi.

"Ohayou~" everybody greeted back and Koyama attacked Shige for being so lousy with his train ticket.

"You really are forgetful!"

"Look at who's talking!" They started arguing, always spreading the KoyaShige-Love, while Ryo climbed to the empty seat at Tegoshi's other side. "Ohayou, Pi!" he greeted with a wide grin, but icy-cold-eyes. Kimoi~, Tegoshi thought as he felt the atmosphere frozen immediately around him. Kowai. Somebody please help me...

"Ohayou, Ryo-chan. Genki?" Pi replied with the same facial expression his best friend had.

"Un. Gomen ne for being so late."

"Don't worry. It was so kind of you to pick up Shige."

"No, that was nothing. You would've done the same, deshou?"

The all lovey-dovey-super-happy-behaviour of Yamapi and Ryo made Tegoshi feel awful. Without being noticed he shrunk in his seat, making himself as small as he could. He really envied Ryo and Yamapi for being so close and so good friends, but the last week they had scared him. Never once they tried so hard for looking alright with each other.

In the row in front of him Shige and Koyama were laughing and having fun, and Massu ate again, admiring the beautiful landscaped that rushed along the van-windows.

Tegoshi wished to be there, just a step ahead from him. But it was like an invisible wall that kept him between Ryo-chan and Yamapi, and locked him out from the normal, real-happy NEWS-members. Never once he felt so uncomfortable with Ryo and Yamapi.

Well, looks like this trip is gonna be a once-in-a-lifetime-experience...he thought full of sarcasm and sighed inside. If I'm gonna survive this I will publish my memoirs. Haha...

Nagoya, their first concert stop, came nearer and nearer, while poor little Tegoshi tried to cool himself down with making fun of his own, pitiable situation.

"We arrived in Nagoya, Minna-san", Manager-san said to the crowd of around 30 people, including NEWS and various Johnny's Jr. "Tomorrow 8pm we'll start with the rehearsal for the first concert." Little applause. "So rest well and enjoy the afternoon free-time, ne~" This time everybody clapped in joy. Even Manager-san seemed to be happy for having at least a few hours before bedtime. The group split up. The Jr's searched their hotel rooms, staff-san went to celebrate their safe arrival in Nagoya and NEWS was left in the hotel lobby.

"Jyaa~" Koyama looked around his beloved Members. Tegoshi still seemed tired, holding his head, Yamapi and Ryo at his sides, both carrying their luggage casually over their shoulders, Shige with his bag in the right and his camera in the left hand, and Massu who was finally full and seemed quite satisfied with himself and the world.

"Wanna go to a karaoke bar?" With big excitement in his eyes Koyama waited for an answer. Shige raised his hand. "I wanna go!"

"Me too!" Ryo-chan shouted. "Tesshi, you too?"

"Mh." Tegoshi said with a wide smile. He loved karaoke. He couldn't resist, even if he had such a damn headache as today.

"I will go too!" Yamapi said, glaring at Ryo-chan who grinned evil.

"Me too." Massu raised his hand last and Koyama smiled happily. "Then we meet here in 10 minutes?"

"Hai~~" Shige went with Massu to his hotel-room and Pi left reluctantly with Koyama. Ryo-chan stuck out his tongue at him and lay his hand on Tegoshi's small shoulder. "So, here are the keys for our honey-moon-suite." He said as he swang the card for their room in front of Tegoshi's nose.

"Ho-Honey-moon-suite?" he said and blushed. With widely opened eyes he stared at Ryo who burst into laughter. "Just kidding!" he chuckled and patted Tegoshi's back.

Yokatta~, Tegoshi thought and sighed in relief. I really thought for a moment – Ya! Don't think about it Tegoshi! He scaled himself as he shook his head like a cow. Ryo smiled to himself as he saw that scene. "You really are cute, ne~" he said and watched Tegoshi's pouting. "I am not!"

"You so are!" Ryo insisted, poked Tegoshi's still blushed cheeks and then went ahead. "You coming?" he asked over his shoulder, when Tegoshi didn't make a step. He still stood there pouting. "You~" he squealed at Ryo.

"What?"

"You're so mean!" Tegoshi acted like a little kid.

"Because I called you cute?"

"Mmmmmh...."

Ryo laughed. "Come on, you really think that?"

"Mmmmmh..."

"So what do you want me to do as an apologize?"

Tegoshi thought for a moment, tipping his finger on his chin. "You...You can...CARRY ME~" And in the next second he ran forward and hopped on Ryo's back, who shrunk a bit due to the sudden weight. "Phew~" he made and grabbed Tegoshi's legs before he could fall off.

"Don't 'Phew'! I am not that heavy..." Tegoshi said reproachfully. He was right. Ryo never thought that Tegoshi was so actually so light. But he acted like he would weight a lot of tons though. "Make sure you don't fall of, ne~" So he piggy-backed him all the stairs to the elevators and through the long hallways to their hotel-room, even to their bed, though it was quite complicated to open the door with Tegoshi on his back and his luggage in his hand.

"Hai~ Here we are, jump off." He said as he stood in front of their bed.

"Don't want to~" Tegoshi said all jolly and tightened his arms around Ryo.

"Wait, can't breathe!"

Ryo heard Tegoshi's chuckle at his ear and had to smile himself. "If you don't get off I'm gonna let you fall!" He threatened.

"Mmh..." Tegoshi acted like he would think hardy about it again.

"It's just..."

"What?"

"...that you're quite comfortable."

"I would not mind carrying you for the rest of my life, it's just that the others will probably look weird if I'll appear with you on my back."

"Good argument." Tegoshi said and took his arms off. With a slight movement Ryo knelt down and placed him on the bed. "Arigatou~" Tegoshi said bright-smiling at Ryo.

"It was my pleasure." He replied, bowing down like a butler for the queen, and looked

at the bed. Actually it was two single-beds that were moved together as one. "You really don't have a problem with that?" Ryo asked with lifted eyebrows. He was worried that Tegoshi might step back after all.

"No, not at all. It's not like you would rape me or something like that, deshou?" This time Ryo was the one blushing and quickly turned around as he saw Tegoshi's innocent looking puppy-eyes. "Haha. As if I would do something like that. Hehehehe..." Oh shit, he said to himself. Yabai yo~ This was dead on...

"See, then everything's all right."

"Mh. Well, I'm changing. I wore that shirt the whole day." Ryo tried to change the topic. "Blue, white or yellow?" he asked Tegoshi and held up three shirts.

"Blue. Though you are the 'yellow Ranger', ne~ But blue suits you better. Reminds me of summer."

"Summer?" Ryo doff out his black shirt. Tegoshi looked at his naked upper part of the body. He could perfectly see every muscle of his recently trained six-pack.

"Right, summer. Well, let's the. The summer is blue, deshou?" Tegoshi could have slapped himself for his stupid answer and Ryo must've seen that on his face, because he laughed. "Blue sky? Interesting...no...funny." Then he dressed on his fresh, tight shirt. "Jya, do I look like summer now?"

Tegoshi didn't reply and just pouted.

"Mata?" Ryo bristled, but smiled though. Without a word he stepped back to Tegoshi and kneeled down again. "Hora! Jump up!" he said and waited. Tegoshi stared at his back a moment and then smiled in happiness.

"You really should think about a diet..." Ryo teased as they headed downstairs.

"Mmmmh. I think I will eat a lot of desserts today at the karaoke bar. "Tegoshi thought loudly. "Maybe chocolate-cake?"

Ryo just chuckled and didn't say a thing anymore. Further he simply enjoyed feeling Tegoshi's warm breath at his ear and his hands searching hold at his chest. They were exactly were his heart beat so fast it almost wanted to jump out.

Kapitel 5: Chapter 5

Koyama already waited in the lobby, Shige and Massu by his side.

"Where's Pi-chan?" Tegoshi asked over Ryo's shoulder.

"Changing his clothes." Koyama answered with a smile and checked the time on his cell phone.

"You two really have the same habits!" Tegoshi said to Ryo, who denied saying something about that.

"And why the heck are you torturing Ryo?" Shige wanted to know, looking at him, because he still sat on Ryo's back.

"You all talk today like I am fat~" Tegoshi claimed and all four of his members laughed. He even pouted more.

"It's my punishment for being mean to him." Ryo explained to them with a wide grin. He didn't see it as a punishment at all, but he didn't see a reason to tell them that either. You really could spot the light bulb above Shige's head as he answered: "Oy, that means you have to piggy-back at least one of us the whole time!"

"As if I would carry you, baka! Tesshi is heavy enough."

"Hey, holy crap! I am not heavy!"

"Did you ever piggy-backed yourself?" Ryo asked with a chuckle, waggishness twinkling in his eyes, and hopped up and down on his feet so that little Tegoshi got shook.

"Uwaah~ please stop." He pleaded after a while. "I'm getting sea-sick..."

"Sea-sick?" Shige laughed and the rest joined in. Right in this moment Yamapi came into the lobby and found that scene. Of course all he really saw were Tegoshi and Ryo. He stiffened as Tegoshi's cheek touched his best friend's one.

"Oy, Pi! Finally there!" Koyama shouted and waved his hand. Of course everybody else in the lobby turned around. "Congrats, Kei-chan." Shige scolded Koyama. "Now everybody who did not notice us, knows, that we are here. Or at least Yamashita-kun for sure."

"Gomen..."

"Don't be mad, Shige." Tegoshi said from Ryo's back. "Kei-chan didn't mean it, deshou?"

"Tesshi is right." Yamapi stepped into the round. "Johnny-san probably organized everything so that no fan girls would be here. And if, would they already have attacked us. Our meeting earlier wasn't not obvious with this entire people and our Jrs." Nobody said something about that fact. So Yamapi sighed, placed his hands deep inside his jeans-pockets and smiled into the round. "I thought we were gonna go to karaoke?"

Mumbling NEWS headed outside. Ryo wanted to walk somewhere, where his best friend would not be, but Tegoshi leaned himself to the side where Yamapi walked and Ryo had to follow in order to not lose his own balance. Tegoshi smiled happily as Ryo followed where he led him to, and whispered to Yamapi: "Thanks."

"About what?"

"That you agreed." Said Tegoshi with a warm smile.

"Oh, that. Isn't it a matter of course? I mean, did you think I would not agree with you?"

"I don't know."

Of course Ryo heard, still piggy-backing Tegoshi, their conversation, and he had quite a hard time to control himself in not clenching his hands, because he would hurt Tegoshi's legs this way. He noticed the gazes Yamapi threw at Tegoshi. And it made his heart feel so full of rafe.

"Ne, Tesshi..." Yamapi began after a pause.

"Mh?"

"Didn't I told you something?"

"Did you?"

"About your 'I don't know'?"

Tegoshi laid his head innocently to the side and again his cheek touched Ryo's one. "I don't really remember"

"Well, then forget about it."

"But..." Tegoshi's face suddenly looked sad, and Ryo heard the big regret in his angelic voice. "But I feel like I have to remember. I'm sorry..."

"Don't be. It's okay." Pi smiled gently. "It's not like I'm mad or something like that, you know."

"But-"

"No 'but'. I said it's okay, deshou?"

Tegoshi remained silent. He looked up at Yamapi with a little sigh. He hated himself for lying so bad at him. Actually he remembered exactly what Yamapi did tell him that time. But he thought it was better to let him not know the truth. He really thought that. He sighed again and Ryo wanted to grab his best friend and shake him as he heard that sound. Who was he to make Tegoshi sad? He so wanted to reprimand Pi. But he bit his tongue. If he would say something right now, Tegoshi would probably get to know about their bet. Or at least about the feud between them. Ant that was something Ryo wanted to prevent no matter what. Unconsciously Tegoshi laid his head against Ryo's one and sighed again. Ryo felt so awful as he heard that the third time and he wanted to hug little Tegoshi tightly. It sounded so heartbreakingly sad.

"What's wrong?" he whispered and Tegoshi just shook his head a bit. His hair tickled Ryo's ear. So they kept going without a word and Ryo was damn angry with Yamapi for bringing down their mood.

After a walk of ten minutes Tegoshi asked: "Ryo-chan, I am not too heavy, am I?"

"What am I supposed to answer? When I say 'yes' you're probably pouting again and will demand that I shall carry you for the rest of the day. And when I say 'no' it would be the same, because you would've no reason for letting go of me, deshou?"

"I just wondered..." Tegoshi mumbled and dug his face in the little gap between his arm and Ryo's neck. His head ached like hell again.

"Daijoubu. You're not too heavy. You're not in the right mood, aren't you?" Ryo said with a little worry in his voice. Tegoshi shook his head again. "I'm tired and I don't feel so well..."

"Why didn't you stay in the hotel then?"

"I love karaoke...And I would've been alone..."

"I would've have stayed with you."

"Mmh...Now it's too late."

"Well, we're there in a minute anyway." Ryo tried to cheer his little friend up at least a little. He was right. Soon after that Koyama jumped up, turned around to his members and shouted: "We found it~~ Shige, I take everything back about you and not being able to read maps properly!" Wide grinning he clung to his beloved Shige-chan and entered the karaoke bar first.

"Konnichi wa~" he greeted the waitress and the rest of NEWS followed him. She got huge eyes and blushed as the six good looking guys stood in front of her and ordered a room. Especially when she saw Ryo piggy-backing Tegoshi. Quickly she ran and looked for a free karaoke room.

"Maybe she knows us." Ryo suspected according to her reaction.

"Probably." Massu said and studied the menu at the bar table. A few seconds later they heard a squeal, giggles and the young waitress came back with another girl. "We do have a free room." The waitress said with a cute voice. She twinkled so often Massu wondered whether she had a problem with her eyes. "Would you please follow my partner?" She pointed at the other girl, who bowed with a smile, turned around and went ahead. She led them to a big green door and opened it. "Here you go. Please feel free to order if you have any wishes." Then she went out and closed the door behind herself. Again they heard a loud squeal and a small voice whispered excited: "Oh my gosh! I really met them!"

Yamapi turned around to Ryo: "They know us."

Ryo-chan grinned and both forgot for a moment about their bet. But then Tegoshi moved and tried to get off from Ryo's back. "Ryo-chan~~" he clamored and pulled at his legs.

"Oh, sorry, I totally forgot." Ryo knelt down. "Jump off." Tegoshi hopped off and stretched his legs and then his arms. "We can see your underwear." Shige said, when Tegoshi lifted his hands up as far as he could. Yamapi and Ryo risked a naughty gaze and Koyama chuckled. "Woah, Tesshi, it's pink!"

"Pretty, deshou?" With a wide smile and shining eyes Tegoshi held up his shirt to look at his tummy and underwear himself. "My mum gave it to me for my 20th birthday. I even have the matching socks, see?" He pulled at his jeans, so that they could see the pink-socked feet in the white sneakers.

"Sugoi~" Massu said in a lame tone.

"Hey, at least try to sound interested!" Tegoshi laughed and put his hands into his waist.

"Don't get upset." Pi said and stroked through Tegoshi's hair as he passed him. He went to the big TV-Screen at the wall and pushed the power-button. With a little -click the monitor started to flicker and Yamapi turned around. "Who wants to sing first?"

Kapitel 6: Chapter 6

"I'm dead." Ryo panted with exhaustion and stretched his legs and arms on the bed. He drank too much again. Of course he did. Everything in his mind was a rotating, blurred cocktail with a pretty sweet red cherry on top. And of course this cherry was Tegoshi. Without him Ryo would've probably slept on the floor at the lobby. Due to his help Ryo even found their hotel room.

It has been stupid of Ryo to compete against Yamapi in the undeclared drinking contest. It has been sure from the beginning that he would end up losing. Yet he couldn't resist when his best friend ordered every time a drink more than him again and again. When Yamapi could still stand straight and sing a super-sweet love-song-duet with cute Tegoshi Ryo already laid on the sofa babbling shit and embarrassing stuff. Kei-chan cared for him not falling down or throwing up, but Shige was pretty drunken as well and Massu nearly killed himself with three big pineapple desserts and a coconut. So Yamapi ended up carrying Massu, Koyama lugged Shige and Tegoshi more or less led Ryo the way and saved him from bumping into houses, walls, cars, young ladies, trees and everything else he mistook for big fluffy sheeps.

Now, there he was, laying on the bed like a big fat dead bear. Tegoshi stood next to him, wondering where he should sleep. "Ne, Ryo...Move on. I don't have any space at all."

"You can snuggle on me~"

Tegoshi stiffened as Ryo grinned his killer-smile. "Come on, hun. Daddy Ryo will keep you warm."

"You're scaring me..."

"Where is my little sheep? Tessheep, where are you?"

Tegoshi escaped with a little squeal Ryo's arms grabbing after him. "Ryo, stop it!" He screamed as he jumped over their luggage and got out of the way of some pillows. "Don't throw stuff after me! I'm warning you!" Ryo grinned even wider, chuckling naughty as Tegoshi stood helpless in a corner of their hotel-room.

"Oy, Ryo~ Don't dare-WUAAH!" With a quick move Ryo grabbed Tegoshi's waist and hugged him tightly. "Let go of me!" Tegoshi claimed and tried to lose Ryo's grip. And then suddenly Ryo laid completely worn out in his arms, smacking like a little baby. "You're smelling good..." he mumbled and dug his innocent smiling face into Tegoshi's sweater.

"R-Ryo-chan?"

No answer.

Tegoshi sighed. With some effort he put Ryo back to the bed, covered him up, changed his own clothes and slipped under the blanket. Ryo laid around one step away, so Tegoshi calmed down and closed his eyes. He was nearly asleep as he felt a finger gently grabbing his own one. He turned his head and found Ryo so near to him he could even count his lashes.

Yabai~ Tegoshi thought and tried to move away just to find him next to the end of the bed. But Ryo tightened the grip of his finger and Tegoshi laid still in order to not wake him up.

Oh shit...What have I gottn myself into?!

The next morning Tegoshi woke up even before his alarm-clock rang. It was the first morning since a week he woke up without a headache and felt entirely rested and vivid. The sun shone through the half closed curtains and tickled his noses. He smiled. Perfect day for a perfect concert. He wanted to stand up, but fell back into the pillows with a little –puff-

Eh...Nani? He thought and then noticed the arm around his chest. He followed this arm, that ended in Ryo. *Yabai! Why is he so close?*

Extremely careful he tried to turn himself out of Ryo's hug without waking him up, but after five minutes of wiggling and wobbling he had to give up with an exhausted sigh. *Impossible...he thought. It's like trying to move a cow...I've never once moved a cow...*

He let out a whiny hum. *I guess I'll have to lay here till he wakes up, ne~...but...I need to pee...*He made a grimace. That was the bad side of too much juice in the evening. He really has to go to the toilet the first thing in the morning. But then he suddenly got a gorgeous idea. Carefully he reached out his hand firs his cell-phone. Quickly and throwing a glimpse at Ryo every now and then he rearranged the time for his alarm-clock. "Just a minute" he whispered to himself and laid his head back into his white fluffy pillow. Impatient he started the countdown.

Just before his cell-phone started to ring Ryo said: "That's a horrible method of getting rid of me."

With a high scream Tegoshi jumped out of the bed. "Kyaaa~" He hold his heart in shock and stared at Ryo, who tousled yawning through his hair. "S-Since when are you awake? I though you would sleep!" Tegoshi claimed reproachfully after his breath found back to normal again.

"How am I supposed to sleep when you are rattling at me non-stop?" Ryo asked back.

"You could have said anything then!"

"Why? You didn't even try to wake me, so I didn't see a reason to tell you I'm not asleep at all."

"That's mean! Did you know how difficult it was?"

"What and why?"

"I really need to..." Tegoshi suddenly stopped. "Maah, anyway." He really didn't need to tell Ryo that he nearly peed himself.

"You really need to what?" Ryo asked his killer-smile on the lips.

"Not important." Tegoshi answered evasively and didn't dare to look at Ryo, who was darn curious. "I think it's important."

"You're gonna laugh when I tell it, so anyway. Forget about it." Tegoshi pouted. He didn't know himself why he didn't want to tell it. Somehow he felt embarrassed though he usually didn't care about blabbing stuff like that out. Without one more word he turned around, grabbed fresh clothes out of his bag and went into the bathroom.

Ryo stared after him in wonder. Then he sighed and scratched his hear. "What's wrong with him?" he asked himself and climbed out of the bed. "I did nothing wrong, deshou?" He heard the shower and threw an angry gaze at the bathroom door. He tried to imagine a reason why Tegoshi acted so weird, but simply couldn't. *Yabai!* He screamed in mind and stopped in the move of doing their bed. *Did I say something odd yesterday?! Damn, I can't remember!* He started to walk up and down the small space between window and bed, whispering: "Remember Ryo! Remember! I sang, I drank, I drank more, I bullied Shige, I drank, I quarrelled with Pi...And then? I somehow managed to get back...but...Arrgh! It's all away!"

The sound of a door clicking made him jump. Tegoshi came back, fully dressed and a towel around his neck, rubbing his still wet hair. He said nothing as he looked at Ryo who stood there and gazed at him in uncertainty. "Ne, Tesshi...Did I do something terrible last night?" Ryo asked worrying, with eyes like a ditched dog.

"Depends on what you see as terrible." Tegoshi answered with a little smirk, as Ryo's face changed into alarming.

"What exactly did I do?"

"Well" Tegoshi sat down on a sofa next to the closet. "You drank a lot, made Shige cry, teased Yamapi, sang some songs I just know as songs sung at funerals, then you talked a lot about how you would win the heart of somebody you love – by the way who is she?"

Ryo shrugged his shoulders, looking as ignorant as he could. Tegoshi continued: "Then, as we were about to leave, you screamed as if you would be killed and ran into the women's toilet, so I had a hard time to bring you back safe. And then you blabbed

a lot about sheeps and you nearly knocked me out with pillows and I thought you were going to rape me with you wide scaring grin...but no, you didn't do anything bad." The irony in Tegoshi's voice was unistakable.

Ryo bit his lip. "So bad?"

Tegoshi nodded, still smirking.

"I'm sorry...I didn't mean it."

"You were crocked like hell, that's all."

Tegoshi finally smiled gently and Ryo didn't know where to look.

"Well, can't help it now, ne~"

Ryo felt bitterness in his stomach as Tegoshi said that. He accused himself. He didn't know for what, but he did so. "Tesshi, did my behaviour last night changed your opinion of me?" he asked quietly and stared at his hands in his lap.

Tegoshi looked at him and suddenly felt pity for Ryo, who seemed quite down. He never once before has seen him like that and somehow it made him feel bad, too. For him Ryo was a person who was cheeky, a bit crazy, kind, shy, direct, more or less mean, but warm-hearted. But not a person who was sad. Maybe sometimes a bit melodramatically and effusive.

"Don't make such a face." Tegoshi poked Ryo's cheek. "It doesn't suit you." He said truthfully and smiled as kind as he could with his head laid to the side.

Ryo just sighed, yet Tegoshi's concern made him feel better a bit. It felt good to have him near. They sat a moment in silent, both following their own thoughts, when Tegoshi stood up, shaking his nearly dry hear like a little dog and threw his towel onto the bed. With a last check in the mirror he perfected his hairstyle and turned around to Ryo. "You better get ready soon." He said. "Our rehearsal starts in half an hour."

"Where are you going?"

"I? I will go and visit the others. Kei-chan is probably already awake. So you can use the time to dress up in privacy."

Ryo nodded but then something came into his mind. "But Pi-!"

"What's with him?" Tegoshi asked with the most innocent look on his face.

"Well, you know...He is a late riser..." Ryo knew it was a lame reason to keep Tegoshi away from Yamapi. But he couldn't think of a better method either.

"I know. But I think Pi-chan can't resist my smile, though I might wake him up. It's the same with you, deshou?"

"I'm not sure..." Ryo said.

"You're his best friend." Tegoshi simply replied.

"Mmmh..." Ryo made and watched Tegoshi leaving the room with a wide smile. And somehow he got the feeling that he had lost him a bit.

Kapitel 7: Chapter 7

"Knock-Knock." Tegoshi shouted and opened the door of the hotel-room Koyama and Yamapi shared. It looked pretty much the same as his and Ryo's one. Big room, light-colored walls, a gigantic window, on the right side of it a closet, next to it a chair and the door that led to the bathroom. On the left side the two beds were moved together as one and in the corner next to Tegoshi was a couch and two armchairs. It was quite similar, except that here on the floor laid a lot of clothes.

Koyama sat on the couch, flipping a magazine. He looked up as Tegoshi entered the room with his shiny I-am-the-cutest-boy-in-the-world-smile. "Ohayou Tesshi!" he said friendly smiling as always and asked: "Why are you here so early in the morning?"

"I just wanted to see you two." Tegoshi answered innocently and looked around the hotel-room. "Where's Pi-chan?"

"Still asleep." With a tiny sigh Koyama pointed at the little hill of blankets and pillows on the bed which moved slightly up and down due to breathing. Tegoshi chuckled. "Ryo already warned me that he is a late-riser."

"Yeah, I already tried to wake him up 2 or...3-4 times? Impossible! This guy is really hardcore! It's like talking to a stone."

"Really?" Tegoshi lifted his eyebrows in surprise.

"Mh. I've tried everything. I whacked him, I splattered water on him, I tried to pull away the blankets, and all he did was moaning, grumbling and slapping! We have to meet in twenty minutes and all he does is laying there like such an innocent angel, but if you get near to him he'll kill you without opening an eye. Nonono. I prefer staying away even if this means to let him oversleep." Koyama said and looked at his watch. "Well...it wouldn't be a surprise if he's late again, ne~"

"But it would be unfair if we let him sleep..."

"I know, but look! He's completely knocked out!"

Tegoshi stepped further to the bed. Yamapi laid under a thick layer of blankets and just his hair and nose poked out.

"You can try to wake him up, Tesshi, but don't have high hopes and don't claim afterwards I didn't tell you the risks." Koyama stood up. "I will go and search Shige. I somehow missed him this night, ne~ And I don't want to be here if he might wake up. Ryo-chan once told me that Pi can be really sadistic in the morning." With a cheering Koyama-typical smile he left the room, thumbs up, and Tegoshi looked at the bed in front of him. Silently he knelt down so his eyes were on line with were Yamapi's face was hidden under one of the tons of blankets. He listened to the steady, calm and regular breath. It was a wonderful, pleasant sound. He could've listened to it forever.

But just in this moment Yamapi moved and his head came out of the blankets. He smacked and placed his face on a pillow near the edge of the bed. He still was sound asleep, dreaming like a baby. He looked so peaceful Tegoshi wanted to marvel at his face for hours.

But he knew they were running out of time. So he moved closer, leaned forward and placed his lips at Yamapi's ears. "Pi-chan~ Wake up~" he whispered, using as much breath as he could and enjoyed the following reaction. Like bitten from a snake Yamapi woke with a start and held his ear. Tegoshi had to hide his mouth in order to not burst out into laughter.

"Wuah, Shit! That's the worst!" Yamapi mumbled, rubbing his ear as if the creepy feeling would disappear that way. Right that moment he noticed somebody sitting next to him and twitched back in shock. Just then he realized it was Tegoshi. "Man, you've surprised me!" he said, the fright still deep insight his bones. Tegoshi put on his most innocent look and grinned. "Got you~~" he smiled and ducked before Yamapi could slap a pillow into his face.

"Omae!" Yamapi yelled, trying to sound angry.

"You can't be mad at me." Tegoshi still had his dorky smile from one ear to the other. And he was darn right. Yamapi wasn't the one who got angry at other people easily anyway, but as he saw little Tegoshi in front of him, he nearly melted. He couldn't stop himself from cupping Tegoshi's face between his hands. It seemed so teeny-tiny next to his own, big fingers. Gently he stroke Tegoshi's slightly chubby cheeks.

"Pi-chan..."

"Sssht...Just a second."

Tegoshi didn't move, blushing around his nose. His heartbeat was so fast he feared it would suddenly stop due to strain. With widely opened eyes he stared into Yamapi's serious face. He nearly lost in his deep, dark eyes.

But then Yamapi already let him go and Tegoshi slumped down with a little sigh. He forgot to breath and now he knew why his heart beat so fast. He was so confused he began to stutter: "P-P-P-Pi....E-E-E-Eh?" He didn't even have the power to bring out a 'nande'.

Yamapi chuckled and didn't seem to be embarrassed at all. He looked extremely calm and cool as ever.

"I just wanted to show you something since you seem not willing to tell me something about the task I wanted you to think about." He said seriously and fixed Tegoshi's puppy-eyes, who couldn't help himself from getting goose-bumps. But not the scary ones. It was comfortable, rising up somewhere in his fingertips going over his back to the toes. He felt the warm blood flushing into his cheeks again.

It was that very moment when Tegoshi finally decided to tell what he feels, when

Koyama, Shige, Massu and Ryo bumped into the hotel-room. Like hardened criminals the two of them twitched and drove away from each other.

"Oy, you woke him up!" Koyama yelled full of joy. "Great Job, Tesshi!"

Yamapi looked completely cool and normal at the others, but Tegoshi's eyes darted to Ryo like a kid which has been caught at eating forbidden cookies. He didn't know himself why he had that guilty savor in his stomach as he saw Ryo's grimly expression.

"Hora, Pi! Get out of the bed!" Shige said and pulled the blankets away. "Hey~~" Yamapi claimed. He just laid there in his boxer's.

"What?" Koyama asked. "Shige's right. We have to meet up in twelve minutes! We don't want to be late again because of you."

Grumbling like a gnome Yamapi parted himself out of the blankets. It was not the fact that their meeting was so soon, but his feeling that Tegoshi had wanted to tell him something important, which made him feel a bit angry at the rest of his members...

Kapitel 8: Chapter 8

Chapter 8

Tegoshi was confused. Something was wrong here. Really wrong. It's been two hours since the rehearsal has started and there was an odd atmosphere every time Ryo or Yamapi, or in the worst case scenario both, were near to him. Usually NEWS' rehearsals were fun and exhausting. But today it was just exhausting for him. Most of the time two or three of them were sitting together on the stage or walking around the platforms, laughing and chatting together while the rest studied their parts and dance steps to perfectionism. This time was different. Of course KoyaShige stuck together like a couple of grandparents and Massu accompanied him wherever he went to, but whenever it was time for a song or dance with whole NEWS or moments to pair up with either Yamapi or Ryo, Tegoshi got goose bumps. And he didn't know why. That was what confused him so much. Usually NEWS was the part of his life he felt nearly the most comfortable with (except his family and soccer). But now he felt like that had somehow changed. Somehow he got the thought that Yamapi and Ryo were fighting over something that conquered him. It was a stupid thought, he knew that. He would never be so important to be the reason for a fight between such good friends like RyoPi. But of course he saw every now and then how they narrowed their eyes whenever the other one was near to him. He worried about what he could have done to raise up such a hassle between them.

He sighed. Maybe it's just my imagination...he tried to cheer himself up, yet this hope was nothing he relied on. But he tried to throw these thoughts away and concentrated at the concert plan in his hands. Cross-legged sitting at the stage, Massu next to him while KoyaShige was doing their 'Chirarizumu', he followed the listed songs with his eyes and started to count the ones he had to sing with Ryo or Yamapi.

"Weeeek, Bambina, Best Friend, Fiesta, Cherish, Teppen..." he mumbled to himself and sighed again. "Why am I even counting? This is a NEWS-Concert. Of course I will sing most of the time with everybody..." He let out a whiny hum as he realized he never felt so down before a concert. I love my members...And now...Why is my heart so afraid? "Well, at least there are some Tegomass-Songs as well..." With a little pout he placed his chin between his hands and watched Ryo starting with his solo 'ordinary'

They didn't changed into their concert outfits yet, since it was the first rehearsal. The second one would begin after lunch and everything would have to be like the real concert. So Ryo stood in the middle of the main-platform in just casual worn-out jeans and a hoody, his favourite cap the other way round on top of his head. They were still allowed to make a few mistakes and just on cue Ryo messed up and Koyama laughed loudly into his microphone. From far away spots around the concert hall chuckles and bristles echoed bit by bit, first Shige, then Yamapi, Tegoshi and Massu.

"Oy, don't make fun of me!" Ryo yelled and pointed across the stage at Koyama, who still giggled.

"Sorry, Ryo-chan. It's just that you always make the mistake there."

Ryo pouted, something unusual, instead of snapping back.

"Eh?!" Massu shouted shocked into his microphone as a reply and asked with big round eyes: "No teasing?!"

"Got a problem with it?"

"Somehow..."

Tegoshi chuckled again and Ryo turned around to him, a little smile on his lips, and Tegoshi couldn't help but smiling back. Then Ryo started over with 'ordinary'. After his solo whole NEWS gathered up on stage for 'Koi Yake'. Tegoshi wondered every time how this song was able to rise up his mood so suddenly and with such a high effect. Out of the blue he jumped and did his best and it felt good to be so full of energy. He loved this song, it was somehow touching him to the deepest bottom of the heart. Singing was something which stopped him from worrying about his problems and made him utterly happy. Maybe that was why he loved NEWS so much. "Here it comes~~"

Till the end of the rehearsal he didn't lose his high mood and was totally satisfied. He even forgot about Ryo and Yamapi and clung to both of them every now and then. "I am SO looking forward to the concert!" he shouted as everyone went to the dressing room and impetuously he hugged Koyama from the back. "I'm glad to sing with you on stage again~"

"I think everyone is, ne~" Shige said and pulled Tegoshi off from his Koyama, who smiled happily. "Member Ai~~" He raved about this scene. "Minna DAISUKI!" Massu, Ryo, Yamapi and Shige blushed, but Tegoshi threw his arms up in the air and yelled: "I love you too!"

"Do you love me too?" Ryo asked and Tegoshi nodded. "Mh, of course!"

"Me too?" Pi wanted to now, a slight too-serious look on his face. Tegoshi nodded again. "Mh. And I love Shige too. And my Massu. Chuchuu~" He rubbed Massu's chubby cheeks and both laughed.

Yamapi and Ryo sighed synchronically, glanced at each other and cleared their throats. Then they looked at Tegoshi, who went ahead of them, surrounded by Koyama, Shige and Massu.

"He's happy." Pi said and Ryo nodded. "Ah, he is. Feels good, ne~"

"Mh."

They stayed silent for a while as they followed the rest.

"Ne, Pi. We're friends after all, aren't we?"

"Of course."

"Though we love the same person?"

"Yes."

"Though one of us might lose?"

"We'll stay friends. Though one of us will lose."

"That's good, Pi. That's good."

They looked at each other and smiled, and both felt relieved.

Though there was the bet between them, they didn't want to risk their friendship. They had worried that they might lose each other, the same as they worried to lose Tegoshi to the other one. But now that they knew that they felt the same even about their friendship their battle rose up to completely different conditions. Friends are fighting fair.

"Ryo-chan?"

"Mh?"

"Promise me?"

"Yeah, I promise. We'll stay friends."

"Thanks...Now I feel better."

"Same as me, Pi. Exactly the same."

~+~

Chapter 8 deshita~~

Kapitel 9: Chapter 9

Chapter 9

Their first concert was a huge success. The fans went crazy over them, Ryo messed up his solo, but after a cute smile and a "Wuah, gomen ne~" the audience let out a big "Kyaaa~" and Ryo made a highlight for their DVD. Koyama danced the wrong moves and everybody scolded him during the MC, even Yamapi teased him. Shige created a huge fan-scream when he did his infamous famous "Kuchizuke wo~" and Massu complained during the MC that he was starving so that Ryo felt his duty to cut him off immediately. Tegoshi ran from one member to another, smiling like a dork and sang with his angelic voice his heart out. And Yamapi was as handsome as ever and heated up the crowd as he sang 'Daite Senorita' and 'Seishun Amigo'.

Everybody had this utterly high, overwhelming feeling. We are NEWS.

During the encore everybody did things as he wanted, which ended up with half-naked KoyaPi, wet Shige, Ryo piggy-backing Tegoshi again, everybody singing the song-parts as he wished and Massu wearing all the shirts and clothes Koyama and Yamapi dressed off. The stage was a huge mess and Shige bumped more than once into a Jr. and Tegoshi and Ryo whacked him for not paying attention to his Kouhai's everytime they passed him.

After the encore was over everyone held each other's hand. Tegoshi held Massu's. Massu held Ryo's. Ryo held Yamapi's. Yamapi held Koyama's. And Koyama held Shige's. And as the platform they stood on slowly went down they smiled at each other.

Of course they celebrated together till late night. But this time most of all Yamapi and Ryo stayed away from too much alcohol, and especially Tegoshi was grateful for that. Another night with drunken Ryo and he would've declared his own withdrawal from NEWS.

So everything went perfectly smooth and everybody ended up in their bed, exhausted, but happy.

"Ne, Tesshi?" Ryo suddenly spoke as he and covered himself up-

"Mmmh." Tegoshi was nearly asleep and turned around to Ryo's face with half-opened, heavy eyes. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing. It's just that...Well, how do I put it?" Ryo felt his cheeks blushing.

"Spit it out..." Tegoshi sighed exhausted. It was damned hard for him to keep his eyes open. He yawned and didn't even have the power to hide it.

"You're tired, ne...I don't wanna stop you from sleeping..." Ryo mumbled, totally left from courage as he heard Tegoshi's tiny hum. "Was it important?"

"Maybe I'll tell you tomorrow."

Tegoshi nodded, though he didn't know whether Ryo could see it through the darkness. So he closed his eyes in relief, thankful that Ryo was so kind to let him sleep. Probably he would've forgotten what he wanted to tell him till tomorrow if he would've had done so now. Tegoshi dug himself further into his pillow and blanket and breathed out in satisfaction.

And then he felt it again. The little grip of somebody touching his fingers gently. Tegoshi was sure Ryo was still awake, but his tongue was too lame to ask what this was about. And it wasn't uncomfortable, yet it felt a bit weird to let Ryo hold his fingers. If I would be fully awake right now, Tegoshi thought, I would definitely be confused again...

But he wasn't fully awake anymore, so he let it be, let Ryo grab his fingers slightly and fell asleep.

"Oy, sleepy baby~"

"Let me sleep..."

"I don't even think about that."

"Mpfh..."

"Tesshi~ Come on, wake up!"

"Don't wanna...Let go of my blanket."

Ryo chuckled. Tegoshi dug his head further into his big fluffy pillow, hoping Ryo would be silent. "Too early..." he claimed and tried to pull his blanket out of Ryo's hand, because his shoulders froze. "That's unfair~ I'm still so tired, Ryo-chan..."

"You slept the whole night like a bear. I don't believe you can still sleep. How old are you? 72?"

Tegoshi mumbled something not understandable as a reply and Ryo knelt down in front of his side of the bed. "Ne, Tesshi, if you don't wake up soon Massu will eat everything of your portion for breakfast as well. I don't mind leaving out a meal, but I would worry about you not eating properly. You already are so skinny."

"Are you complaining about my weight again?" Tegoshi asked as he turned himself to the side so he could face Ryo.

"I'm just saying that I'm worrying about you..." Ryo said honestly. "So would you please stand up now to get ready?" He put on his sweetest smile and laid his head to the side. "Please?"

Tegoshi didn't believe his ears. Was Ryo begging him? Ryo? The Ryo?

With a quick move he lifted his head, something for which Ryo seemed to have waited for. So fast Tegoshi didn't even realized it Ryo put his arms around Tegoshi's little shoulders and squeezed him against his chest.

"What are you doing?!" Tegoshi squealed in surprise and in the next moment he wriggled in Ryo's gentle but tight hug in laughter, when Ryo started to tickle his sides. "Wuaah~ Stop it!" he pleaded giggling and tried to wrest himself out of the embrace.

"First say 'Please, Ryo-tan!'"

"P-Please, Please Ryo-t-t-tan!" Tegoshi spluttered out and squealed again. Ryo smiled. It was still the sound of a happy child he heard in Tegoshi's high-pitched voice. Not the laugh he always showed off on TV, but a laugh which was utterly charming and so innocent, so deeply innocent. And it made Ryo's heart beat so fast. "What are you gonna give me if I stop?" he asked and enjoyed Tegoshi digging his head into his chest as he tried to escape. "I-I- don't know. What d-d-do you- do you want?"

Ryo didn't even need to think about that. "Kiss."

"E-e-e-e-eeeeeeeeeeeh?!"

„Kiss.“ Ryo said again with so much confidence he never thought to have himself. Tegoshi in his arms began to have a tummy-ache due to the unstoppable laughter. Totally defeated he gave in: "Okay. I'll give you a kiss, but please s-stop!" Immediately Ryo let go of him. Tegoshi sighed and laid at his chest with heavy breath, trying to calm down. He needed a moment till he could speak normal again, and Ryo waited with the patience of an angel. They stayed silence, just Tegoshi's breath filled the light air in the room.

"Ne...are you serious?"

"I am..."

Tegoshi took two deep breaths again. "A kiss?"

"A kiss."

"Didn't you say you wouldn't rape me?"

"A kiss counts as rape?"

Tegoshi sighed. Then he simply asked: "Why?"

“What do you think why I would want a kiss for?” Ryo asked back and felt Tegoshi’s hair stroking the skin at his throat. He was glad they weren’t sitting face to face. Not just because he was so near to Tegoshi this way, but also he was sure he wouldn’t have the courage for that if he had to look into Tegoshi’s cute puppy-eyes. Again nobody of them said a word and Ryo would have given his right arm to be able to hear Tegoshi’s thoughts. But he couldn’t and so he was condemned to wait for an answer. Finally Tegoshi opened his mouth to speak again. But not to say what Ryo had hoped for. “You said Massu’s gonna eat my portion? Better I get ready then, ne...?” he nearly whispered and crawled unnecessary complicated away from Ryo and out of the bed. He didn’t even dare looking up as he searched in his bag for fresh new clothes. He seemed really busy finding a second matching sock. Ryo just watched him, suddenly paralyzed with the fear that he did something wrong.

“I’ll go take a shower.”

“Wait a moment!” Ryo spoke without even thinking. All what mattered something right now was the fact to not leave Tegoshi with a false impression. Now or never.

“Can you wait till I’m done?” Tegoshi cut him off before he even could speak up.

“No. Probably not. Remember? I wanted to tell you something yesterday.”

“Mh.” Tegoshi had all his clothes piled up in his arms. “I’m sorry Ryo, please wait. I really have to go to the toilet.” It was a lie and he hated lies, but he feared the confusion and headache rising up inside him again if he would let himself think about the situation right now. He needed a bit distance. Immediately. “I’m sorry, Ryo-chan.” And he went to the bathroom as fast as he could, throwing a final glance at Ryo who still sat on the bed looking at him with a terrible, heartbreakingly face. Tegoshi tried to close the door behind himself before something even more awkward could happen, but Ryo already said it in that second.

“Tegoshi...I love you...” In a loud clear voice the words echoed in the room and Tegoshi stood there, the back pressed against the door, the fingers clenched into his clothes at his chest, right there were he felt so terribly different right now. Yabai...Why is my heart pounding so fast?

~+~

Chapter 9 deshita~~

Kapitel 10: Chapter 10

"Oy, Tegoshi! We're gonna be late!" Ryo knocked on the bathroom-door.

"Go ahead." Was the dimmed answer, a scratchy un-tesshi-like voice.

"Are you okay?"

Silence.

Ryo sighed. He could have slapped himself for blabbing out his confession without considering his position and situation. He so wished to take it back, but words can't be made unspoken. He wished he could at a least apologize but he wouldn't b sincere when he would say he was sorry. And anyway, sorry for what? For loving him? Never. For saying out loud? He would have done so sooner or later anyway.

"Come on, Tegoshi." He said and knocked again. "You can't stay in there forever. And you will see me downstairs ate the latest. No matter what, you can't escape." Ryo thought for a moment. "Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you." He added and made a grimace. If he would be Tegoshi he would definitely be scared right now. "Ne...Are you listening?"

Again there was a big silence before there came a low "Yes..."

Ryo sighed, then he cleared his throat: "Do you need some time?"

"Think so."

"Shall I really go ahead?"

"Yes, please."

"Are you okay?" Ryo asked again and this time Tegoshi answered. "I hope so."

This wasn't the thing Ryo hoped for either. "If you need something I'll be there, ne...Though I'm probabl the person you want to be there for you the least." Then he turned around and wanted to leave, but the sound of a door clicking made him stop. He whirled around to see if Tegoshi would come out after all, but the door was just opened a little crack. "Don't get me wrong" Tegoshi's voice was nearly a whisper. "I don't hate you or something like that. And I won't avoid you. I just need a moment for me to get over it, okay?" Ryo nodded till he realized that Tegoshi couldn't see it. "Yes, I understand."

"Thanks..."

"I am the one who should say that." And with that Ryo left the room to give Tegoshi the time he needed.

"You're so different today." Yamapi said and Tegoshi looked up. They were driving in the van to the airport for the next location of their concert tour, sitting in the same order as two days before. Koyama was listening to music, Shige, Ryo and Massu in the front-row were playing cards. Tegoshi sat next to Yamapi and hasn't lost a word till now. He seemed so far away with his mind, and when his eyes met Yamapi's it looked like they needed a second to find back the way into the van. "Are you okay?" Yamapi asked with a little worry in his voice.

Tegoshi thought for a moment, struggling with him whether he should say the truth or not, and then he sighed. "I'm not sure..." he admitted. With a distressed gate he tousled through his hair.

"Headache?"

"A bit."

"You often have one recently."

"How do you know?" Tegoshi asked. Yamapi chuckled gently. "It's not hard to tell with your open-hearted baby-face." He answered and poked Tegoshi's nose. "It's nothing easier than reading you facial expression."

"What do you read now?" Tegoshi wanted to know since he didn't know himself how he really felt.

"Problems. Something's troubling you."

Tegoshi's eyes went down. With a deep sigh he fold his hands in his lap.

"You don't need to tell me if you don't want to." Yamapi said insightfully and smiled gently. Tegoshi lifted his head to look into his friendly face. "I think I need to tell it somebody." He answered quietly and threw a nervous gaze to the front-row, but the guys were still completely attracted by their game. Ryo grinned happily when he won and made a peace-sign, winking at Koyama.

"Shige lost." Tegoshi whispered and smiled a bit. It felt good to smile. These guys could always rise up his mood. "Probably because of Ryo-chan, ne~"

"Yeah, he's such a sleeky cheater-kid when it comes to scoring Shige off." Yamapi replied. "I hope they don't play about stripping or something like that again."

"Are you worried we'll have to endure a half-naked Shige again?" Tegoshi asked with amusement and Yamapi chuckled. "Yeah, I'm fearing he will get used to it. Next concert tour he will demand that his striptease becomes a regular. If that's gonna happen I will stand up as the leader first time, I swear. Haha..." Yamapi stopped laughing and looked down at Tegoshi, who was back to his previous self. "Ah~" he

sighed and tousled through the younger ones soft hair. "Don't be so gloomy. It makes me sad, Tesshi."

"I'm sorry, Yamashita-kun."

"Pi-chan."

"Pi-chan?"

"I'm Pi-chan for you. Did you forget?" With his gentle dark eyes he fixed Tegoshi's worried face. "Are you gonna tell me what troubles you?" he asked innocently and with an utterly peacefully voice.

Tegoshi sighed. "I don't know whether your are the right person to talk to about that..." he admitted and blushed a bit.

"Why?"

"Personal matter..?"

"Mmmh..."

"Don't get me wrong. I won't mean it in a bad way."

"It's okay. You have your reason. Everyone has."

"Maah~" Tegoshi let out a whiny whim. "You're always so understanding and nice."

"Sounds full of reproach..." Yamapi said with a little pout.

"You don't make it easier for me that way."

"What easier? I can't follow you."

"Ryo..."

"What did Ryo do to you?" Yamapi suddenly sounded angry and looked as if he was in his Kurosagi-Role again.

"He did nothing to me." Tegoshi tried to calm Yamapi down. "Not directly. He just...said...said that he loves me...?" He couldn't precent that it turned out in a question. "I'm not sure how he meant it."

"What do you think how he meant it?"

"I said I don't know, deshou? That's why I am so confused..."

Yamapi looked down at Tegoshi who was despondent and let out a deep sigh again. You can fill a whole CD with the sighs he let out the last few days...Yamapi thought

ironically and he said: "And how do you feel about it?"

"About what?"

"His confession."

"If I would know that I wouldn't be so confused. It somehow – well, I think it's the wrong word, but it makes me happy." Yamapi stopped breathing. "But on the other hand...I already have one I love..."

Yamapi couldn't help but gasping. "You do?" he asked with a deep shock in his voice. He already thought that Ryo was a hard concurrent. But another one? He felt panic slowly rising up within him.

"I do..." Tegoshi blushed, half of his face hidden by his fluffy soft hair. Yamapi feared the question, but he had to ask though: "Who?"

Kapitel 11: Chapter 11

Tegoshi luckily didn't need to answer. Right in that moment the van stopped at the airport and everyone had to get out. Tegoshi was glad to get away from Yamapi for a moment and went with Massu to chat a bit. He felt as if he'd just slept a few hours, due to all the nerve-racking happenings. He knew both Yamapi and Ryo were paying close attention to him, and under different circumstances he would've been happy about taking the center stage. But all he felt was this nervous sting of being watched non-stop. He sensed their gazes in his neck. They stayed at the airport for an hour before they were called for their flight and although they all sat at a set of chairs in a group Tegoshi didn't remember the slightest bit of the conversation afterwards. Everything which came into his mind had something to do with either Ryo or Yamapi. They were rotating in his mind up and down and around and around and he felt dizzy. He never thought so much about things like that.

That's not normal anymore, he thought as they passed the gate to their plane. What the heck is wrong with me?

He suddenly felt a slight grip at his waist, turning him into another direction. "Pay attention." Ryo whispered into his ear and Tegoshi sensed the hair in his neck lifting up when the warm breath stroked the sensitive skin there. "You nearly bumped into that lady there. Where are you with your head?" He heard Ryo's husky voice chuckling in a soft tone. Tegoshi just nodded without a word, still paralyzed by the sudden reactions his body made. He felt unable to find the way to his seat and he didn't know why. Ryo guided him, his hand gently laying at Tegoshi's slim waist. He knew it was hilarious that his heart beat so fast so out of the blue. It was just Ryo after all. And he promised to behave normal though Ryo confessed, didn't he? He tried to calm himself down as he organized his bag and proofed the settings of his seat. Ryo sat next to him and their arms touched each other slightly. Tegoshi twitched as he would have gotten an electrical shock and blushed as Ryo gave him an "everything alright?"-gaze. Nothing was alright. He never felt such a severe, nerve-racking emotion in his tummy. He never felt this ticklish prickle behind his belly-button.

Though Ryo didn't seem to sense it, Tegoshi was totally aware of the heat rising up between them and the tense that filled the air between their hot breathes. Every time Ryo made the tiniest movement Tegoshi smelled his comfortable manly fragrance which stroked his nose. He moved the head to the side and up, just to look into Ryo's gentle smiling face. "Are you okay? You're looking a bit pale."

"I'm fine." Tegoshi answered with clenched teeth and faked a grin. Ryo narrowed his eyes in disbelief and he stared at Tegoshi with a "Didn't your mom teach you to not lie?"-sight, but didn't say anything further.

The plane arrived an hour later and everybody jumped out in excitement, even Tegoshi who was influenced by happy Koyama. "Come on, bring it on! We are NEWS!" Koyama shouted as they walked through the airport and Staff-San had a hard time calming him and the crowd that recognized them down.

"Koyama!" Manager-San said with his deep impressive voice and Koyama shut up immediately. "One word further and you'll go on stage in a pink Tutu today!"

Everybody laughed at Koyama's shocked expression and Shige put on an evil smirk. "Are you imagining him in tights and short mini-tutu?" Ryo asked in a whispering voice, which made Shige first twitch and then blush into a deep red-tone. Ryo chuckled as he

went ahead with Yamapi, Tegoshi and Massu, letting KoyaShige behind with their dirty thoughts. They got into the van waiting for them and were driven to the new hotel. Tegoshi again sat silently between Yamapi and Koyama. "Oy, Tesshi, what's wrong?" Koyama asked full of member ai and laid his hand worrying onto Tegoshi's skinny arm. "You seem pretty down..."

"Nothin in particular. My stomach feels a bit unwell due to the flight."

"But you love flying."

"I guess I'm getting old then." Tegoshi smiled and both Yamapi and Koyama lifted and eyebrow. "If you are getting old, what the heck are we then? Dead Dinosaurs?"

Tegoshi couldn't help but laughing. It was a load off Yamapi's mind when he heard the cheering bursting sound and saw Tegoshi's baby-cheeks blushing. "Ah~" he sighed in happy relief. "This is the Tesshi I so love." He said and poked Tegoshi's snub nose. Tegoshi blushed even more as he realized Yamapi's words. He said he loves me in some kind of meaning!! He thought in excitement.

Right after they arrived at the hotel they rushed to the rehearsal of their second concert. It wasn't as long as their first one, but tiring though. Despite how it looked on DVD a concert was hard work after all. Of course it was fun and the moment the guys went out on stage was the greatest one in their life every time again, so they ended their rehearsal with mixed feelings. On the one hand they were purely exhausted, on the other hand they were looking forward to the concert and it felt utterly good to work with the staff and to harmonize with everyone perfectly.

They still had some hours left before the actually concert would start and they gathered up in the hotel lobby.

"Wanna go eat something?" Koyama asked and looked curiously into the round.

"Yeah! Food!" Massu shouted and put his hands up in the air with his cutest happiest smile. But Shige and Ryo made a face. "Can't we go tonight after the show has ended?" Ryo asked. "I mean, can't we eat just some snacks now and short before the performance some staff-food and then have afterwards a great meal?"

Massu didn't look that happy anymore, but after Yamapi, Tegoshi, Koyama and Shige agreed to Ryo's idea he gave in. "Have no other choice then..." he murmured and Tegoshi patted his back with a cheerful smile. "You're very strong, Massu. I'm proud of you." He said honestly and full of innocence.

So the group went to their different hotel-rooms. Tegoshi felt a little nervous as he followed Ryo-chan through the hallways, but he tried to calm himself down. It's just Ryo. Nothing changed. He's still Ryo after all. And though he might have...feelings for me, nothing's gonna happen.

Ryo felt that something was concerning Tegoshi, but he didn't know what to say and how. He was aware that his sudden confession took Tegoshi by surprise. But it was said now and Tegoshi had to handle with it. It was important that he would understand in order to let Ryo win, who didn't knew that Yamapi had one big advantage over him.

Right when they entered their hotel-room Ryo threw his bag onto the bed and pulled his shirt of his body. Tegoshi blushed at the view of Ryo's naked trained torso. Gosh, he looks good! He thought and blushed even further about the fact he really stared at Ryo's well-seen muscles.

"Do you want to take a shower first?"

"What?"

Ryo chuckled. He had to suppress a wide grin because he knew he caught Tegoshi red-handed by checking his body out. "You're really lost in thoughts today, ne~ I wanted

to know whether you want to take a shower first or not.”

“Oh...” Tegoshi made with big eyes. “If you don’t mind I want to shower first.”

“Okay.” Ryo smiled. “Then go on.”

Tegoshi smiled back. “Thanks.” Ryo was as friendly as before. Nothing has changed, he said to himself again and felt better, as he placed his package onto a chair next to the nightstand. He wanted to doff his hoody, but simply couldn’t pull it off his head. “Shit...” he mumbled as he tore and yanked. He heard an amused giggle, some steps and then felt someone grabbing his hoody. “Come on. Arms up.” Ryo said gently, Tegoshi did as he was told and Ryo took the hoody off his head like a toddler. “See, it’s easy like this.” Ryo teased and gave Tegoshi his hoody, who had deep red cheeks. Ryo let out a husky laugh. “No need to be embarrassed. It’s okay.” And he tousled through Tegoshi’s hair, turned him into the direction where the bathroom was and gave him a little shove. “Go.” Ryo said with a caring smile in his voice. Tegoshi looked back at him as he walked to the bathroom with a pout. He nearly ran into the doorframe and Ryo couldn’t help but laughing. Tegoshi blushed a bit, but then shrugged it off with a shyly, cute smile. As he closed the door behind him he was surprised by how much his mood has changed. He feared first the moment he ought to be alone with Ryo, but unexpectedly it felt good. It was easy to be spoilt by Ryo and it made him feel light when Ryo smiled at him.

“See Tegoshi” he told himself as he stepped under the shower. “Didn’t I say everything’s gonna be okay?” He felt relieved as the warm water poured down on him and he hummed the melody of ‘Taiyou no Namida’. By the time he finished the song he also stopped the water, put a white towel around his waist and one around his shoulders so the water could drip down off his hair. He smiled at himself in the mirror. It felt so damn comfortable to smile after all and he laid his head to the said and said: “You’re simply worrying too much. There’s no need to.” And then he shouted at Ryo outside: “You can get ready. I’m done~”

“Hai, hai~” was the dimmed answer and Tegoshi smiled again. Back to normal, he thought. Or even better. He collected his used clothes in his arms, opened the door and hopped outside, right into Ryo’s arms, who already waited there. “Watch out~” he heard as he bumped into Ryo’s chest and both nearly lost balance if Ryo wouldn’t be much stronger than little Tegoshi. Out of reflex Ryo put his arms around Tegoshi so he wouldn’t fall down. “Ough.” Tegoshi made and his forehead leaned against Ryo’s collarbone. He felt Ryo’s skin at his naked shoulders. Silence. And then Ryo chuckled. “What are you laughing about?” Tegoshi asked and wondered about the warm prickle in his stomach as he noticed that he liked the sound of Ryo’s chuckle. He lifted his head to look up at Ryo’s gentle smiling face. He knew it would be already time to loosen the embrace there were in, but he surprisingly didn’t want to. It was a different feeling of embrace than the one Ryo and he had yesterday before the confession. This time it had a different meaning in it. A meaning Tegoshi, which kind of shocked himself, didn’t fear.

“It’s okay.” Ryo said in a low, soft tone.

“Eh?”

“It’s okay.” Ryo repeated and felt like he had to dote on Tegoshi’s innocent puppy-expression. “Didn’t you told this yourself just a second ago in there?”

Tegoshi blushed a bit and hid his face behind his hair by letting his head down a bit.

“You heard?”

“Exposed.” Ryo chuckled with his husky voice. “You’re so easy to see through, Yuchan.” He said, poked Tegoshi’s cheeks gently, turned around him and before Tegoshi

could even blink Ryo was already behind the closed bathroom-door.
And he stood there, with big round eyes and stared after him in surprise. "...Yu-
chan...?"

Kapitel 12: Chapter 12

What was this feeling he had? His worries were blown away and he was thrilled. But it was out of complete different reasons. There was something new inside him he didn't know. It made him hyper and smile and blush a lot, whenever Ryo was around. His heartbeat went faster, whenever Tegoshi sensed Ryo threw a gaze at him. He bit his lips with a smile whenever he noticed Ryo played close attention to him. His thoughts went crazy whenever Ryo was near enough to touch him by chance. It felt good to Tegoshi. Though it had a kind of wrong taste.

Yamapi was close to him nearly every moment Ryo was too. Tegoshi's feelings towards Yamapi still were there deep inside him and he still had butterflies in his tummy when gentle calm Yamapi gave him a sweet smile. In the dressing-room Yamapi sat on a chair, drinking a cup of coffee, his eyes fixed on Tegoshi who tried to perfect his look, and Ryo was standing next to him. Though Ryo seemed to be busy with closing his pants properly, Tegoshi noticed that both of them were ready to jump whenever he made a movement. Somehow it was nerve-racking to be observed that much. But it made him rather happy. Yamapi was finally paying attention to him the way he wished so long for, and Ryo watching him like a man watching his precious treasure felt...pleasing. He felt unwell to admit it, but it felt really like this. Pleasing. And this pleasingly feeling was something he'd missed so much for quite a while now. He just wondered whether it was because of Ryo or because of Yamapi.

"Five Minutes!" Staff-san shouted and left. Tegoshi looked around. Massu stuffed a last cookie into his mouth, Koyama was teased a last time by Shige, Ryo smiled happily and Yamapi seemed still very relaxed. It was the usual chaos which broke out just when Tegoshi wanted to say how much he loved this bunch of guys. Massu chocked an a crumb and as he wanted to get a glass of water he ran over Shige, who fell on Koyama, who bumped into the table of food. A lot of apples, rice and other snacks flew around the dressing-room and a piece of banana landed with a 'plop' in Yamapi's cup of coffee and spilled some drops onto his nose. When Tegoshi wanted to help Shige and Koyama he tripped over his own feet, lost his balance and with a tiny squeal he closed his eyes, prepared for the thud. But right the moment he thought he would hit the ground he felt an arm wrapping around his waist, swirling him up and pressing him against a warm chest.

"Oy~" he heard Yamapi's voice mixed with a suppressed smile. "Take care. We're in a messy mood again here, ne~" Tegoshi opened his eyes. He laid in a strong pair of arms, which held him safely. Yamapi was watching his face closely and smiled gently at Tegoshi's innocently blushed face. "Surprised?" Yamapi asked teasingly and adored Tegoshi's expression. Their eyes met and time stood still. Tegoshi heard his heartbeat and felt Yamapi's soft breath on his face. He had butterflies in his tummy when he realized that Yamapi really held him in his arms, and that it was really Yamapi, who smiled at him with those gentle eyes of a dog and a drop of coffee at his nose.

They didn't notice that Koyama and Shige got up in their feet and Massu survived his cookie with great difficulty. And they didn't notice Ryo was staring at them the whole

time.

The concert was over, everyone got dressed back into casual clothes. Shige, Massu and Koyama talked loudly and full of excitement in their dressing-room while getting their stuff packed. Ryo was just out organizing some food for Massu, who was starving. Even he had his moment of Member Ai. Tegoshi stood in front of the big mirror and was fixing his hair (again), when Yamapi walked slowly up to him until he stood behind Tegoshi.

"Ne, Tesshi..." he said in a low voice and laid his hands onto Tegoshi's thin shoulders.

"Mh? What's wrong?"

"Can I....Can I talk to you for a second?"

Tegoshi first looked at Yamapi in the mirror, then turned around, suddenly missing the tiny weight of his hands on his shoulders, and faced him. Yamapi smiled at him, but his eyes were serious behind the always gentle sparkle. "Sure you can." Tegoshi said, the head in the neck, because they stood so close. He felt so tiny next to Yamapi's strong, protecting stature.

"Now?" Tegoshi asked, but Yamapi shook his head. "Later. I wanna talk when....erm...alone, you know?"

Tegoshi's heartbeat fastened. Yamapi looked unsure in a cute way as he rubbed his nose. "Just when it's okay for you."

"It's definitely okay!" Tegoshi said quickly and put on a bright smile.

Yamapi let out a relieved sigh. "Woah, that makes me glad~ I feared you would say no."

Tegoshi giggled. "Why should I do so?"

Yamapi shrugged. "I can think of a lot of reasons." For a second his mimic darkened, but then he smiled as well. "Today was super fun, ne~ Though I messed up the lyrics." He smirked in embarrassment.

"The girls liked it." Tegoshi laughed. "And I liked it too~"

"Hehe, maybe I should mess up more then."

"Yeah, do so and I will fangirl you as well."

"Really?"

Tegoshi watched Yamapi's face. Was there really a glance of hop in it? He couldn't

help but put on a wide grin. "Really." He said honestly, surprised by the fact he really admitted it.

Yamapi smiled brightly. "I will do my best then."

Ryo came back that moment and Tegoshi twitched back from Yamapi at the sight of him.

"I got some soup for all of us" Ryo yelled with his wide cute smile and held up some bags from a little store he went to. "Come on as long as it's still hot~"

"Oh, Dinner-time" Tegoshi smiled with a nervous gaze at Yamapi, who did notice the change in Tegoshi's behaviour. But before he could say a word the little one was already with the others and argues with Shige over a package of hot soup. Yamapi thought about the scene just a moment ago. Did he felt guilty because he talked so freely to me? We haven't spoken like this in ages, I guess. He did enjoy out conversation as well...didn't he? He asked himself and then narrowed his eyebrows, as he saw Tegoshi smiling happily at Ryo who sat next to him. With loud voices and giggling they started to sing Tegomass' 'Miso Soup' as they dug in their chopsticks. There was something new between those two. Their whole relationship seemed to have changed. Shit! Yamapi thought. There's already something going on.

"Ryo-chan~!!"

Ryo stopped walking and turned around by the sound of Tegoshi's happy voice. "Wait a moment!" Ryo smiled and waited. Of course he did. He would always wait for him. With his hands deep inside his pockets he stood there in the lobby till finally little Tegoshi arrived by his side.

"Ne, what's up?" Ryo asked curiously and started walking slowly again to let Tegoshi catch up with him easily.

"Nothing." Tegoshi answered with reddened cheeks. "I just wanted to walk a bit with you." Tegoshi's innocent way of looking at him made Ryo chuckle with amusement. It was obvious that there was more behind it.

"You can't lie to me, Yu-chan."

"I'm not lying."

"Well, then you don't know you do." Ryo said self-confidently and smiled at Tegoshi's confused mimic.

"How do you mean that?"

"Like I said."

"But I don't get it." Tegoshi claimed and made pout. Ryo had to laugh. With a husky "Kawaii, ne~" he tousled through Tegoshi's hair. "Come on, You'll understand sooner

or later.”

“Understand what?”

“You’re pretty stubborn, deshou?” Ryo chuckled.

Tegoshi didn’t know what to answer, so he said nothing as they headed into the elevator. He wasn’t satisfied with the silence between them. He kinda liked talking to Ryo. He sighed. “Can’t you give me a tiny hint?”

Ryo looked down at him, first chuckled again, then grinned, turned around and stepped further. “What would you do if I would tell you?” Tegoshi stepped back, he already felt the wall of the elevator behind him, but Ryo didn’t seem to mind. He was so close now...

“T-Tell me what?”

Ryo leaned down his head. Tegoshi forgot to breath when he felt Ryo’s soft lips gently touching his ear. He heard his heartbeat and felt the blood rushing through his veins. Ryo’s hot breath tickled his ear as he whispered: “You’re already falling in love with me...”

The door of the elevator opened with a harsh noise against the silence that had ruled in there for a while. “I’m right, am I?” And with that Ryo whirled around and walked out, down the hallway with big, confident steps. Tegoshi looked after him, unable to move.

Ryo’s words echoed in his head. And then, suddenly, he opened his eyes in shock, a quiet realization rising up within him.

Yabai...He thought. Is he...?

Kapitel 13: Chapter 13

Tegoshi sneaked out of their hotel room when Ryo went to the toilet. He needed a silent moment alone, though Ryo hadn't said a word further for an hour now. But it was just his presence which didn't let Tegoshi form a clear thought in mind, which didn't let Tegoshi calm down.

The fact that Yamapi waited outside in the hallway for him wasn't a great help either. But it was better than nothing at keeping his thoughts away from Ryo. "Hey, Pi-chan" Tegoshi said with as much enthusiasm he could summon. Yamapi sensed that something was troubling him immediately. "Tesshi, what's wrong?"

"Am I really that easy to see through?" Tegoshi asked annoyed. "Am I really that unable to hide my feelings?" He pouted and dug his hands deep inside the pockets of his worn-out jeans.

"Yeah, you are." Yamapi said honestly. "Right now it's very clear you're not satisfied." Tegoshi rolled his eyes and Yamapi stopped chuckling immediately. "But maybe I just now that because I always watch you. I'm not sure."

Tegoshi bristled, not happy with that answer at all. His angry angelic baby-face made Yamapi smile. "Oy, Tesshi, what's wrong with you? You can talk to me, you know."

Tegoshi lifted his head, an incredibly unsure look in his eyes. He watched Yamapi's open, trustworthy face for a second. Then he sighed. "Actually there is no real reason. I'm just a bit confused, that's all."

"You're often confused lately, deshou?"

Tegoshi sighed in an awful smile. "Guess so, ne~"

Yamapi made a little pout. "I don't want you to be confused." He mumbled. "...or sad." He looked down at his hands, suddenly blushing a bit. Tegoshi had to suppress a squeal. Was Yamapi really worrying that much about him? He couldn't help but smiling brightly. His bad temper from a second ago was completely forgotten.

"Oh, Pi-chan~" he said and suddenly held out his arms and hugged Yamapi. "You're always so kind to me~~"

Yamapi was surprised by the unexpected embrace, but it made him happy, so he closed his arms around little Tegoshi gently. He hesitated for a moment. But then he made a choice. Now or never...that's probably the best moment you can get! "It's probably because..." Yamapi took a drew breath. "Because I like you so much."

"Eh?" Tegoshi twitched back and out of the embrace. Full of disbelief he stared at Yamapi, whose face was deeply red. "W-What did you say?"

"I like you. I...I love you."

"But...You too?" Tegoshi knew this was inappropriate and tactless, but he just couldn't believe his ears. Yamapi sighed. "I know Ryo already confess, but...I just wanted to say it. I want you to know how I feel about you."

Tegoshi just looked at him, unable to say a word. Yamapi waited vainly. After a while he resigned, stood up, wished Tegoshi a good night and left, looking back full of worry a few times, but Tegoshi didn't move until the door behind him opened when Yamapi was already vanished from his view.

"There you are. I looked for y- Eh? What's wrong, Yu-chan?" Ryo knelt down next to Tegoshi and turned him around to face him. "Yu-chan?"

But Tegoshi seemed to stare through Ryo, though he tried to force him to look into his eyes. "Hey, talk to me! Yu-chan, you're scaring me! Please say a word." Ryo sounded desperate as he shook Tegoshi's tiny shoulders slightly. He seemed to be so far away... "What happened? Yu-chan, talk to me, please..." Worried Ryo laid his hands against Tegoshi's cheeks, cupping his face. The sudden, comfortable warmth brought back a bit life into Tegoshi and his gaze cleared. "You're finally looking at me..." Ryo sighed in relief. Though he didn't say a word Ryo felt much better, now that Tegoshi didn't seem to be paralyzed anymore. "Are you okay? You're probably not, ne. Sorry, my mistake. Can you walk?"

Tegoshi shrugged helplessly.

"Okay." Ryo smiled gently. "No problem, Yu-chan." He stood up. "Look out, I'm lifting you up now, ne~" Carefully Ryo shove one hand under Tegoshi's hollow of the knee and with the other one he held the slim back. With one smooth movement he lifted little Tegoshi up and brought him into their room. Totally suavely he put him down on the bed and under the blankets and covered him up. Tegoshi's absent face made Ryo shiver, but he tried to hide his worry. He would have liked to know what happened to Tegoshi, but he knew he wouldn't get an answer. Not now.

Ryo switched off the light and went to bed himself. He heard Tegoshi's far too quite and calm breath. Ryo let out a little sigh. He wanted to hold Tegoshi's hand or stroke his cheek, wanted to let him feel that it was okay, that he wasn't alone, wanted to comfort him, to make him feel better. But he feared that Tegoshi wouldn't like it.

So he closed his eyes and tried to sleep. Around half an our later Ryo sensed Tegoshi was slightly moving. At least he was a bit lively again, which relieved Ryo a tiny little bit. But then he suddenly felt something clinging to him. A little hand shove between his arm and chest, slowly and hesitating. Ryo turned around carefully and found Tegoshi close to him. He could see his lost baby-face in the darkness.

"Hey..." Ryo whispered and gently stroke the hair out of Tegoshi's forehead.

"Can I...?" Tegoshi nodded at his hands clinging Ryo and then looked up with begging puppy-eyes. "Please?"

Ryo sighed with a little smile. He hold out his own arms and warily pulled Tegoshi closer. "Sure." He said and Tegoshi placed his head at Ryo's shoulder.

Ryo didn't know what had happened and he didn't know why Tegoshi was so confused and upset. But there was one thing he knew for sure. That it made Tegoshi feel better to be hold by him.

Kapitel 14: Chapter14

Tegoshi had slept like a baby in Ryo's arms the whole night. Not even one second he had moved away a bit.

Ryo had to wake him up in the morning so they won't miss the can to the airport. The next concert was the day after tomorrow, so they had two days off. It was already planned for them to stay over night in a hotel, but they could fill their free time as they wished.

After breakfast they headed off to the airport. This time Tegoshi sat in the front row with the pretence to chat with Massu and Shige, so Kei-chan ended up in the middle between Ryo and Yamapi. The trip only lasted for 20 minutes, but the atmosphere again was icy-cold. Ryo knew Tegoshi's condition had something to do with Yamapi, after he'd seen the nervous gazes Tegoshi had thrown at Yamapi during breakfast. Though they had promised each other to not pick a quarrel Ryo couldn't help but accuse Yamapi for being this terrible to Tegoshi.

Poor Kei-chan didn't know that there was something cooking, when he asked whether they should play a game together. Yamapi and Ryo scotched his idea without batting an eye, before he could take his question back.

When they arrived at the airport Koyama took refuge to his Shige-chan, away those gloomy guys.

"Ne...what did you do to him?" Ryo asked when everybody was out of ear-shot.

Yamapi didn't even savoured him a gaze. "I did nothing to him." He answered with an icy-cold voice.

"Of course you did! Holy crap, otherwise he wouldn't have clung to me that much the whole night."

"He did what?"

Ryo was about to snap back when he paused a second. Then he grinned his killer-smile. Yamapi's disbelieving, furious and shocked face was a great satisfaction. "He snuggled up to me.", Ryo finally answered with pleasure. He spoke the words full of consideration and malicious joy. "He seemed pretty upset so I was responsive of his pleas of holding him." Nobody said teeny-tiny lies aren't allowed.

Yamapi didn't reply. He'd thought his confession would give him some points back, but instead ot that Ryo had scored even more. He so had hoped to win back a bit of Tegoshi.

Luckily they didn't have to wait long for their flight so no awkward conversation between Ryo, Yamapi and Tegoshi could come up. Though Koyama already sensed

problems with his member-ai-antennae.

Their flight took nearly an hour and this time Ryo sat between Koyama and Massu; and Shige ended up between Tegoshi and Yamapi. He tried his best to chat with them, but both blocked his passionate efforts to start a conversation. So Shige had to give up and he really wished to just leave this seat to go to the row in front of him where Koyama happily talked with Ryo and Massu.

It was when Shige stood up to go to the toilet, when Yamapi leaned over and poked Tegoshi's arm gently. The little one twitched and looked at him with his big round puppy-eyes. "Ne, Tesshi..." Yamapi's face was full of sadness. "I'm sorry about yesterday. I didn't mean to hurt or confuse or insult you. Or whatever my words did to you." His serious voice and gaze didn't let Tegoshi doubt his regrets. He suddenly felt sorry for making Yamapi worry about him that much. His face softened and he stretched out his arm to place his warm fingers at Yamapi's cheeks. "You're the one who's hurt now, aren't you?" Tegoshi asked and gently stroked Yamapi's fair skin. "You don't need to."

"But..." Yamapi took a deep breath. He suffered from Tegoshi's sudden so loving affection towards him. "But Ryo told me-"

"What did he told you?"

"That you were totally confused and upset this night. And I feel guilty, because I want you to be happy...but I caused the completely opposite." Yamapi's disarming forthrightness made Tegoshi's heartbeat go faster. "Oh, Pi-chan.", he sighed and didn't know what else to say. He just let down his fingers from Yamapi's cheek and gently grabbed whose hand.

"Are you mad at me?"

Tegoshi shook his head, a little smile on his lips. He heard Yamapi breathe out in relief. They stayed like this, nobody made a movement, until Shige came back. And when he finally again said down between them, Yamapi could see that Tegoshi bit his lip with a cute smile and looked at his hands, as if he couldn't believe they were holding Yamapi's ones. And Yamapi got the feeling that he had scored a tiny point back to his side.

They decided to eat outside of the hotel this evening. They were in Osaka, starting today for 5 days and had a lot of free time. Ryo was rather happy to be 'home'. He had missed his beloved Osaka so much and had already made his plans to show Tegoshi his favourite places. He never once before had done this though they had often stayed here in Osaka as NEWS.

"Will we meet up at 8pm at the station and then look for a good restaurant?" Koyama asked when they were out of the airport. "Shige and I would like to go around and look here and there for some nice things."

"And shots." Shige added and held up his camera with a happy grin.

"I wanna go shopping!" Massu said, and both Ryo and Yamapi looked at Tegoshi, who wasn't sure what exactly he wanted to do. He stayed silent while Koyama and Shige already left. "Mmmh..." he made and gave a shrug. Ryo grinned and opened his mouth, but Yamapi was faster. "We've already made plans for the thing, deshou?"

"Which thing?" Ryo asked with narrowed eyebrows as he noticed Tegoshi's surprised face when Yamapi had said that.

"Secret. Ne, Tesshi?"

Tegoshi just nodded innocently and didn't know why, but it made him happy that Yamapi wanted to spend his time with him.

"Perfect!" Massu patted Ryo's back. "So you can come with me and show me the best shopping malls!"

"As if you would buy your clothes in a normal shop." Ryo mumbled gloomy and was dragged away by a happy Massu.

"So" Yamapi smiled and clapped his hands together. "What do you want to do?"

Tegoshi curiously looked at him. "Did you plan this?"

"I though of doing this last night, but I didn't know if I would really try it, nor that it would work."

"You're far more evil than I thought." Tegoshi laughed jokingly. Yamapi's sudden serious face made him shut up.

"You don't even know rudimentary how evil I really am."

Silence. A sheepishly Tegoshi. And then Yamapi burst out into laughter. "You're face is priceless!" He chuckled and the tousled through Tegoshi's hair with a peaceful smile. "Don't look so scared. I swear, I'm the nicest person you know. At least I'm the nicest when it comes to you." He poked Tegoshi's blushed nose gently.

"Why?"

"Isn't it obvious?"

Tegoshi shook his head, Yamapi chuckled. "You're far too innocent, Tesshi. I've already told you why." Yamapi looked deeply into Tegoshi's puppy eyes. "Because I really like you. And I feel much better now it's out." Yamapi said happily. His smiling face made Tegoshi feel good, though the reason why rose a sting of unease inside him. Stupid you! Tegoshi scolded himself. Shouldn't you be happy as well? The thing you so wished finally came true and you're so...unsure...HE said he loves me. I so longed for this day

to come true. But why can't I smile about it with my whole heart? I really want Yamapi to be with me. I love him...Don't I...?

"Come on." Yamapi said and pulled Tegoshi out of his burdensome thoughts. "Let's go." He grabbed Tegoshi's hand and went ahead. Tegoshi uncertainly followed, looking at their intertwined fingers. The warmth of Yamapi's hand felt food. It really did.

They went through the city without any special place they wanted to go to. Just when Tegoshi wondered whether they would start to talk some time, Yamapi screamed and jumped, let go of his hand and hopped away. Tegoshi stood there, blinking in surprise and stared at the empty space in front of him where Yamapi has been just a second ago.

"Woah, Bloody Mary's Shit!! Look at this!"

Tegoshi turned around and found Yamapi standing in front of a candy-shop. "Cotton Candy!!" he shouted with shining, twinkling eyes and a bright childish smile. "I love it!"

Tegoshi chuckled. He has never seen Yamapi so happy before.

"Oh no..." Yamapi let out a sudden whimper. "Yabai..."

"What is it?"

Yamapi turned around to look at Tegoshi. His face was a heartbreakingly pout. "No money...Would have been too good if I would've gotten some." He sighed.

"Aww~!" Tegoshi made, got out his purse and went to the candy-shop. "Two Cotton Candy's please."

"Hai, just a moment, ne~"

"Eh?" Yamapi watched Tegoshi in disbelief. "You really don't need to do that. It shouldn't mean that I want you to buy me some."

"But I want to - Oh, thanks a lot." Tegoshi took the Cotton Candy from the shop-owner and gave one to Yamapi, who didn't know what else to say instead of an honest: "Thank you."

"Mh-mh." Tegoshi shook his head. "I just wanted to see your smiling face." He blushed a bit and took a huge bite from his own fluffy cotton candy. "Mmmh~ Delicious~"

Yamapi had to laugh. "Wait a moment, you have..." Gently he wiped away some of the cotton candy on Tegoshi's cheeks it off his fingers. Tegoshi blushed again. There it is, He thought happily. My excited heartbeat when he looks at me like this. Ah~ I've missed it.

And then, out of a sudden desire, Tegoshi reached out his free hand and shove it into

Yamapi's one, who looked at him with tiny surprise.

But then he smiled his warm smile and intertwined there fingers. They ate their cotton candy in silence. There was no need to say a thing.

Kapitel 15: Chapter 15

They met up at the station at 9pm. Ryo and Massu were first, after a while Koyama and Shige arrived. Yamapi and Shige came last. They waited outside for the two of them and as soon as Tegoshi noticed Ryo, he pulled his hand out of Yamapi's and stepped a bit away from him. With a guilty conscience he didn't dare to look into Ryo's eyes as they greeted each other. He didn't even know whether Ryo had seen their hands intertwined or not. As well as he didn't know why he felt so guilty. I did nothing wrong, he tried to justify himself, but it didn't work as he found himself being surrounded by Ryo and Yamapi at each of his sides again.

His heartbeat fastened as they walked to a near restaurant, headed in and where led to their seats. Of course he had to sit down between Yamapi and Ryo again. Yabai...They're not making it any easier for me this way at all! Tegoshi thought. He felt as if his current position resembled the condition of his heart. Torn up... He looked up at Yamapi to his right side, who was giving him this warm, calm and serious look. And then he turned his head to Ryo at his left, who was smiling at him with his far too cute big-brother-smile. Then he looked down at the menu on the table in front of him. He sighed. It feels wrong to like both of them. It's not fair. If Ryo would've not been so caring and straightforward it would've been so easy. I've loved Yamapi for so long now. I want him to hold me. He is so steady and grown-up. But Ryo-chan...I feel good when I'm with him. He makes me smile. He cares for me. He's watching me and it makes me happy that he can't take his eyes off me. He's there for me when I need him. Damn...I know I have to decide...but it would hurt one of them. I don't want to make them sad. I don't want to lose neither of them...

"Yu-chan, what's wrong?"

"Eh?" Tegoshi looked up. Everybody was staring at him. He hadn't noticed Ryo had spoken to him.

"Sorry, I've dreamt. What did you say?"

"I've asked whether you've already decided on what to eat." Ryo said and the aware, worrying look in his eyes was not unseen by Yamapi. He hated the way Ryo was always watching Tegoshi. It was like he was observing him the whole time, every step, every movement, every expression – non-stop. It was like Ryo feared that Tegoshi might run away. And it made Yamapi so mad to see Ryo's eyes stuck to Tegoshi.

"Ehm...I'm taking the same like you." Tegoshi forced a smile full of wobbliness. He knew Ryo noticed everything he did and Yamapi sensed every change in his mood. It was tiring to be on guard so much in order to not worry either of them or to prevent awkward questions or gazes. Oh please...he thought annoyed. Can't they stop it at least for a single moment? It was okay to be with just one of them. He enjoyed the time he spent with either Yamapi or Ryo. But to be with both was just horrible.

Tegoshi didn't get the slightest bit of the conversation that started between the

other members immediately after they'd ordered. He used the time to rest inside his head and to calm down his thoughts. He neither noticed that Yamapi kind of boasted with the fact that Tegoshi bought the cotton candy for him, nor did he sensed the gazes from Ryo which rested on him the whole time. He didn't even move his eyes away from Tegoshi when the waiter served them their food. Ryo didn't mean to give Tegoshi a creepy feeling. He just wanted Tegoshi to look at him for at least a second, so that Ryo could see whether he was alright or not. But Tegoshi never once looked up the whole night. Not even a single time he answered to a question Ryo asked. Ryo's only comfort was that he didn't react to Yamapi either.

So when they got back to the hotel Ryo and Tegoshi went off alone to their room in silence. Ryo didn't know what to say and he had the suspicion that Tegoshi wouldn't answer anyway. When they arrived in their room Tegoshi immediately went into the bath-room, locked the door and a second later Ryo heard the sound of the shower. With a sad sigh he sat down at the bet and waited in impatience. Ten minutes later Tegoshi came out. He saw Ryo sitting there, stopped and then quickly looked away when their eyes met. That was too much for Ryo. It was too obvious. "Oy, don't ignore me!" he said and his voice was much harsher than he'd intended it to be. Tegoshi answered with the same tone: "How could I? You're observing me non-stop! I would welcome it if I could ignore you."

Ryo bit his lip. Tegoshi's hurtful remark hit home. He said nothing. Tegoshi seemed to spot that he'd said something wrong. So he finally looked at Ryo after all and saw him with sunken shoulders and a heartbreaking expression on his face. Tegoshi fought with himself, but then he said: "Gomen ne, Ryo-chan...I didn't mean it..." Ryo didn't react. With four steps Tegoshi was by his side and knelt down in front of him. That way Ryo was forced to look at Tegoshi, whose baby-eyes made him feel even worse. "Please stop it..." he said pleadingly in a soft voice.

"Stop what?" Tegoshi wanted to know.

"Looking at me like that. It's unfair."

"Eh?"

"You don't know how cute and innocent you are." Ryo groaned and let his face fall down into his hands. His voice was as husky as always, but this time it had also a hurtful, overwrought sound in it. "But I know." He whispered. "I know far too well. I can't get enough of your cute face. It makes me happy to see you. It makes me realize how precious you are; how important you are to me." He paused for moment. Tegoshi heard how he took a breath. "But recently you stopped smiling. I didn't know this is because of me..."

"Oh Ryo! It's not because of you!"

"Liar. You're just saying this in order to not hurt me."

Tegoshi said nothing and Ryo let out a bit, husky laughter. "See, I'm right. Exposed."

"Okay...It is because of you. At least a half." Tegoshi admitted. "It's just that...Well..." His voice broke off.

"So, what?"

Tegoshi sighed and then looked down. "It's so complicated..." he said quietly. How could he tell Ryo that he suspected he was in love with both, Ryo and Yamapi? It was impossible that he would tell Ryo, wasn't it?

Ryo looked at him with his special gaze. This special gaze, which made Tegoshi's heart go crazy, his knees weak and wobbly and his mind blank. That moment Tegoshi knew that he felt more for Ryo than he'd thought. Maybe too much. Could you be too much in love with a person when there's already another one important to your heart? Was it possible for one person to love more than one human so much it hurts? Could you die from the pain a confused heart causes?

Tegoshi's heart hurt so much. And his head knew it was wrong. It was wrong to have such feelings for more than one person. Stupid heart. Didn't it know that something like this was forbidden?

Tegoshi felt the touch of some warm hands gently stroking his cheeks. Ryo's hands.

Without noticing it tears have fallen down from Tegoshi's chin. Carefully he laid his head into Ryo's cupping hands. It felt good, this feeling of being comforted, although he knew he didn't deserve it.

"Ryo..." Tegoshi whispered the name, just to know how it tasted like in that very moment. It tasted so sweet some days ago, like pure honey and he hasn't known why. Now he knew, and it felt bittersweet. Weird how much the realization of love can change a name...He felt as if he had to cry again. He wasn't sure whether it was okay, so he held back a big fat cratching sob in his throat, though it hurt so much even more tears would sum up in his eyes.

"Oh dear...There's no need to." He hear Ryo whispering back and felt even more terrible. Who was he to make Ryo worry about him so much? And the most terrible thing was that something was inside him - this egoistic not-caring part - that enjoyed it. That really enjoyed being shepherded. He was torn apart and he just used poor Ryo-chan for his own heart's sake. "Ryo..." Tegoshi was sobbing now anyway. "You don't know...You don't understand." He sounded so desperate.

"I don't understand what?" Ryo asked as he didn't have a blue what was troubling Tegoshi. "Yu-chan...I don't get it."

But Tegoshi pushed him away and shied away from him. "I don't deserve your gentleness." He said with a broken voice. Even his stomach hurt when he said it. "I don't deserve any of this. You're too kind, too caring... I don't deserve you, Ryo. I am not good eno-" But Ryo cut him off by suddenly pressing his soft lips onto Tegoshi's, whose eyes tore open in surprise.

“Why do you have such stupid thoughts?” Ryo asked in a love voice when they parted away. “I’d never say you’re not good enough for me. Why are you wearing yourself down? Is it because of Yamapi?”

Tegoshi just stared at Ryo, still paralyzed by the unexpected kiss. His lips felt so different now, he feared to have to realize they weren’t his anymore if he would just open them to speak.

“Yu-chan...” Ryo’s husky voice echoed in Tegoshi’s ear. “There’s no need to. Forget him. Forget everything about him. I wouldn’t be here for you if I wouldn’t think of you as one of the most wonderful persons I know.” Gently he stroke Tegoshi’s cold cheeks again. The touch made Tegoshi come back to talk again.

“I am not wonderful. You’re thinking wrong of me.” He whispered. With big round eyes full of sadness and fear he was staring at Ryo, who looked at him with a serious face.

“Well, even then I’m fine with it.” And he leaned down to Tegoshi again.

What am I doing?!

Kapitel 16: Chapter 16

Tegoshi slept shoddily that night. He threw himself anxiously from one side to the other one and whimpered. He had a nightmare. Ryo woke up from the sound of Tegoshi's desperate voice. He saw his painful, sad face and without hesitating he pulled Tegoshi into his arms and held him tightly. Nearly immediately Tegoshi's whimpers silenced.

"Sssh..." Ryo made anyway as if he pampered a baby. Tegoshi's sleeping face was still heartbreakingly sad, full of grief and sorrow, but he sighed, totally worn out and moved further into Ryo's protective embrace. With his fingers he grabbed Ryo's shirt and held it.

And again Ryo was worrying what in the world was troubling Tegoshi so much.

Tegoshi felt sick the next morning. His throat was swollen and his voice scratchy. He felt as if he wouldn't have slept a single minute that night. He was powerless when he woke up and had no motivation for the day. But he forced himself to get out of the bed anyway. Ryo was already away, but he'd left a message on the table, saying he was at home meeting his parents and siblings. Tegoshi was glad to be alone. He didn't want Ryo to see him like that, because it would have just brought his worry for him back.

Tegoshi's head was aching as if 100 elephants would have a great party in there. But this pain was nothing against his heart. It felt empty, though it was heavy like a lead weight inside his chest.

After he'd looked at the clock which told him it was around lunch-time he decided to take a hot bath. The thick overwhelming air befuddled him even more, but he was too dull to even realize it. His head was full of nothing, but his brain weight as much as his heart. He just laid there in the bathtub, the hot water nearly boiling him and stared at the flagging on the walls. The pain in his head vibrated behind his forehead. He nearly fell asleep after some time, so he struggled himself out of the bathtub. With slow heavy steps he walked to his bed, just in shorts, and crawled under the blankets. He was terribly cold, but his head felt still so unbearable hot from the bath. He didn't realize he slipped into shallow sleep after a few minutes.

He woke up from some noise. There was somebody with him in the room. He forced his eyes a bit open, but his sight was blurred. He groaned.

"Tesshi?" A worried voice. It took a moment till he noticed whose it was.

"Pi...-chan?" he whispered and narrowed his eyes, trying to get a clear glimpse of the face in front of him.

"Mh." Was the answer. "Are you okay?"

Tegoshi needed to breathe in and out a few times to get the energy to reply. "I'm not sure...I'm...not so good..."

"Thought so... You don't seem alright."

Tegoshi felt a hand touching his cheek, but immediately stopping in the movement. "Shit, Tegoshi!"

"What?" Yamapi's shocked shout echoed in his head, leaving beats of pain as it wavered out.

"You're hot! I mean, you're burning!" Yamapi's hand felt icy-cold and good on his forehead. "You have a damn high fever!"

Fever?...Oh...

Tegoshi took a deep breath. "Oh..." he groaned and tried a weak smile. "Sorry..."

"'Oh?' Gosh, Tesshi, you have at least 40°C!"

Tegoshi didn't know what to say. Yamapi's usually so well-sounding voice was incredibly loud in his sore head. "Please...calm down..." he pleaded and closed his eyes in exhaustion.

"Calm down?" Yamapi repeated in shock. Tegoshi's face was wet due to sweat. He didn't know what to do. He was sure he had to bring down the fever no matter what, but he didn't have any medicine.

"Tesshi?"

"Mh...?"

"I'm going to ask somebody for something against fever, okay? Don't move, I'll be right back."

"Okay..." Tegoshi nodded with greatest effort. And then he felt a pair of comfortable soft lips onto his own ones. But before he could open his eyes to look if it wasn't just his tired imagination that went crazy without his weak body being able to control his wishes, he heard Yamapi leaving the room and closing the door behind himself. Tegoshi laid there in silence again. The fact Yamapi were here stirred him up, but not as much as it would've done when his head would have not been so foggy. He could still feel Yamapi's lips, but he had imagined them so much onto his own ones up till now, he couldn't say this time was true, not a childish daydream again. The blankets felt thick and heavy on his chest and he was so hot, yet he feared to get cold as soon as he lifted them a bit to get some fresh air at his body.

Just when he was about to slip into sleep again Yamapi came back, and with him Koyama. Tegoshi could hear his voice.

"Tegoshi?" Yamapi asked full of worry in a low tone. "Tesshi? Koyama has some painkillers. They should bring down your fever too."

"Mmmh..." was all Tegoshi was able to bring out.

"Can you sit up to flush the pills down with some water?"

"Hm?"

He heard a little sigh. "Come on. I'll help you, okay?" Tegoshi felt Yamapi's pleasantly cold hands in his neck and on his back. Everything in his head swirled a moment when Yamapi sat him up in the pillows. He had no other chance now than to open his eyes. He looked into Yamapi's worried face, and right behind that he could see the shape of Koyama. "Here, open your mouth." Yamapi said in a low voice and pushed a little pill between his lips into his mouth.

"You have to drink it up." Koyama said, but it was unnecessary. As soon as the first drop touched Tegoshi's tongue he realized how thirsty he actually was and he finished the glass of water in one greedy gulp. After that the overwhelming exhaustion came back. The fact he sat up even increased his headache. He was relieved when Yamapi laid him back again. He heard the worried whispers of Koyama and Yamapi, but he didn't want to understand them. All he wanted was to sleep...

Yamapi and Koyama kept watch by Tegoshi's bed side for three hours. They looked at his sweaty face which became more and more less shaken as his fever went down. They jumped up when he twitched and opened his eyes.

"Pi-chan?" Tegoshi whimpered.

"I'm here." Yamapi grabbed his tiny hot hand. "Do you feel better?"

"Mmh...Yes, I think so..." Tegoshi held his forehead. The pain was just a little throb now. His mind was clear, yet his body felt still weak though. His stomach moaned. "I'm hungry." He squeaked in a high scratchy voice, his still reddened cheeks even blushed a bit through a whimsically teeny-tiny smile and he looked pleadingly at Yamapi.

"I'll go to get you some soup." Yamapi said immediately. He was lucky that Tegoshi seemed better. Hesitating he looked at Koyama as he stood up. "I'll stay with him." Koyama promised and Yamapi left with the relieving feeling that Tegoshi was in good hands during his absence.

Koyama's eyes looked deep into Tegoshi's. "Is it because of them?"

"Eh?"

"Ryo-chan and Yamapi. It's because of them, isn't it?"

"I don't get you."

"Don't try to fool me. It's obvious they're fighting for you."

Tegoshi looked at him with honest confusion.

Koyama stared back in surprise. "You really didn't notice...?"

"Notice what?"

Koyama shook his head. "Forget it. It's okay." He smiled. "Probably I misunderstood something."

Tegoshi sighed.

"But something's troubling you anyway, deshou?"

A moment passed, then Tegoshi nodded.

"I...I love them....Both of them...But that's not right...And it's not easy either. Every time I'm with one of them my decision changes...I wish I would be sure, but I'm not...It's not fair of me. They have the right that I'm honest and fair to them..." Tegoshi's voice got more and more quiet until it silenced.

Yamapi came back, opened the door, but neither Koyama nor Tegoshi noticed or heard him.

"Ryo said...Ryo said I should forget about Pi-chan..." Silence.

Yamapi stood there, the hot soup for Tegoshi in his hand and he could hear his heartbeat rushing in his head. Before he knew what he did he'd left the room without being noticed again.

"But I can't. Pi-chan is important to me. As well as Ryo..."

"Oh, Tesshi..." Koyama sympathetically grabbed his hand. "Why didn't you say something?"

"I was afraid...and confused." His voice trembled. Tears were in his big puppy-eyes that stared at the blankets covering his hot body. "But...I think I know what to do now." The sudden determined look on Tegoshi's face made Koyama aware. "To do what?" he asked carefully and afraid of the answer he already suspected.

Tegoshi looked up. Every single trace of fever in his face was away. His eyes were sure, no sparkle of doubt or hesitate in them.

"I will quit NEWS."

Kapitel 17: Chapter 17

Yamapi walked down the hallway with darn sure steps. He knew he was acting out of anger and that he would regret it afterwards, but he also felt the need of it. He found Ryo sitting together with Shige and Massu lobby. Ryo stopped talking even before Yamapi was near enough to hear their talk. "Yo, Pi, what's wrong?" Of course Ryo could see the pissed, furious expression on his best friends face. Yamapi stopped right in front of the arm-chair Ryo was sitting in, the hands clenched into fists in order to not punch him right away.

"Can I talk to you for a second?" Yamapi asked with a serious voice.

"Of course, what's wrong?"

"Just the two of us."

"Oh...okay." Ryo looked confused, yet he stood up and smiled at Shige. "I'll be right back."

Yamapi turned around and walked ahead, followed by a curious Ryo. They didn't lost a word until they found an empty hallway where Yamapi suddenly turned around to face his best friend. His angry face made Ryo twitch a bit. "What's wrong?" he repeated his question, but Yamapi cut him off: "Don't act so innocently!"
"E-eh?"

"You know what I'm talking about."

"Bloody hell, I do not know! Why the heck are you shouting at me?"

Yamapi bristled in anger and shook his head in disbelief. "You're insisting?"

"Insisting on what?" Ryo asked impatiently. "Fuck, you called me out and just started to let out your rage or whatever out on me without any reason! I would be very glad if you would tell me why you are that furious. I'm sorry that I'm obviously so stupid to not be able to follow your incoherent reproaches. Shit, what did I do to you?"

"You're the one who's manipulating Tesshi so he will definitely choose on you, aren't you?"

"Why should I do that?"

"That's what I'm asking you!"

Ryo narrowed his eyes, laughing bitterly. "I can't believe you're thinking so badly of me. I never did anything harming you. Why should I do so now?"

"Mmmh, I'm not quite sure." Yamapi acted like he would seriously think of it. "Well,

let's see....Maybe to make yourself looking better in front of Tegoshi?"

"As if I would need that."

"What do you mean?"

"It's obvious he likes me more, deshou? You can't deny that." Ryo said in an arrogant voice and placed his hands deep inside the pockets of his favourite worn-out jeans. A big mistake, because the next moment Yamapi hit him hard right into the face.

"Are you sure about that? I know they're fighting for you, but..." Koyama looked worrying at little sobbing Tegoshi. He couldn't believe what he just heard a second ago.

"I am sure. It's best this way. And I can't stand this situation longer anyway."

"But..." Koyama didn't find any reasons to convince Tegoshi of the opposite. "Did you already talked to Johnny-san?"

Tegoshi shook his head. "I want to tell it after the tour is over. I don't want to leave NEWS in a big fuss right now, so I will wait."

"Tesshi..." Koyama didn't know what to say further. "I will miss you."

"I will miss you, too, Kei-chan." Tegoshi held out his arms and Koyama hugged him tightly. "Can you please hold it a secret for a while? I want to tell it to the others when the right time has come."

Koyama was sure that there would never be a right time for such an crucial message, but he nodded though. "Thank you a lot...Maybe I should look for Yamapi. He's away for a while now for just getting me a soup. I don't want him to worry about me that much. I feel better now. Maybe I should go to tell him that." Tegoshi mumbled more or less to himself than to Koyama and crawled out of the bed.

"Take care, Tego-nyan."

"Mh, I will do my best."

Tegoshi left, a tiny little bundle of troubles, and Koyama let out a sad sigh. "Guess my only chance is to talk to Yamapi and Ryo, ne~"

Tegoshi ran right onto the fist-fight Yamapi and Ryo had in the hallway. They didn't notice him – too important was their desire to punch each other so badly. Yamapi's nose was already bleeding and Ryo's lips were red and swollen. There Tegoshi was, completely overextended with the situation and didn't know what to do. He didn't

even feel like asking why the heck they were fighting nor did he have the power to interrupt this hilarious, but serious fight. His brain didn't seem to realize what his eyes saw. But it realized what his ears heard.

"You don't know how it is to be deeply in love with him!" Ryo screamed and his fist bumped into the air next to Yamapi's face.

"How dare you? At least I do care about his emotions instead of always confusing him!"

"The one who is confusing him is you! If you wouldn't always interrupt and swirl around his feelings he already would be mine!"

Yamapi let out a bitter laughter. "You really believe in this stupid shit? Just because you confessed to him before I could do so you think you do have the right to claim him as yours?"

"Hell, yeah, I do!" Ryo boxed into Yamapi's stomach.

Tegoshi's mouth opened in shock, when Yamapi gulped and bent down in pain. Just when he was about to fall down he mobilized his whole power to throw both his fist into Ryo's chest and both of them fell over each other and to the ground. They were a bundle of arms and legs and Tegoshi couldn't tell what belonged to whom. He heard the strained groans of Yamapi and Ryo, which cut through his heart.

They're fighting you...Koyama's voice echoed in his ears and Tegoshi's head began to hurt again. They're fighting because of...me...I am the reason why they're fighting. They're friendship...It's me...

Tegoshi desperately watched the scene in front of him, watched Yamapi and Ryo beating each other up. His thoughts went crazy, the noise was too much for him. "Stop it..." he whispered. "Please stop it..."

Of course they didn't hear him. "Stop it please." He repeated, a bit louder this time. His voice was trembling. "Stop it!!" He shouted with all his might. Finally Ryo and Yamapi let go of each other. They were shocked to see Tegoshi standing there, who did probably watch their whole fight.

"Tesshi..." Yamapi whispered, but then he remembered. "Tegoshi, you're fever!"

"Fever?" Ryo asked with surprise, immediately worried. "Why didn't you tell me he has a fever?"

"As if you would care for him properly."

"I do! I-"

"Stop it!" Tegoshi yelled and Ryo was quiet. "You might be thinking that you hurt each other, but the one who suffers the most is me, deshou? You might be thinking that I

can decide, but I have no choice, when both of you are willing to fight till the end. I can't take it anymore. I can't. It's so painful. Don't you know that it's me who's hurt the most? It's me! Not you...Not you..." Tears were falling down his cheeks, his face was filled with despair and he looked from Yamapi to Ryo-chan with his blurred, pain filled puppy-eyes. "It's me." And with a last hopeless gaze his shoulders sank down and he lost his consciousness.

It was completely silent. Yamapi and Ryo sat on the hard, uncomfortable hospital seats in the hallway, not noticing the busy nurses and doctors passing by. They stared at the door in front of them, knowing that their little Tegoshi laid in there.

"I didn't know we causes so much trouble for him..." Ryo whispered.

"All I wanted was to win against you." Yamapi admitted.

"We broke him. I would never forgive myself if I made him unhappy. I mean, I will never forget this look in his eyes."

"It was the worst thing I've ever seen."

It followed another long silence. Then, so quietly it was hardly heard: "I give up, Pi."

"Eh?"

"I give up. He'll be happy with you. He loves you."

"He loves both of you."

Yamapi and Ryo whirled around. Koyama headed towards them. Both looked at him with pure fear. "He loves both of you." He said again. "But his heart is confused. Both of you were pulling at one side of him, trying to win him, but in the end you tore him up right in the middle. One of you has to give up for his sake. You have to. Otherwise, I think, He won't be able to recover."

"I will" Ryo began, but Yamapi simply stood up and left without a word, without looking back. Koyama and Ryo watched him in silence. Just in this moment the door of Tegoshi's restroom opened and a nurse stepped out. "He's awake now." She said. "He need to rest, but you can talk to him."

Ryo was still paralyzed from Yamapi's sudden left, so Koyama punched him in the ribs. "Ow!"

"Go in!"

"But..."

"He's waiting for you. At least for one."

"But-"

"No 'but'! Go!" And Koyama pulled Ryo up, pushed him into the restroom and closed the door behind him. Ryo stood there stiffened. Tegoshi laid in a bed at the window, the blanket over him and a lot of pillow's stuffed in his back. He looked so pale and weak.

"Ryo..." he said with a husky, scratchy voice. Ryo stepped further. From the near Tegoshi looked even more breakable. His tiny little hands reached out for Ryo's and Ryo grabbed them in fear. "I'm here." He whispered, gulping down the big dumpling in his throat. "I'm sorry, Yu-chan. I am so horribly sorry. I'm sorry I hurt you so much." He felt the tears in his eyes, yet he didn't even try to swallow them down. "Yu-chan... I am a bad human, deshou? I've never intended to make you so sad. I've never wanted to hurt you. I...Fuck, I just wanted you to love me..." Ryo's throat led out some hoarse sobs and he stood there, next to the bed, with trembling shoulders and a broken heart. He didn't know how to calm down, he didn't even want to. He felt so horrible he just wanted to cry out everything for the rest of his life. He didn't dare to open his wining, tear-filled eyes. Then, suddenly and so slight, he felt a warm touch, so gentle and tender at his hands. It was Tegoshi, holding his cramped fingers. "Ryo." He whispered with such an understanding voice Ryo gasped for air just to sob everything out again. "It's okay." Tegoshi said comforting and Ryo twitched back. It was too much for him. He was the wrong one, he was the reason why Tegoshi was so pale-skinned and exhausted in the hospital, and still Tegoshi was the one comforting him. He didn't deserve any consolation at all. Ryo stepped back. "Don't be so nice to me."

"Eh?"

"Don't be so nice to me! What I've done to you is the worst crime I could've committed. Don't you understand? I caused you so much grief. I!" He wanted to leave the room. He couldn't stand seeing Tegoshi's harried, innocent, matt eyes. His body still trembled due to sobbing. He turned around and reached out for the door knob.

"Don't leave me."

Ryo stiffened in the movement. He heard Tegoshi's heavy breath panic. "Ryo...I'm begging you...Please don't leave me..."

Ryo didn't dare to move.

And then he heard it. That weak, heartbreakingly whimper. Tegoshi's whimper. "Ryo...you can't leave me now..." This tiny hardly audible voice of Tegoshi was more than he could endure. He wanted to run out, he felt so darn guilty to have caused so much trouble to such an innocent helpless creature. But it was Tegoshi's pleading, his complete fragile, weak pleading, which stopped Ryo from going so.

"Please..."

With faltered steps Ryo turned back, the eyes stuck to the ground. He knew he would

tear apart when he would look at Tegoshi, though he felt it would be a deserved punishment for him. Without saying a word he sat down on the uncomfortable chair next to Tegoshi's bed.

"Thank you..." He whispered, finally breathing a bit calmer. "Ne, Ryo...Look up...Please." Ryo felt Tegoshi's finger at his cheek. It felt icy-cold. "Don't make such a face. It makes me sad."

"A reason more why I should leave you." Ryo mumbled in bitterness. He heard Tegoshi's little sigh. "Don't be stupid." He said. "I'm glad you're here. By my side."

"Though I caused you so much pain? Look at you! You're in the hospital! You collapsed! How can my presence make you happy?!"

"Ryo-chan..."

"Don't touch me!"

Tegoshi stopped in the movement. He never once saw Ryo so furious. And so pitiful.

"You're scaring me..."

Ryo clenched his fists. "Yu-chan...Tegoshi, I'm not suited to be with you. Yamapi is far more better for you." Ryo's throat was sore as he tried to speak out what his heart defended with all its might. "You know he left for your sake? He gave up in order to give you happiness. You loved him for a long time now. He's you prince charming. He's dependable, manly, he has a strong sense of responsibility, he's steady, he is somebody you can rely on. You need a person like him. You need him more than me." Ryo didn't dare to say that he actually had decided to leave first. It was best for his little 'Yu-chan' not to know.

It was completely silent for a moment. And then, with a tiny, fearing voice Tegoshi asked: "Are you going to break up with me...?"

Finally Ryo looked up, his eyes filled with tears. His face showed pure grief as he nodded.

"No..." Tegoshi whispered in disbelief, his eyes widened in shock. "No...No! No!" He panicked again. His breath became irregular, his heartbeat so fast it hurt. "No, Ryo-chan! No!" Tears fell down on his blankets as he tried to struggle himself out of the bed. He reached out for Ryo's strong shoulders, stumbled over the layers of sheets and blankets. He nearly fell down the bed and Ryo just sat there, did nothing. As much as Tegoshi shook him, Ryo didn't look into his eyes. Finally, full of despair, Tegoshi broke down and leaned limply and powerless at Ryo's chest. He sobbed silently. Out of reflex Ryo put his arms around him. He rocked little Tegoshi, who cried unstable, like a little baby. "Gomen, Yu-chan. Gomen ne..." he whispered over and over, feeling so awful guilty, as Tegoshi cried himself to sleep. Ryo wiped the tears off his wet cheeks with his thumbs. After all he cared for him so much. Little Tegoshi was his one and only. Ryo wanted to hug him so tightly, never let him go, but he feared to break

Tegoshi's fragile structure. He has become so skinny. Since when did he stop eating meals properly? Ryo could feel the pure ribs as he stroke Tegoshi's small back. He didn't know how long he sat so, his innocent helpless protégé in his arms, when the door opened quietly.

"How is he?" Koyama asked with worry, and sighed as he stood next to Ryo and looked down at Tegoshi's exhausted face. "What for god's sake did you do to him?" he wanted to know, not reproachfully, but with a slight resignation.

"I told him that I would let him go. That I would break up with him so he can be happy with Pi..." Totally heartbroken Ryo looked with a bitterly, warm smile at Tegoshi, who still sobbed a little, though he was already sound asleep.

Koyama sighed again and sat down on Tegoshi's bed in front of Ryo. "Did you have to tell him that right now? You might think it's best for him, but he's so instable, so weak. He suffered a lot the last weeks. He was in love with Yamapi nearly a half year and was totally hyper when Pi finally responded to his feelings. But then there was also you. You, who made him laugh so easily and forget all his worries. Though he was happy with Yamapi, there was a different happiness when he was with you. You two always fought with each other over his attention. Ryo...Do you know that he'd thought of quitting NEWS?"

Ryo stared at him in shock. "Impossible...!"

Koyama shook his head. "He really considered it, or he still does so. He's told me about it before he..." Koyama looked at Tegoshi totally worn-out in Ryo's arms. "Before...Ryo, he might have looked strong, but inside he felt so much pain, because he loves both of you. And he can't decide. Not yet. But he has to. Do you understand?"

"So...what should I do? I don't know how to handle it. I never thought it would end up this way. All I want is to see him happy." Ryo said desperately. "I don't want to see that broken look on his face anymore..."

"I'll give you an advice." Koyama fixed Ryo's eyes, which longed for a solution like a drowning man for a helping hand. "Take care for him till he gets better. Give him the time he needs. And then you can still break up with him if you want to. But first he needs to be mentally prepared again. If you abandon him now...I really don't want to think about that."

"But..." Ryo didn't finish his sentence. There wasn't anything to say anymore. Koyama's advice was the only thing he could follow now.

"Isn't it like I would lie to him?"

"You love him. Since when is love a lie?"

"Watch out the step!"

Tegoshi rolled his eyes. "I am not blind. And I'm not stupid either." He said.

"But I just..." Ryo began, but Tegoshi cut him off. "I know. And it's cute. But it also annoys me."

"I'm sorry."

"Arrgh, Ryo-chan! You know what annoys me even more than your worrying? It's your steady apologizing."

Ryo didn't answer and just walked ahead with Tegoshi's bag. He had to stay in the hospital for whole three days and was just released. Ryo did as Koyama has told him. He stayed at Tegoshi's side. And Yamapi hasn't shown up once. At least not when Tegoshi has been awake. He only had visited him at night time, short before Ryo had climbed into the bed set up for him next to Tegoshi's. Yamapi then had been sitting there, watching Tegoshi's sleeping face for around an hour, without saying a word or touching him. Ryo had argued a lot with the nurses to get the permission for Yamapi to come out of the visiting hours. He had to promise that it wouldn't cause any stress for Tegoshi. That wouldn't have been Yamapi's intention anyway. When Ryo had called him asking him to come he immediately set up that condition: Tegoshi mustn't get to know that plan. And Ryo agreed. Of course he did. He understood. He understood Yamapi so well. And he was grateful that his best friend was with him at least this one hour at this crucial time they actually should be the most separated. And Ryo knew how hard it had been for Yamapi to sit there, seeing the one he gave up willingly but with a broken heart.

Of course Ryo had told Yamapi that Tegoshi has been discharged today. But he didn't show up. Ryo didn't accused him for that. It was only natural. He was sure he would have done the same. It was killing enough to let Tegoshi go, so why torturing yourself over and over? It would have just being unable to stop Tegoshi going away from him unopposed. Yes, Ryo understood. That's why he has decided to take Tegoshi in again. But just as long as he needed to fully recover.

And then would send him back to Yamapi. It would be fair. He deserved Tegoshi. They both deserved each other. Ryo didn't have the right to disturb their love. Not, not he, he not.

"Where are you again?" Tegoshi asked, stroking away the worrying wrinkle between Ryo's eyebrows. "You're looking so sad..."

Ryo blinked, smiled a bit, before he closed his eyes and lead his head into Tegoshi's hand at his cheek. He took a deep breath and enjoyed the warm, familiar touch. They stood like this for a moment, Ryo with a complete satisfied face and little Tegoshi who marvelled at Ryo's splendid expression. They didn't need to say a thing. It was perfectly fine this moment the way it was. "It's a good feeling..." Ryo whispered after a while with still closed eyes.

"What?"

"Being comforted by you."

"I'll always comfort you." Tegoshi said, lifted up to his tiptoes and gave Ryo a slight kiss.

"Don't be so easy with the word 'always', Yu-chan. It's like 'forever'."

"You talk like you want to get rid of me..." Tegoshi said with a sudden sad tone in his voice. Ryo looked down at his little Yu-chan, deadly serious. "You know this is the least thing I want. So stop talking shit like this." But the fact he didn't want to, didn't change that he had to. Ryo sighed and pulled Tegoshi into a tight embrace. He placed his head onto Tegoshi's and stroked through his soft baby-hair. "Yu-chan...You know there's nothing I wish more than to be with you."

"Mh..." Tegoshi made against Ryo's warm chest.

"And you also know that I love you."

"Do I?"

Ryo chuckled. "Don't be so innocent. This is one of the reasons why I love you." He said and tickled Tegoshi's side. He adored the cheeky squeal that followed due to that. "You simply crack me up..."

Tegoshi giggled. He'd missed this so much. It was so easy to be happy when Ryo was around him. It made him feel light and fluffy. The whole three days in the hospital he'd felt far more better than the last weeks before. "It feels good."

"What?" Ryo looked down at Tegoshi's angelic face, a warm shine in his dark eyes. That was the thing Tegoshi had missed the most. Ryo's gaze resting on him with attentive, caring stare. It was like he was being watched by an overcautious, sensitive, fond guardian. It made him feel important. It made him feel needed. It made him feel loved.

"Everything." Tegoshi answered honestly and smiled. "Everything." He repeated, just because a double vocalizing made it stronger, so this feeling inside his chest wouldn't vanish that fast. And Ryo smiled back at him.

But when little Tegoshi turned around to hop up the stairs the smile fell off his face and in place of that he looked after Tegoshi with his bitter, hurt and sad eyes.

"I am so sorry, but I will have to leave you...my little Yu-chan..."

"Wuaah, out of the way, out of the way!"

Tegoshi opened his eyes in surprise and jumped out of Ryo's way in the last second.

“Watch out, dangerous, dangerous.” Ryo laughed and threw the pan into the sink. Immediately he opened the spigot and the cold water whooshed in the hot pan. Tegoshi drove nearer. They both looked kind of pitiful at the completely charred rests of their lunch.

“Sorry, Yu-chan. Guess we’ll have to starve now, ne~” Ryo smiled whimsically with lifted shoulders and the head laid to the side. Tegoshi chuckled. “I don’t mind starving if we would just continue were we stopped before we nearly burned down your kitchen.” He said with a slinky smile and Ryo grinned. “Well, that would sate my hunger even more.” He replied and gently laid his hands around Tegoshi’s slim waist. Tenderly he leaned down to kiss Tegoshi, who cupped Ryo’s face with his tiny hands. Ryo pulled Tegoshi closer and he got butterflies in his stomach when he heard Tegoshi’s satisfied sigh. He smiled into the kiss.

Then he carefully pressed himself against Tegoshi’s body and as they got more and more passionately Ryo navigated himself and Tegoshi into his bedroom.

With a slight –buff- he closed the door behind them with his feed.

The days passed by and Tegoshi really blossomed again. Ryo fulfilled every wish he had, trying to use the bare time he had left with his Yu-chan. He smiled and enjoyed every single second he spent with him. But as soon as Tegoshi wasn’t by his side, even when he was just in another room, the smile vanished from his face and he had to fight the tears by gulping them down like an alcoholic a good-tasting wine. He was glad Tegoshi got visibly better every day, but he was also aware that with his better state the time to break up, to say goodbye, came nearer and nearer with huge unstoppable steps. He reared that crucial day. He feared it so much...

Every time he held Tegoshi in his arms – and he held him a lot – he embrace him even tighter, trying to cherish and memorize it for later, when Tegoshi wouldn’t be with him anymore.

And then, one morning where he was again awake long before Tegoshi, when he marvelled at his peaceful sleeping face, he knew that day had come. Otherwise he would’ve just pushed it away in front of him forever. Carefully he moved out of the bed. His naked feed quietly tapped on the floor. He had his things already packed for nearly a week now. He left a notice and a key at the table. He gently kissed the sleeping Tegoshi on the forehead, on the nose, on his soft lips, whispered: “I love you, Yu-chan”, tears were running down his cheeks. But he left. It was killing him. But he left.

When Tegoshi woke up a few hours later he immediately noticed something was wrong. There was no Ryo. The place beside him was empty and cold. Nobody. He was alone. In a matter of seconds he was out of the bed. “No...” he whispered disbelieving, fearing, founding Ryo’s closet empty as well. “No...” He saw the

notice...saw the key. "No...Please...No..."

His hands were shivering and his world tore into pieces. He already knew what the notice said even before he'd read it.

Yu-chan...I will be away for some days. I won't come back to you. Take this key. It's for Yamapi's apartment. He's waiting for you. He's always waited for you. I'm sorry I'm leaving you that way. But it's the best this way.
Take care. Become happy. Ryo

Kapitel 18: Chapter 18

It was raining. The streets were under water and lightnings lit the sky for seconds nearly every minute. Bursting loud thunder was following them immediately. Hundreds of people, hidden under their umbrellas ran as fast as they could to reach their homes. But there was somebody who ran against the flow of people. Somebody who didn't know where his home was, where he belonged to.

The tears were invisible under the raindrops for a while now. He didn't know his destination. After Ryo had left Tegoshi didn't know where he could go to. Staying alone at Ryo's apartment till he got back? Impossible. He feared the loneliness of the empty room's, now Ryo has gone.

He felt the weight of the little key inside his pockets. It's for Yamapi's apartment. He's waiting for you.

Was he really waiting? They haven't spoken with each other since...then. Tegoshi was afraid. Was it okay to simply go back to Yamapi like this? Would he send him back? Ryo said he belonged to Yamapi, but why hadn't tried to get in contact since then even once?

Since that fight Yamapi had with Ryo Tegoshi hadn't spoken a word to Yamapi, though they had been even in the same room several times for a NEWS-Group discussion. Yamapi had always been busy when Tegoshi was around, so there had been no chance for them to even exchange some verbiage. It had seemed as if Tegoshi was pure nothing for him. If it would have not been for Ryo's presence always near and caring for Tegoshi, then...Tegoshi didn't even want to think about all the mess of emotions that would have arose again.

But now...He had no other place to go to. Well, he was sure Massu or Koyama would take him in, too, but that was nothing where he could stay for a longer period of time without explaining his situation. Koyama would have the sympathy, of course he would. Bute he wouldn't be able to give Tegoshi what he needed. That would be impossible for him. Actually it was impossible for everyone. Except for those two persons, of whom one had left him a while ago and the others one just a few hours.

Tegoshi stopped and looked up. The rain was dripping down his hair, his nose and his clothes. He was wet and his throat sore. The steps up to Yamapi's apartment seemed too high for him to climb and he feared what would await him up there. He gulped the fear down though and forced himself to walk up the stairs. But then he stood there soppo and shivering from the wind, lost by his courage and didn't dare to knock or ring the bell. Of course he could use the key. But wasn't it, though Ryo gave it to him with the permission of use, too rude to simply walk in there, all like "Honey, I'm home! Did you miss me?"

So Tegoshi did nothing, except sinking down onto the cold floor, his knees pulled against his chest, and trembling he waited for...Yeah, for what? Someone to fetch

him, to care for him, to comfort him.

He didn't notice the cold breeze, the rain and his mood overcame him and he laid his head with a little 'plong' against the door of Yamapi's apartment and closed his eyes.

Yamapi looked up from the script he was just about to read. He thought he'd heard something. There had been a noise at the door. Or had he just imagined it through the steady whisper of rain?

He stared at the door for a moment and listened. Nothing.

He decided to concentrate back on the script. But no matter how hard he tried, his thought always drove off. Off to Tegoshi. How much did he wish to hold him in a close embrace....But he knew that the decision of leaving him with Ryo had been right. Yet his heart was still stronger than his mind. And the desire of wanting Tegoshi back grew bigger and bigger with every second he wasn't with him. But the moments when they had to spent time together as NEWS were far more worse. He had the chance to be with Tegoshi, but also he was not allowed to. He had cherished the time Ryo had pleaded him to stay at Tegoshi's bedside in the hospital. And he was grateful for Ryo letting him have those moments. But he wished he would have not been doomed to leave Tegoshi after some short hours again. Every time he had turned around, facing his back to Tegoshi he felt as if he had cut out a part of himself. Every time again and again, until he was just a fragmented broken piece of nothing. Yamapi had never know before the meaning of the word "heartache". Now he knew it was the term for a hungry, hurting, biting monster which ate him up from the inside non-stop.

Yamapi twitched up from his soda. He had heard the noise again. This time he was damned sure that there was something outside at his door. He looked out of the window. Heavy clouds were throwing big raindrops through the stormy night. Who the heck would deliberately take a step out of his own warm home during this weather? Maybe it was just his neighbour asking for some coffee to borrow. But wouldn't be nearly 11pm a bit too late for a fresh batch of caffeine? Curiously Yamapi went to the door and looked through the peephole. The hall was empty. Strange...Yamapi wondered and opened the door. Immediately he felt a jerk at his legs and he looked down.

"Dear, Holy Crap!" He shouted in surprise, finding Tegoshi at the doormat, exhausted, completely wet and tear-stained. "Tesshi, what's wrong? What happened?"

But Tegoshi just sobbed having his head laid against Yamapi's knee. He wasn't able to say a word. Overwhelming emotions have been taking him over since the moment he had heard Yamapi's voice. There was grief, sorrow, despair, qualms – and most of all relief. He hadn't heard that familiar beloved sound of Yamapi's voice for how long now? He hasn't noticed how much he has missed it.

"Tesshi...Ssh....Calm down." Yamapi put his strong warm arms around him and pulled him tightly to his chest. Tegoshi could hear his heartbeat. "Everything is okay."

"No..." Tegoshi pressed out between two hoarse sobs. "Not, it's not. Ryo is away. I'm alone....And I who abandoned you...am here now...Nothing is okay."

Yamapi patted Tegoshi's head. "Everything is okay now." He said with emphasis, laid his index finger under Tegoshi's chin and lifted his face up. He deeply looked into Tegoshi's round wet puppy-eyes.

Tegoshi swallowed. "Why are you doing this?"

"Doing what?"

"Being so nice to me. I...I thought you wouldn't care about me anymore..." Tegoshi's voice broke off.

Yamapi sighed, a sigh full of grief. "I've tried so." He whispered. "I thought it would be easier for you that way. I thought it would help you if I start to ignore you. All I want is for you to be happy. And in order for that one of us had to give up...Ryo's my best friend after all."

"I've missed you..." Tegoshi's voice was trembling. Yamapi stroked his cheeks.

"I've missed you far more." He said and Tegoshi didn't dare to deny it. He knew that Yamapi had been alone the whole time while he had spent his days happily with Ryo.

"I'm sorry." Tears were rolling down Tegoshi's face again.

"Everything is okay now." Yamapi repeated and then he leaned down his head to kiss Tegoshi.

Is it really okay...Ryo?

The days passed by and Tegoshi got used to living with Yamapi. It was comfortable. Yamapi was mature and calm, he cooked for him, cared for him, he washed his clothes and Tegoshi noticed that they lost Ryo's scent and turned into Yamapi's. It was the third night when Tegoshi wore one of his favourite hoodies and he felt kind of puzzled as he nestled down into the soft cloth and couldn't find any of Ryo's scent in there anymore. Realizing that fact gave him a painful twitch.

Yamapi hugged him often and Tegoshi felt that he needed the physical contact. It felt good when Yamapi stroked along his waist when he kissed him in the kitchen. He got goose bumps every time they kissed. He slept like a baby in Yamapi's arms during the night. They lived peacefully together and though Yamapi was always around him in order to not let Tegoshi get sad, the little one missed his Ryo-chan a lot. Of course he was happy that Yamapi took him in without hesitating. But Tegoshi wanted to know why Ryo had left him. What did he do wrong?

And then the days came when their days off ended and they had their first days as NEWS during their concert tour again. Due to Tegoshi's break-down they had postponed the last concert for two weeks, so the final was now just 2 days away. Tegoshi felt nervous even before he entered the dressing room. He knew Ryo was in there, he had to be, this was work after all.

Yamapi's hand shove into his one and squeezed it gently. "Don't worry." Yamapi whispered encouraging and smiled at him. "I'm right behind you."

Tegoshi opened the door and immediately 3 persons ran up to him. Kei-chan hugged him. Massu patted his back with his warmest Pooh-Bear-Smile and Shige grinned: "Oh, our Mr. Big Mouth is back." Tegoshi laughed. "I knew you missed me" He said with the arrogant voice he so perfectly mastered. Secretly he was looking around the room. And there he was, sitting on the sofa, deeply sunken into the pillows, his hands in the pockets of his worn-out-jeans. Ryo. He was different from the way Yamapi had been. Yamapi had tried to ignore him, but Ryo sat there and stared at Tegoshi. Simply stared at him. He didn't say a word, he didn't move a bit. He just stared with his bitterly, painful sad eyes.

Tegoshi felt about to cry again, wanted to run to him, cling onto his arms and say how much he wished him to take him back. But he felt Yamapi right behind him, just as he'd promised him some minutes ago, which held him back. So Tegoshi just nodded "Hey, Ryo-chan." He said in a low voice and carefully stepped nearer. He knew Yamapi was watching while Koyama, Massu and Shige tried to open a conversation. "Hi, Tegoshi." Ryo whispered in his husky voice. "How are you?"

"I'm fine." Tegoshi answered, knowing that Ryo's actually question behind that was something like "Does he take good care of you?" Tegoshi hadn't noticed how well he had gotten to know Ryo in this short period of time.

"That's good."

"And...How about you?"

"As the circumstances demand." Ryo replied for which Tegoshi was grateful. "Thank you." He said. Ryo looked at him. Puzzled.

"For your honesty. Thank you for not lying to me."

"I've never lied to you." Ryo's eyes were so full of sorrow Tegoshi could hardly bear it. He so wanted to cling onto Ryo. But he couldn't and he was glad when the staff-san came into the dressing room to get whole NEWS for the rehearsal.

For the rest of the day they didn't exchanged a word, but as often as their eyes met Tegoshi could feel Ryo's pain. He could see it through the whole Dome.

And he knew Yamapi was aware of that. But Yamapi didn't lose a word about that, yet Tegoshi could see it in his eyes as well. It brought back the guilt and made him realize how he must mean to Yamapi. He even lets be so near to Ryo though he knows I

haven't given up on him yet...And if I'm honest...I don't want to. I don't want to lose Ryo.

Tegoshi sighed. He'd never thought that being honest with oneself could be so painful.

After the rehearsal was over everyone went back to the dressing room. But nobody noticed, that half-way Yamapi pulled Ryo away and into another hallway.

"What?" Ryo asked provokingly. "Are you going to beat me up again?"

"No, of course not...At least not now."

"Oh, that makes me totally glad."

"Stop the irony, Ryo." Yamapi scolded him seriously. "I have something to talk to you about."

"If you want me to stay away from Tegoshi then I can promise you that I'm already doing my best."

"It's not that. Though it concerns Tegoshi." Yamapi sighed. "Why did you leave him?"

"It doesn't feel right." Ryo said, suddenly calm and sad. "You don't know but Koyama told me that Tegoshi was in love with you even before our bet. You won."

"Maybe I did. But the situation changed. Tegoshi's feelings now are important, Ryo. And he still can't decide."

"That's why I try to get some distance. If I'm ignoring him like you did...No, that's impossible for me. I could never ignore him."

"Thanks for your nice method of making reproaches."

"That's actually not my intention, but I'm happy that it worked out that way thought." Ryo said in a sarcastic voice. "Did he stop thinking about quitting?"

"Quitting?" Yamapi looked puzzled.

"Tesshi wanted to quit NEWS. Did he give up on that thought?"

Yamapi stared at his best friend. "I wonder...Did he?"

"That's what I'm asking you."

"I don't know..."

Kapitel 19: Chapter 19

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He was sure. It would be the best after all.

He could see Ryo suffer after all, how it killed him everyday to endure the hours they spent together in NEWS. He didn't have the right to make poor Ryo suffer that hard. That's why he decided to quit. To finally cut this agonizing bond. He had thought a lot about it. NEWS was one of the most precious parts in his life. But it would be unfair if he would torture Ryo and everybody else just because of his selfish behaviour.

He still had Yamapi. That was more than he actually deserved. He didn't want to be greedy. At least he could give NEWS back to Ryo....He knew that was a lame act of showing his gratitude. But it was the only thing he could do. The only thing which wouldn't hurt the three of them, and especially either Yamapi nor Ryo that much. It would be the best. And maybe he would find back to his usual self again.

The door bell made him twitch. He looked up, hadn't even noticed that he had tears in his eyes. With some light moves he slapped the blood back to his cheeks. He took a deep breath before he opened the door to the apartment.

"Eh?" He looked down the empty hallway. The elevator blinked, just arrived the ground floor seven staircases beneath with a 'bling'. With narrowed eyebrows Tegoshi wanted to close the door again when he noticed the black little thingy at the doormat. Curiously he picked it up. It was a voice recorder with a little cassette in it. Again he looked down the hallway, but there was still nobody who could have dropped it there by accident. "I wonder who this did..." he murmured to himself and took the little Dictaphone with him into the apartment. He sat down at the sofa and pressed the green 'play'-button. First there was silence, just the sound of the cassette running. And then he heard it. This low soft breath he would know under a hundred of breaths. His heart cramped as this breath started to sing – as Ryo started to sing.

Dore dake aruite kitan darou?
Furimitara namida no ato

How far have we walked?
If I turn around, you'll see the path of my tears

The clear husky voice which filled the room, his ears, his head and his heart and

everything else brought back the tears into his eyes. And with them this not bearable pain which he tried to oppress with all his might.

Kizu tsuke kizu tsuki tadoritsuita basho
Ima koko ni kimi ga iru

Arriving at a place where we hurt and get hurt
You are here now

He sobbed. He sobbed unstoppable wetting his shirt, his hands, his lap.

Ai nante kimi dake sa itsudemo motome sugite
Ai nante kimi nashi ja imi nai yo ikirarenai
This thing called love, it's only you, I always demanded too much
This thing called love, there's no point without you, I couldn't survive

His throat began to burn; his eyes swam away in a sea of tears. And he felt so lost. Ryo's voice, singing this wonderful A cappella, made him want to cling onto him so much.

Asa no hizashi ni kimi no negao to
Tereta egao de ureshiku nareru kara
Sonna hibi wo kanjitai yo eien ni

The morning sunlight on your sleeping face
Because the way it shines on you smile makes me happy
I want to feel those kind of days forever

A pause. Ryo's gentle breath again, heavy now, as if it had to endure a flood of tears. Tegoshi knew what would come next. He didn't prepare himself for the great burn-out though. Instead of that he just sat there, shivering defencelessness in order to let the overwhelming impact of the final hit hit him hard right into his chest.

Ai nante kimi dake sa itsudemo motome sugite
Ai nante kimi nashi ja imi nai yo ikirarenai
Ai shitemo ai shikirenai

Mirai nante kimi nashi ja mienai yo iranai yo

This thing called love, it's only you, I always demanded too much
This thing called love, there's no point without you, I couldn't survive
Even if I love you, I can't love you enough
This thing called the future, I can't see it and I don't need it unless you're in it

The cassette still ran, but there was this silence again. Tegoshi trembled. He bit his lips, cried so hard he could hardly breathe. It hurt so much. Everything inside him hurt so much. A sore sob left his wounded throat.

"Yu-chan..." Tegoshi twitched again, then stared at the voice recorder in pure fear. "Yu-chan...Please don't quit." The last words echoed in his head. Ryo's painful, heartbroken voice, pleadingly, over and over again.

And Tegoshi broke down. With a desperate whim he threw his hands around his legs and rolled himself together into a ball. There he laid – this soft, helpless creature, left alone.

"Fuck!" he spit out in a sob. "I still do love him after all."

And he spoke out what he'd denied to himself with all his might, what he'd tried to forget in order to not hurt Yamapi. "I still do love him."

Yamapi found him on the sofa. He didn't expect little Tegoshi to lay there. After he tried to call him various times he thought he would have already gone to bed. But there he was, his little Tegoshi, and looked as lost and hurt like two weeks ago in the hospital.

"Tesshi..." he whispered and knelt down next to him. He saw the dried trace of the tears and stroke his pale, cold cheeks. "What did you do?" he asked in a quiet voice, but Tegoshi didn't wake up. Yamapi feared to change the structure of this question into the actual more proper version. What did we do to you? "Did you cry yourself into sleep again?"

Yamapi sighed. "I thought I would have finally won your heart, you know. I really thought that- And now...Look at you. You're still confused. I can tell by your painfully sleeping face that you're still torn up between us...But what should I do? ... Ne, Tesshi, tell me...What should I do with you...?" His voice was nothing more than a low hoarse whisper. "It hurts me as well to see you like this. And Ryo. He's my friend after all... I've never seen him so desperate, Tesshi...My poor little Tesshi..." Yamapi felt the tears rising up within him. "I thought it would be my great chance when Ryo let you go...And you were happy with me. And now I see that I am still not enough. It breaks you. I don't to be condemned to just watch you being destroyed. I don't want to...I can't stand it anymore..." A teardrop was rolling down Yamapi's cheek and fell

down onto the floor where it disappeared in the thick, fluffy rug.

“Kei-chan told me you want to leave. Is it my fault? Tell me, is it my fault?” He watched Tegoshi’s sleeping face in silence. The hours passed and nobody moved. Just their heavy breath, heavy of sleep and exhaustion and grief and sadness and despair and tears, between them.

The alarm clock of Yamapi’s cell phone woke them up in the morning without any harm. Yamapi’s muscled hurt because he sat the whole night on the uncomfortable floor by the sofa.

“Eh, Yamashita-kun? When did you come home?” Tegoshi asked as he sat up.

“Tonight. I didn’t want to wake you up, so I just stayed here.” Of course Yamapi noticed that Tegoshi addressed him the formal way. And it stitched his heart.

“Oh...”

Yamapi forced himself to smile and tousled through Tegoshi’s hair. “Don’t make such a face.” He said and squeezed Tegoshi’s face into an awkward grin. Tegoshi reminded this of the scene where he had to say Yamapi that they couldn’t share a hotel room. It seemed so far away...This sudden realization nearly brought back the tears. But just nearly. “We should get ready for the last concert today...” He said instead and wrenched himself out of Yamapi’s arms.

“Mh, you’re right.” Yamapi followed Tegoshi with his eyes, how he didn’t had the courage to look into his eyes as he tidied up some stuff in the living-room. “I’ll change my clothed. You can take a shower.” Tegoshi left the room before Yamapi could say something, so he just sighed sadly and walked into the bathroom.

15 minutes later they were ready to leave for the concert which would start in 6 hours.

They hardly spoke anything with each other and both felt the change through the awkward atmosphere which seemed to stand between them like a big fat marshmallow. Though Tegoshi tried to prevent it. But whenever he looked up at Yamapi he felt his smile crackle and whenever he wanted to say something the words faded away into nowhere.

As they arrived at Tokyo Dome and in the NEWS dressing room both of them were quite happy to already see Koyama, Shige and Massu there. Kei-chan sensed the tense and immediately involved Yamapi into the conversation between him and Shige, so that Tegoshi could settle down next to Massu.

“Holy crap, Tegoshi! You look like been smashed by a roller-coaster!” Massu shouted and pointed at the deep rings under Tegoshi’s eyes.

"I don't feel so well." Tegoshi admitted with a tiny smile. "But I will be okay. Tons of make-up and a pot of coffee will probably raise my appearance and mood."

"You sure?" Massu asked with worry. Tegoshi smiled. It felt good that even one person cared for him without causing any trouble. "Yeah, I'm sure. Thanks, Massu." He said with as much sincere as he could bring up.

Shige in the other corner of the room left for the toilet, so Yamapi and Koyama were alone. "What happened?" Koyama asked and Yamapi dug his hands deep into his pockets. "I'm not quite sure, but looks like I've lost..." he said and Koyama lifted up his eyebrows in confusion. "Eehh?"

"When I came home tonight I found him in the living-room. He'd been crying and as far as I know from my talk with Ryo yesterday he wanted to convince Tegoshi to not leave NEWS. And that he mumbled something about 'Ai nante'...Tegoshi hasn't talked to me so far. But I'm sure he finally decided. And that he has decided against m. He whispered Ryo's name tonight..."

Koyama patted Yamapi's back. "Maybe it's better that way."

"Maybe? I would be glad when this would finally end? I can't stand seeing him like this, Ryo either. We can't help him without making it even worse. Whenever we want to cut the bonds he breaks down into this deep dark hole. I don't want to see his far-away eyes. I don't want to see him hiding his grief. I know we caused him all this trouble, but all I want now is that he is finally happy. I love him, but I have the feeling that I'm better with not loving him anymore. Don't get me wrong...It's just that...I don't know what to do..."

"I understand, Pi...I fully understand you. I already got the thought, don't be angry, that Tegoshi is better with Ryo."

"I'm not angry." Yamapi said honestly. "For a long time I really feared to lose him, but now...He smiles when he's with me, the sparkle comes back to his eyes, but it doesn't reach his heart. When he's with Ryo-chan, his whole body, his whole aura shines. Does this sound stupid?"

"Mmh, no. It sounds right."

"Maybe it's wrong to push him back and forth between us like an out-worn teddy bear. But this time I made my final decision."

"I'm proud of you. I really am proud of you."

"This doesn't help me a bit."

Koyama sighed. He thought for a moment, stroking Yamapi's back, who seemed pretty down. But then he got a brilliant idea. "But I know what would help you. All three of you!"

Yamapi looked up, his face a mixture of confusion and curiosity. Koyama smiled brightly. "It's Shige!"

"Shige?!"

Kapitel 20: Chapter 20

Please turn on your Mediaplayer/iTunes etc. and listen to 'Ai nante' by our lovely NEWS

~+~

The concert had a special feeling. Everybody sensed it. NEWS and the staff did their best to create a final show which would make the audience satisfied and happy. But deep inside Ryo, Yamapi, Massu, Shige and Koyama were worried. Koyama had explained his plan to the others and also what it would mean for NEWS if that plan would fail. Especially Massu was shocked by the long odds that were at stake. And Shige wasn't sure about the tiny role he played in that plan. But they all got the need of success.

They would start after the MC. Everybody had talked as if would be for the sake of their life, even Yamapi and Ryo who usually didn't speak up that much during the MC-part participated as well as they could. Just Tegoshi stayed as far as possible silent, smiling when the cameras has a close-up on him and laughing into the microphone every now and then. He was tired of faking his smile. He didn't even know how to smile honestly anymore, yet faking it felt much better than putting on the sad face everybody would worry about. Before he really realized it the MC was already over and he hadn't lost a word. Shit, he scolded himself. You have to focus!!

He knew the next song would be 'Ai nante' and he tried to erase yesterday evening out off his memory. He felt unsure and he would have given everything to be able to drop out of the performance, but he'd promised himself to not ever be cowardly again. This would be his last show anyway. 12 songs and the Encore. This wasn't to much, was it?

He took a deep breath, when the intro began. The audience screamed when they noticed the song and the lights turned off. The whole Tokyo Dome was dark, just a few flashlights lit the hall. Tegoshi exactly knew where Shige and Ryo stood and he concentrated on his text, when suddenly a spotlights shone on him. He whirled around, supposed to sing the first keys, but he was surprised and the microphone was out anyway.

"Dore dake aruite kitan darou?
Furimuitara namida no ato"

Tegoshi felt like his heart would stop to beat as Ryo's husky, gentle voice echoed through the dome with just the piano in the background. He was unable to form a clear thought. His mind went completely blank.

“Kizu tsuke kizu tsuki tadoritsuita basho
Ima koko ni kimi ga iru”

Ryo stepped out of the darkness and into the spotlight which shone on Tegoshi, a heartbreakingly expression on his face.

“Ai nante kimi dake sa itsudemo motome sugite
Ai nante kimi nashi ja imi nai yo ikirarenai”

The music busted out and Ryo came further. Tegoshi could see the tears in his eyes. He couldn't move and finally Ryo was near enough to grab his hand, out of the camera-view. Tegoshi slightly grabbed Ryo's fingers back, glad to be able to hold onto something. He feared to lose his balance, his knees were wobbly and he felt dizzy. Totally overwhelmed by the situation he hardly forgot to breath. He felt that Ryo's hand was trembling in his own one, he could see that Ryo's whole body was shivering.

“Asa no hizashi ni kimi no negao to
Tereta egao de ureshiku nareru kara
Sonna hibi wo kanjitai yo eien ni”

Ryo's sung words echoed in Tegoshi's head and he felt tears rising up inside him. He knew what would come next. The big showdown of the song. He bit his lip. Ryo squeezed his hand desperately when he took a deep breath.

“Ai nante”

Ryo's husky voice screeched. And then broke off. Ryo held the back of his hand with which he held the microphone up to cover his mouth. He couldn't bear looking at Tegoshi. A scream went through the audience, and before Tegoshi realized what he exactly was doing he held up the microphone in his hand and sung:

“kimi dake sa itsudemo motome sugite

Ai nante kimi nashi ja imi nai yo ikirarenai

Ai shitemo ai shikirenai

Mirai nante kimi nashi ja mienai yo iranai yo”

Tegoshi’s voice clearly finished the last line of the song, the music trailed off and when the spotlight turned out Tegoshi let down the microphone. It was meaningless that there were over 50.000 people around them. It was meaningless that there were right in the middle of a concert. Everything what matted was the fact that Tegoshi finally knew were he belonged.

And as he stepped further through the darkness he heard Ryo’s hoarse sobs. He felt that he was about to cry, but they also had to leave the stage. The next song was a KoyamaPi-Collaboration. So he dragged Ryo with him down the stairs to the dressers of the Juniors which stand under the stage everywhere and into a dark corner. Ryo was crying like a baby and he hid his eyes with his hands. His shoulders were shaking and he snuffled.

“Ryo-chan...” Tegoshi whispered with wet eyes and he was not sure whether he should smile or break into tears. Gently he took Ryo’s and pulled them off his face. Ryo sobbed even harder when he got a glimpse of Tegoshi and quickly he lowered his head.

“Oh, Ryo-chan...” Tegoshi claimed and a single tear rolled down his cheek. “Actually I should be the one crying.”, he said quietly and Ryo made a snoring sound. “Gomen ne, Yu-chan. But...But I simply can’t stop.”

Tegoshi bristled a smile. “Baka.”

“I’m so sorry.”

“Stop apologizing.”

“What should I do then? I did horrible things to you. What am I supposed to do if not apologizing? I have no-“

“Fuck, stop babbling shit and finally kiss me!” Tegoshi cut him off and immediately he felt Ryo’s soft lips and his own ones. He sighed satisfied, pressed his body against Ryo’s, the warmth he had missed so much, and clung with his fingers to his back. After a while Ryo drove back. “Yu-chan...can you forgive me? I am really so-“

But Tegoshi already pulled Ryo back into a kiss.

"You did the right thing, Pi."

"Think so?"

"Just think? You told me you were sure."

"I will never be sure as long as he's not with me."

"You already miss him..." It wasn't a question. Koyama saw it in Yamapi's eyes that were not be able to hide what his face hid so hard.

"I will always miss him. It hurts. It hurts so much." Yamapi's hand rested on his chest. "I've never once before felt such a pain...Kei-chan?"

"Mh?"

"Will it every go away again?" Yamapi's sudden lost look was like a knife in Koyama's heart. "I don't know, Pi...I really don't know."

Yamapi nodded. "It's better this way."

And both of them looked at Tegoshi and Ryo who kissed and dried each other's tears and laid in each other's arms and fit perfectly together in their embrace.

Ryo hugged him from the back and Tegoshi could feel his hear beating against his shoulder blades.

"Ne, Yu-chan-"

"Ssh...Stay quiet for a while please."

Ryo did as Tegoshi told him, though he couldn't understand why. Then Tegoshi took Ryo's hand, which had clung onto the little ones tummy and placed it at his chest.

"Do you feel it?" Tegoshi whispered still holding Ryo's warm hand.

"Mmh..." Ryo made in complete satisfaction, closed his eyes and buried his face into Tegoshi's soft hair, inhaling this Sweet scent of him he so loved.

They stayed in complete silence, both feeling each other's heartbeat, the most beautiful, utterly charming thing they had every felt. They didn't need to say a thing, they didn't need to tell 'I love you'. Both of them knew it as they slowly fell asleep in such a inner calm they never once have felt before.

the end.