

Between Heaven and Earth

[Kaoru x Die] AU

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Kapitel 4: Chapter Four

Surprised, Kaoru registered the fact that Die was already awake when he came down the stairs the next day. It was later than usual, around nine in the morning, but still early for someone who should be hung-over from having too much alcohol. Raising his brows the smaller man addressed the redhead with a curt nod and couldn't help but ask: "Already up? Not tired anymore?"

A huge smile spread across Die's face as he looked up at Kaoru while he was sitting on the couch, cross-legged and with a book in his hands. "Yes and no. I woke up and wanted to keep reading so badly that I couldn't stay in bed any longer. Should I've waited for you to call me? Sorry if so." Indeed he hadn't been sure if he was allowed to get up before Kaoru would come and wake him up but then again, he felt so useless lying in the bed and doing nothing, that he had just taken the risk.

"No, I'm just wondering," the lawyer remarked with a small, stifled yawn and went to make some coffee. "And your head? Does it hurt?" He spoke a tad bit louder, so Die would hear him from the kitchen.

"Doesn't hurt at all. Why?" The former angel shouted back, just as loud as Kaoru had done. He wasn't sure why his head should've been hurt but it was nice that someone cared about him and his head. So he just smiled and shut the book, done with it.

"Just making sure," Kaoru replied once he appeared back inside the living room. "You were pretty much drunk last night and usually most people would be hung-over, with a headache, or just feel sick the next day. But I'm glad you're not." He almost smiled but more in relief that he wouldn't have to cope with a wailing, sick man beside him.

Happily Die shrugged and smiled. Had he been drunk last night? He had felt a little odd and he remembered that he wanted to dance. But that made people having headaches and feel sick? "Maybe it's a natural talent that I have?"

"Probably but you can't take much considering what Toshiya's told me." Kaoru smirked and left for the bathroom. To have a talent that prevented from being hung-over would be nice but since he could take a lot more than four beers before getting wasted, Die's 'talent' wouldn't mean much to him. Nevertheless, he should watch out

for Die not having too much alcohol the next time they went out.

Once Kaoru was finished inside the bathroom, he made his way to get the much-desired coffee. He called for Die to join him and advised him to help himself for something to eat. The lawyer never ate in the morning but he still liked to sit for a while and enjoy not having to go to the office at weekends. Although he didn't care much, he was curious about the redhead and this was the perfect opportunity to get to know something more than he already found out. Pretending that he believed the story about Die having been an angel, but only just pretending to, he suddenly started his inquiry.

"So Die, tell me," he started and took a sip from the hot black liquid. "For how long have you been an angel?"

The redhead pondered for a moment, then he simply shrugged. "I'm not sure. Years I suppose. I can't tell really because in Heaven there's no time and I forgot most of my life before becoming an angel."

"You forgot? How come? So before you've been an angel, you've been human and then turned into an angel?" This was getting interesting and most of all kind of amusing. At least better than the morning shows in television Kaoru usually used to watch during breakfast.

"Yeah," Die answered, honest to the core, and helped himself to some more chocolate cream from the fridge since he had developed an instant liking to the sweet food. "I was human like you are and I am now again. Then I died and became an angel. At first I could remember my past life as a human but the memories quickly faded." He sat down again and ate the chocolate cream with a spoon.

"How did you die?" Kaoru didn't know why he was asking that question, not even sure if the other man could remember. But Die's explanation was just too simple for his liking. Maybe it was because he didn't believe a single thing of it and was looking for something else, something more to hold onto, which would satisfy his mind.

"Overdose." The usual carefree expression on Die's face vanished and it was the first time that the lawyer saw him smile in a sad way. But the other man continued: "That's what I was told. Can't remember. God says it's better for angels to forget about their past lives in order to help humans on Earth." He shrugged. He hadn't even wasted a single thought about his former life as a human in ages and now it only made him realize that indeed he had gone through life and death before. He didn't like that he couldn't remember. It would've been helpful now.

Kaoru raised one eyebrow in suspicion but dropped it quickly again, not really caring anyway. He was far from finished with his inquiry. So far Die had an answer to every question and didn't even hesitate to spill the beans. Then again his statements were vague. Accused people usually said that they couldn't remember when being under oath. "Is everybody going to be an angel once they die?"

"Nope," the other man said and shook his head meaningfully. "Only those who fucked

up their lives. That sounds weird, I know. But these ones are destined to make up by helping humans. I don't get why either. There's no school or something in which angels get enlightened about everything." He shrugged again a little helplessly and kept on eating, right now sucking clean one of his fingers.

For a moment Kaoru's eyes fixed on Die sucking his index finger, before he shook his head to clear his mind. "And for how long will an angel have to help humans? Angels can't die, can they?"

"For the rest of time actually." The redhead's gaze snapped upwards to meet the inquiring dark orbs of his host. "I told you there's no time in Heaven, so that is just the way it is, because you're right, angels can't die."

"Then why are you back on Earth in human form?" Kaoru held Die's stare with his own, being totally serious, when for once even the red-haired weirdo wasn't smiling like a moron.

"It's my punishment for messing up my missions." That's when the taller man dropped his gaze and inhaled deeply, before pushing out the breath he held for a moment in his lungs. Indeed it was punishment and if there hadn't been Kaoru who had helped him and still did, then this whole thing had probably turned out to be way more difficult than it was now. Die was plainly grateful that he managed so well thanks to the smaller guy. "Now that I'm here it doesn't feel like punishment anymore. Being human is way cooler than being an angel. Yet, being human can be also hard and I know that if you wouldn't allow me to work for you and live here, then I were doomed. So," he drawled for a moment, and then a huge smile appeared on his lips. "Thank you, Kaoru. This means a lot to me."

For once Kaoru didn't know what to say. Many people had thanked him before but they had also paid a fair amount for his help. Die's gratitude seemed to come straight from his heart and that's something the lawyer hadn't experienced often in his life so far. After all Die shouldn't thank him but work off his debts. Averting his gaze from the redhead, he muttered: "Don't mention it."

And he meant it. There was no need to thank him. He did that for the purpose of making good use of this idiot and not out of plain kindness. It reminded him of a conscience that he wasn't supposed to have. For a while it was quiet between them, the lawyer sipping from his coffee and lighting a fag, while Die tried some of the bread he had found in one of the cupboards.

"Smoking kills," the redhead remarked, not even looking at Kaoru.

"Many things do," he replied with a quick tongue without to ponder for long.

"Can I have a smoke then?" Curious about the cancer stick's taste Die asked.

"Sure," Kaoru pushed his pack of cigs over to his guest. "You know how to light one?"

With a small nod Die grabbed for the lighter and put a cigarette between his lips. He

could do that. He had seen how the other man had done it. It couldn't be that difficult. Easily, he lit it, took a drag from the end of it and pushed out the smoke. "I don't taste anything at all."

Kaoru rolled his eyes since he had watched each of the redhead's moves. "Because you do it wrong. Here, you have to inhale the smoke." He took a drag from his cigarette and inhaled it deeply before blowing it out again. "And then push it out."

Trying again, Die did just as his friend had done, inhaled deeply and blew the smoke out with a smile that suddenly vanished.

"Tasted anything?" Kaoru asked bored.

"I feel sick," Die blurted and made the smaller man actually laugh.

"You're white as a sheet." The other man chuckled and took another long drag from the stick, just to demonstrate his superior abilities, even if he was more or less oblivious to his actions. It just came natural to him.

Coughing Die tried again, but then decided to leave it. "Maybe not now."

"Maybe not," Kaoru agreed. "Might be better anyway. I have an appointment later on and if you wanna come along, you shouldn't be on the verge of puking." The question wasn't really if the taller man wanted to come along since Kaoru had already decided that he would definitely accompany him. The guy should make himself useful.

"Where do we go?" The redhead widened his eyes in interest and handed the unfinished cigarette to Kaoru.

"To a client of mine," he halfheartedly explained, his focus on the two cigarettes in his hands now. With a little growl he pushed one out in the ashtray, before he continued. "One that I actually like. But he's not the youngest anymore and has some troubles with his son. Law of succession. Quite a nasty thing, really."

"I've read about it," Die proudly announced with a smile. "There was something about it in the book you gave me."

"But that was only basic law. It's way more complicated than this," Kaoru said as he leant back and frowned, already pretty much concerned about the case. It would certainly not be as easy as usual.

"Why is it complicated? I thought that the law of succession would only be a matter to handle once someone had died. But obviously the guy's still alive," Die spoke out his thought and watched his friend with interest. "Right?"

"The thing is that he's still alive. But he's quite old and he needs to settle everything before he actually dies, or else," Drawling for a moment, Kaoru thought about whether he really should tell Die the conditions of this case or not. But in the end he at least wanted to try. "Well, once he dies, his son will inherit half of his company and

Sakamoto owns a huge company. But his son is somehow not reliable, always messes up in his life and isn't really capable of leading a company, not even one half of it. That's why his father wanted to find a way how he could avoid the whole matter, trying to fix something up, that in the end his son won't get anything out of the whole estate, but maybe a fair amount of money." He paused for a short moment, only to get convinced by a nod from the redhead that he was still listening. "But his son got wind of the whole deal and now it's his son who sues the father in order to put him under tutelage. My part is to avert that."

"Oh, that sounds like a hard job." Die was impressed by all the details and facts and that obviously Kaoru was such a smart guy who could defend people from being put under tutelage. These things about law he understood, but all the other tiny parts of the relations between humans, between a father and his son, Die didn't get at all. Why was this so complicated? "Wouldn't it be better if the son just took the money and left the company to someone who can lead it?"

Kaoru scoffed. "You tell him that." In Die's world everything just seemed so easy. As if people simply accepted that they were stupid. "Besides, he won't be granted with the whole amount half the company is worth. That's why."

"And why doesn't that Sakamoto guy just give him the amount?" Die inquired.

"Because Reiji, the son, doesn't deserve it, seeing that he already wasted so much of his father's financial capital." By now Kaoru was smirking a little at the other man for not even guessing that. Hell, he really was such a plainly naïve guy that if the lawyer wanted, he could make him believe that Kaoru was the Holy Virgin.

"I see." Scratching his red mop of hair, Die was pleased for the time being, the answers enough for him to put some sense into the mess in his head and at the same time he was able to re-think it and maybe come up with new questions. One thing he already knew: that the humankind's relations were far more complex than it seemed from above.

Using the quiet moment and Die's temporary silence, Kaoru stood up, about to leave and get dressed in a proper way. "Clean the dishes, ok? I'm gonna put on some neat clothes and then we can go. I don't wanna be late." He received nothing else but a certain nod, of course, and that was nothing less than he had expected.

Within a matter of minutes Kaoru had changed into the usual but good attire, a plain white shirt and dark suit, before he appeared back in the living room, ready to fetch his briefcase and Die. The taller man had successfully cleaned the dishes and put them back into the cupboards, before he had quickly dressed himself in something that would fit the occasion. It actually impressed the businessman that Die looked that good within a dark blue shirt and the suit but then he should probably thank Toshiya for having such a good taste in clothes. "C'mon then."

A nod was all that accompanied Die's usual smile as he followed his boss. The ride inside the car didn't take them long this time and soon they arrived the residence of Sakamoto. Beyond doubt Die was excited and most of all curious about how that guy

would be like, because he was trying to disinherit his son, but on the other hand Kaoru actually liked the old man. Being of good use and a loyal worker, Die was so friendly and carried his boss' briefcase – after the same man had told him to do so.

Ringling the bell Kaoru suddenly remembered one more advice. "Don't speak without being asked. Got that? I lead, you follow. Easy rule."

"Yes, I understand." Die gave a firm nod and forced his smile off his lips, since Kaoru was suddenly that serious. "You lead, I follow. I can do that."

On the verge of rolling his eyes, the smaller man got suddenly aware of the door being opened and instead smiled at the old lady in the doorway. "Mrs. Sakamoto, good morning. I'm not alone today. I hope that's fine with you and your husband? This is Die, my assistant." Formally Kaoru introduced the taller man who instantly smiled at the nice and friendly looking older woman.

"Good morning, Kaoru," she greeted back with a genuine smile and hushed the two men inside. "Of course it is fine with us. Die, nice to meet you."

Bowing, Die returned the smile that was stuck to his lips anyway and shrugged off his shoes. "Good morning, Mrs. Sakamoto. The pleasure's all mine."

"The mister's in the living room, waiting for you, Kao," she told him, using a pet name few people were allowed to address him with. It made him mentally flinch since this wasn't anything meant for Die's ears to hear. But he tried to ignore it and hoped that he hadn't even noticed as the old lady went on to speak her mind. "He worries a lot about the whole thing with Reiji. If only he would understand. Such a stupid boy."

Following the woman Kaoru and Die entered the huge living room, where an old man was sitting in an armchair, obviously glad to see the lawyer. Politely Kaoru greeted the old man as well and introduced his new assistant. They instantly sat down and Kaoru asked about the old guy's well-being before they moved on to even more important topics, in one word: Reiji. Listening attentively to the whole conversation Die didn't even notice the time passing by that quickly and neither did the other two men. That was until Mrs. Sakamoto entered the room again and bowed. "I'm sorry to disturb but it's time to eat now. Jinji, you know it's not good for you to eat that late."

"Oh woman," the old man addressed her and waved his hand dismissively. "Can't you see that we have more serious matters to handle? We'll eat later."

"But I'm sure Kao and Die are hungry as well. It's past one already and you need to take your medicine," she protested with a frown of worry, wrinkling the old skin on her forehead. As if on demand Die's belly was grumbling, just the thought of something to eat making him hungry. Apologetically he smiled at the old woman and blushed a little as he registered Kaoru's gaze of abashment. The woman motioned with her hand at the two young men. "At least don't make these boys here suffer from starving!"

Of course her husband was ready to protest again but Kaoru, knowing that the fights

between these two could go on forever, cut in and smiled at the woman. "Why don't we eat here?" He cast a look at Mr. Sakamoto before he shifted his gaze back at the missus. "If it doesn't make too many circumstances, we could eat here and continue discussing the whole matter while we have lunch."

Fine with the idea, the old man waved his hand in an agreeing manner and growled inaudibly that he was out-smarted by the lawyer. The old woman smiled, even if she was still looking a little helpless now. But people, that looked helpless, were without a doubt a case for Die! Without thinking he jumped on his feet and broadly smiled. "I'm gonna help you, Mrs. Sakamoto. I could carry all the dishes."

With a grateful smile and another small bow, she gladly accepted and disappeared together with the redhead inside the kitchen. Kaoru frowned. Die was a hopeless case, always up to good. But this time it was even appreciated by the other man and he smiled a little and turned his attention back to the old man and the case at hand. "Well, I think—"

"That guy is really nice." Suddenly Mr. Sakamoto cut in almost harshly, shifting his gaze to look at Kaoru intently. "I'm glad you do have some nice contacts as well. Other than the guys you're usually accompanied by, I mean. Die is red-haired but at least polite."

A little helpless about what to reply Kaoru just inhaled deeply and pushed out the breath after some moments. He knew the old man too well to protest or to deny the truth. "I guess so."

"Facts, boy. Not guesses." The old man smirked and leant closer to the young man next to him. "You hang out with dimwits too often. And since you don't wanna marry my daughter, I have to at least make sure that you don't get spoiled by retarded cretins."

"And Die is no such?" He couldn't help his comment. Part of him hated to be lectured like a schoolboy, even if it was okay that Mr. and Mrs. Sakamoto mothered him. The old man had played a huge role during Kaoru's studies and if it hadn't been him who had urged the young man to go on and achieve his goals, then he weren't where he was now. That's why the former academic and his wife owned some privileges that everybody else didn't.

"No, I just don't like his red hair and well," the man drawled for a moment before he went on. "And sometimes his smile looks a little silly but other than that, he's attentive, helpful, polite and could probably defend you in a fight. Depends. I couldn't measure his arms yet."

"Oh c'mon, stop that now." This was too much for Kaoru but he still had to laugh lightly. As if anybody cared about fighting for someone nowadays. And by the way, he could defend himself on his own quite well. "It's not your task to hook me up. You have a daughter, remember? You could find her a matching guy instead of me."

"Ah, so Die likes girls?" The man obviously was all up for it.

Kaoru sighed and shrugged. "I don't know."

"You lose your drive," he remarked chuckling, teasing the lawyer.

"I... Can we go back to the conversation we had before this? I mean, you're sued. Have you already forgotten?" He didn't mean to be brash or rude but the teasing was slowly making him feel embarrassed. Sakamoto was probably the only one who did that; dared to do that and did it in such a loving manner that Kaoru couldn't threat the old man. Quite the contrary, he liked it. But everything had its limits.

Right in that moment Die and Mrs. Sakamoto appeared back in the living room, serving deliciously smelling food, while the old man was still chuckling at Kaoru. It didn't take them long to set the table and the feast began. In the beginning the old man and Kaoru were both trying to keep on talking about the case, but soon enough they all were pretty much occupied with enjoying the wonderful meal. Die had to admit that this was probably the best thing he had tasted on Earth thus far and he complimented the old woman. Kaoru just nodded and agreed.

"Well Die, say," the old man began and chewed on his food. "Do you wanna become a lawyer like Kaoru here?"

He contemplated for a moment what to answer, smiling all along. "That'd be nice."

That comment made Mr. Sakamoto chuckle. "Maybe you two should team up. Kaoru could do with a little less work. He works too hard, too relentless. Besides, he needs someone to take care of him."

The lawyer suppressed the urge to growl in annoyance as well as to say something. He cast a glance at Die instead, checking for his expression. But as usual Die just smiled all friendly and as lovely as one probably could. "I'll try my best."

It nearly provoked a smile to rise upon Kaoru's lips.

Late in the afternoon Kaoru and Mr. Sakamoto had finally finished to prepare a proper defense and after promising to visit some other time again, off duty then, Kaoru and Die left. The smile didn't vanish from the redhead's lips and he was somewhat relieved and very happy that they had met such a nice couple. "You know, Kao," Die began and subconsciously used the pet name he had heard before. "I really like these two. And they like you really much, one can see that. I just don't understand that Reiji person. Why doesn't he get along with his parents?"

Ignoring the fact that Die had addressed him with a pet name, Kaoru took a deep breath and sighed hardly audible. "Long story. They've been three siblings at first. The oldest one died long ago. I guess that Reiji's problem is that he never got along with his brother before he died. He had become the problem kid, whereas Maiko, the daughter, was still too young to understand it. The Sakamotos tried but they kind of failed to reach their son."

"That's sad," was Die's first thought and he voiced it out. "Family is the basement for love."

Raising one amused but also doubtful eyebrow, Kaoru tried to mock him. "You've got that from Cupid again?"

"Yeah." Nodding Die agreed, oblivious to Kaoru mocking him. "I wish had parents like them."

"Maybe Sakamoto adopts you. He seemed to be nuts about you," he muttered and steered the car back on the road.

"What does that mean, being nuts about me? Does he like me? I liked him too," Die babbled away freely. "But he likes you a hell lot more. Maybe he would adopt both of us."

Shaking his head Kaoru decided that the conversation was over, at least on his part. Silently he drove them back home, refusing to talk anymore. Once again Die had proved to be totally off this planet. Maybe he really came from Heaven. It would explain many things. When they had finally arrived the Niikura household, Die slumped down on the sofa and switched on the TV. As much as he liked to read books, television was something he could grow addicted to. Only some minutes later Kaoru settled down next to Die and grabbed for his cell phone, calling Toshiya.

"What's going on tonight, Tosh?" He began to talk straight away as soon as the other man had replied. Die could only make out some Yeah's and No's all the while and decided to follow the things happening on the TV screen. "Fine then. See you there," Kaoru finished the talk with his friend, only adding one last statement after being asked whether he would come alone or with Die. "Yes, I'll bring him along. Bye."

"Me?" Die couldn't help but ask and poked his index finger in his chest, instantly curious. True, he hadn't been able to ignore the conversation.

"Yes, you. We go out tonight. In a club, nothing too loud, more comfy and neat," he explained and got back on his feet. "I'll get changed for that. We can eat something there as well."

Watching the other man go upstairs, the former angel shrugged and switched off the television, before he headed into his room and changed at least his pants. He quite liked the pair of jeans that Toshiya had chosen for him and slid into the comfortable clothing, tying a white belt afterwards. Whether his shirt matched with the jeans, he didn't know, didn't care about it either. With a smile the man from Heaven casually walked back inside the living room and waited for Kaoru, who appeared only minutes later, dashing past the redhead to fix his hair. Quickly Die followed and mirrored the smaller man's actions, using all the stuff that his friend had used seconds before. When Kaoru raised one delicate eyebrow, Die merrily grinned at him, resulting in the lawyer rolling his eyes.

After a longer ride inside a cab, because Kaoru didn't see any reason not to drink

tonight, they arrived the club not too late. It was a popular place, mostly visited by people who had money to waste for expensive drinks within a well-mannered venue. Visitors preferred it because it opened its doors late in the afternoon and closed not before breakfast time. The music wasn't loud, but decent and stylish, not any alike where Die had been with Toshiya. The red-haired man curiously shifted his gaze around and took in all his surroundings while he was following Kaoru, who headed to the bar straight away.

"What would you like to drink?" Kaoru asked, leaning against the counter.

"I don't know," Die nervously smiled. "I still don't have any money and—"

"Stuff it," the other man smirked. "I already paid the cab, didn't I? So, would I ask if I wanted you to pay yourself?"

Shrugging Die considered that probably Kaoru would not ask if he wanted him to pay for his drinks. "Guess I'm invited then, huh? Then I'd like to have beer."

"You wish," Kaoru chuckled. "I'll just pay in advance and trust you to invite me another time instead." Turning to face the bartender, he ordered the beer and a stronger drink for himself, before he paid both drinks and was rewarded with fast service. He had just handed the beer to Die, who curiously observed its color since it was actually within a glass, when someone addressed Kaoru and demanded his attention. Not because of politeness but simply due to his excellent manners around this kind of society, the lawyer shortly introduced Die to whomever he was talking with. But in the end the redhead was pretty much ignored and happy to see Toshiya finally bounce through the room, only to greet the other man with a hug.

"Die! I'm glad you could make it," he literally beamed in joy. "And glad Kaoru pulled the plug outta his ass and brought you along." He giggled at his joke while Die was wondering why his friend would wear a cork in his butt. "Um, I'd like you to meet some of my friends," the joyful black-haired went on and poked Kaoru in his ribs. "Hey Kao, can I kidnap Die for a while?"

"Hello to you too, Toshi," the other man cast a glance across his shoulder, but wasn't really annoyed at Toshiya for not welcoming him in a more friendlier way. He looked at Die for mere seconds, before he shrugged and turned back to the conversation with some other guys he knew. "Sure. Just don't make him drink too much and puke."

Rolling his eyes, but grinning widely the tall black-haired hooked his arm around Die's and pulled him away to where his friends were. Kaoru's lame advocate-mates weren't really of any interest for Toshiya and he was assuming that a guy as cheerful and exciting as Die wouldn't like their company either. And indeed, the redhead didn't mind at all. Whether he stayed with Kaoru or wandered around with Toshiya didn't matter to him, as long as he enjoyed himself. That, he luckily did. He had a blast.

Throwing a last, short look after Die, the lawyer just hoped that Toshiya would keep the promise he had given last night. The red-haired clumsy-boy didn't need any more confusion than his brain was already suffering. As he turned back to gaze at the guy

he had currently been talking to, the man grinned at him. "Beautiful. Where did you find him?"

Kaoru suppressed the urge to roll his eyes and groan in annoyance, since for once he really did have nothing going on with the company he had brought along. But he was used to such blunt talking and without to bat an eyelash replied monotonously: "I hired him," he smirked at the widening eyes of the guy. "He does indeed work in my company. Nothing to gossip. Sorry to disappoint you."

A relieved sigh escaped the man opposite Kaoru and he raised his brows. "Who said I'd be disappointed?" There was no response from the lawyer and the man pressed on further. "That means nobody takes care of your gorgeous self, right? I could offer myself once more."

"Thanks for your concern," he gave a small but sly smile and took a sip from his drink. "My gorgeous self doesn't crave for attention."

"It did. Once." The man inwardly cringed but smirked back, trying not to give away how pissed he was. "Maybe you're just after red-headed guys now."

The whole conversation annoyed Kaoru to no end and he slowly grew impatient from all the false politeness. "The redhead is nothing but a friend of Toshiya. Ask him if you want details. Believe me one thing. If I truly wanted to get into his pants, you'd be the first one to know."

The self-important grin on Kaoru's lips made the other man narrow his brows. He took a breath, on the verge to reply something, but closed his mouth again, turning away. Without another word he walked off, much to the other man's delight. He almost sighed in relief. There were enough other people he could talk to who he hadn't had something with, that made them pissed about nothing of their business anyway. Fortunately there weren't that many guys here, as far as Kaoru could tell, who had made the same experience as the guy who had just left.

Time passed by without any more quarrels like that and Kaoru enjoyed himself, talking to different people he had never met before. Still, he couldn't deny that Die popped into his mind from time to time, making the lawyer gaze around just to appease his odd urge to be sure that Die was fine. Whenever he did, he found the redhead laughing along with other guys or simply chatting with them, that smile of his always plastered across his full lips. But only then Kaoru was soothed and would turn back to the people who he currently accompanied and honored with his presence. But during a longer period in which he truly hadn't looked for the redhead, there was suddenly Toshiya right next to him, patting his shoulder for attention.

"Hey Kao, do you know where Die is by any chance?" He bit his bottom lip, embarrassed about the fact that he had indeed lost a tall, redheaded cutie.

"I? How should I know when he was with you?" It was just the perfect occasion to tease Toshiya. Kaoru knew too well how easily his friend got sidetracked and the mere fact that he had lost the red-haired man caused the lawyer to cheer inwardly. "Maybe

he's snogging some girl in a dark corner. Who knows?" He turned his back to Toshiya, knowing pretty well that the other man would make sure to gain back his friend's attention.

"You think so?" For a moment Toshiya contemplated if he had read all the signs wrong and Die had really sneaked off with a girl. But then he just pulled at Kaoru's sleeve and made him look at him again. "No way. Maybe he's just outside for a smoke or getting himself another drink. I better go and look for him. If you see him, make sure to call me."

A small smile made its way upon Kaoru's lips. "You do that, Tosh. We don't want to miss Die, do we?" He was teasing the other man but his advances stayed ignored when Toshiya marched off with a frown that left deep wrinkles of worry on his forehead. He was way too concerned about the whereabouts of the red-haired beauty than to think about what exactly Kaoru had meant.

As soon as Toshiya was out of sight, Kaoru excused himself and went into the directions of the gent's. He had seen Die disappearing into the same direction long ago and would've guessed that he was already back with Toshiya. But that, he obviously wasn't. Why he hadn't told his friend what he had seen, was simply because he didn't want anyone to know that he had kept a watching eye upon his company. But still, he wasn't sure about Die's true whereabouts and he didn't like the fact at all. The reason was plain and easy to comprehend. If Die were gone, money was gone as well. That's why losing him wasn't acceptable.

As Kaoru entered the man's room, two males were just leaving, and he closed the door after them, before he stilled for a moment. It was quiet and he began to check underneath the cubicle doors for possible toilet users. In fact, there was only one pair of feet in the last one, wearing shoes that perfectly resembled Toshiya's taste in fashion. Taking a deep breath Kaoru leant against the doorframe and lit a cigarette. "You take quite some time, do you realize that?"

Die's eyes snapped up and focused the closed door in front of him. He was quite sure who had spoken the words but just to be sure, he asked: "Kaoru?"

"That's me," he grinned lop-sided and took a drag from the cig, lazily blowing out the smoke. "Who else happens to find guys in the weirdest places?" It was almost a disappointing irony, that much was for sure. Die, who he had hit with the car and taken home to be a useful slave, now locked up within a toilet cubicle. Former angel Die. Kaoru rolled his eyes. "Unlock the door."

Without to protest the red-haired man reached out and opened the lock of the door, relieved that it was truly just Kaoru who had been looking for him. As soon as his eyes met the sight of the smart-looking lawyer, he felt sorry for locking himself up and bowed his head. A shy smile appeared on his lips and he blushed a little at the mere fact that he felt suddenly so foolish. But for once he didn't know what to say.

"Nice hideout," Kaoru remarked with one eyebrow pitying raised.

"Err... not really a hideout. I was more..." Die scratched his red hair and pondered how he could possibly tell his friend why he had come here and locked himself up. "Taking a break?"

"Taking a break from what?" The other man couldn't help his impatience. He didn't like Die to drawl and stutter. But suddenly a thought crossed his mind and his lips curled into a grin. "From Toshiya and his friends?"

"Kinda," Die lowly confessed and bowed his head low, before he lifted his gaze and took a deep breath. "I didn't mean to hide. I just... it was suddenly so much and everyone wanted my attention and at first it was really nice and cool, I had a ball. It was fun. But then everything was too much, they were too many and I didn't want to annoy you, so I figured I'd just wait inside of here for a while and then go back out, once my head isn't spinning anymore. I..." He really hadn't meant to be impolite. "I'm sorry and... are you mad at me now?"

"Me?" Kaoru shot back, his brows rose with the frown that built on his features. "Why would I be?" Suddenly he just had to chuckle before it turned into laughter, even more when he looked into Die's piteous big brown eyes that were staring up at him in hope he would forgive the idiot for something that didn't even matter to him. Already after seconds his laughter had died though and he just shook his head at the other man. "You really are an idiot, Die. I need to tell you that."

"So you are mad at me." Again Die cast his eyes downwards, showing his compliance. "I—"

"No, you moron. I'm not," he replied with a sigh. "Toshiya is desperately looking for you by now, but it doesn't matter. Just say so, if you're not fine with your company."

"I'm sorry 'bout that too. Is he mad at me?" He was relieved that Kaoru wasn't pissed about what he had done but he also hoped that he hadn't made Toshiya sad or worry too much.

"It doesn't matter." At least it didn't matter to Kaoru and it shouldn't matter to Die either. If Toshiya had kept an eye on the redhead, he wouldn't need to look for him now.

"Okay," the former angel slowly nodded, believing whatever his friend told him. He didn't know what else to say anyway and it resulted in an awkward silence between the two of them.

"Wanna go home?" Kaoru broke the silence once he had finished his cigarette, facing Die with a questioning glance. He wasn't in the mood to stay any longer within the shallowness of the people in this place and since his company was already hiding, they could as well head back home.

"I—I'd like to but," he shrugged, "I don't wanna make you leave just because of me."

"That's okay," Kaoru replied in a more or less monotonous voice. "I wouldn't ask if I

wanted to stay." It was the plain truth, not just something one would say to make another one feel better. If he would mind, he hadn't said it. "Well, c'mon then."

He was about to turn and leave when the taller man, who had finally risen from his seat on the toilet lid, was pulling Kaoru back on his sleeve. He skeptically registered the fingers that grasped his wrist before he faced the hesitating look of Die. "Wait. I...um— I'm scared," the redheaded man confessed with a small apologetic smile dancing on his lips as he gazed at his friend who was on the verge of asking what the hell was the matter now. "They're gonna ask where I've been and why I was hiding. They won't let me go that easily, I'm afraid, and I don't think I'm ready to face them yet."

Another small sigh emitted from the smaller man before he just looked at Die, trying to sort out the information he had just gotten. This was ridiculous! How could that guy just be that... friendly?! He could tell them to fuck off for God's sake! But no, he was afraid of them instead, that they would occupy him by asking silly questions, which he – just for the record – didn't have to answer anyway. And one thing was for sure: if Kaoru just walked out with Die, he would have to carry the redhead in order not to spend another two hours with just saying goodbye to everyone. So the decision was easily made, since the solution was obvious. "They will not even dare to approach you when you come out of this room together with me. Trust me."

And to avoid any possible exceptions of the rule, as it were just to make sure that each person would think what they should, Kaoru reached out his hand and grasped Die's, pulling him along as he made his way out. With his chin high and the usual confident expression in his eyes the lawyer easily walked through the crowds of people and Die just followed, tightening his fingers around the hand that held his. They did, for sure, receive some glances but neither of both cared. To Kaoru it didn't matter anyway, he never gave a damn about what people thought, and to Die it was a relief to have an excuse, walking straight out like that. Nonetheless he couldn't deny that he was also proud to leave with Kaoru like that as it showed they were friends. And Die was hellishly proud to have the smaller man as such.

Outside they were lucky to catch a cab quite quickly, yet due to the excellent commanding tone that Kaoru had used to call one. Not a sane person would've dared to come between him and the cab, Die was sure. Slowly the smile on his face appeared back and once he sat in the backseat of the car, he contently sighed and faced Kaoru. "Thank you, Kao. Again, I mean."

The other man looked at Die, before he cast his gaze away to stare outside the window. This time he didn't answer after receiving the redhead's gratitude. This once he would just accept it.

-End of chapter four-

