

Between Heaven and Earth

[Kaoru x Die] AU

Von NanaSaintClair

Kapitel 7: Chapter Seven

There was a stupid smile plastered across Die's face as he sat in the plane and looked out of the window, once again able to admire the clouds from above. Their plane had taken off half an hour ago and from the moment on Die had taken his place down in the seat, he had been watching the heaven. It was weird though because in human form, he couldn't see any of the other angels.

Last night Kaoru had shown Die how to use the washing machine and the dryer, so he could pack all the few clothes he owned. Once his suitcase was filled and Die was pleased, he had gone to bed in order to sleep early, so that the next morning would come soon. Too excited looking forward to the trip, of course he couldn't sleep at all, read some more pages in his latest book and tried to imagine what kind of place Okinawa would be. Late at night, he had no clue when, Die finally fell asleep dreaming of him and Kaoru having a wonderful holiday.

And now his dream seemed to come true. Next to him was Kaoru who tried to work through some papers he had brought along and right here in this seat the former angel sat and couldn't stop smiling. Once they had safely landed back on the ground, Die wasn't just excited anymore, but really bouncy. He couldn't help it. He felt like he had the energy of a dozen men in this one human body he owned. Rewarded with a huge smile from his companion, the smaller man pretty much looked like the complete opposite, right now shading his eyes with his sunglasses. But Die just merrily hopped along wherever his friend was going.

After a short ride in a taxi, they arrived their hotel. Again Die was plainly and completely impressed. Mouth agape, he stared at everything and nearly everyone as well, like when a group of men, all clad in black suits and their cell phones attached to their ears, passed him by, or when an old lady with her poodle crossed his path. Of course Kaoru had noticed that Die was openly staring at people but for all he cared, as long as he wasn't being stared at, he didn't pity them for his companion's rudeness.

It took Kaoru merely his credit card and a signature to check in before they were led into one of the rooms on the top floor. And while Kaoru made sure to close the door after the footboy, Die just stood in the middle of the room and stared at the double bed. As far as he could tell, there was no spare room for him and obviously he would

sleep right next to Kaoru. The thought instantly made his lips curl into a smile.

"Great, now you're grinning at a bed," Kaoru remarked with slight sarcasm as he squeezed himself past Die and claimed the side of the bed that was closer to the bathroom. If he didn't know his naïve companion, he'd dare to say that he had kinky thoughts, seeing that grin. But chances were non-existent in that meaning. It was nothing but another silly smile.

Shrugging, Die marched over to his side of the bed and dropped his bag next to it, before he sat down on it, laid down, and then got back on his feet. "I never slept next to you before," he explained as if it was the most natural thing to say. "This is kinda... exciting."

"You have no clue," the other man muttered under his breath and unpacked a few of his clothes in order to get changed for the occasion. There were people, and that Kaoru knew for sure, who would be more than just excited, prospectively spending the night with him, but Die was more like a kid who was about to experience his first slumber party.

The taller man walked over to the huge window and the view simply took his breath away. Not only did he see almost the whole city but also the ocean. "Wow... Kao, look at this. I can see the ocean from here."

Looking at Die, or rather his back, a few moments passed by before Kaoru got up and slowly walked next to the redhead. There wasn't anything he would've to say. He didn't even need to look at the ocean but he was in awe about how amazed one person could get about small things like this. Like a young boy desiring a toy, Die kept on gazing at the horizon, the ocean obviously taking his breath away. Kaoru mildly shook his head and turned to take a look inside the bag Die had brought. He better looked stunning tonight!

"Don't you have a vest or anything like that?" He could find tee shirts, jeans, underwear but only one jacket and it was just not enough for the occasion. "I can't believe Toshiya failed to buy a plain black suit jacket and vest."

"Well, he did buy a black jacket, but I left it at home." Forcing his eyes finally off the ocean, Die tilted his head and looked at his friend.

An inquiring gaze tried to pierce his. "And... why?"

"Because," Die drawled and made his way to where Kaoru was hovering above his things, "it's black. I thought that I'm more the type for wearing bright clothes."

"You thought? You're not made to think, Die." Shaking his head the smaller man sighed a little before he found something that was more likely the style he wanted his assistant to dress in. "At least you've brought a plain black shirt."

"I did," Die confirmed with a small nod and crouched down. "It was Toshiya who said I should wear bright clothes."

"But you don't have to do everything the way he wants you to," Kaoru countered, sounding less snappish than he had before. His eyes mustered the red-haired man from his head to his toes. "I guess we need to fix that problem. And it appears that we need to do something about your hair as well."

"What's wrong with my hair?" It was a fact that Die liked it the way it was, brightly red and not too long. He had even styled it with some wax and spray, quite an effort that should be rewarded instead of insulted.

"It's messy." A little smile ghosted across Kaoru's lips. He did like Die's hair, even the color, but within his business he couldn't allow him to walk around like a punk. Not when he should give the proper image of a gentleman of some account. "Won't hurt to give it a proper cut."

"If you say so." The redhead shrugged as his fingers mechanically reached out to tug at a few strands of his hair. He was wondering though what Kaoru had in mind.

"Here." The other man handed him the black shirt and stood up. "Get ready. We're going to get you another jacket and a hairdo."

It elicited another smile. Of course it did. The thought of shopping with Kaoru made Die curious and without to think about it much, he quickly got ready, before the two of them left the hotel together. At first Kaoru made sure to find a hairdresser who would turn the tall, red-haired man into a guy one could actually take seriously. Silent and only a tiny bit scared Die didn't even move his pinky while a woman with sharp features and lips as thin as a sheet cut his hair. He only watched Kaoru from the corner of his eyes as he was giving instructions of how he wanted the redhead to look. A pleased nod of approval was his only reaction once she swirled the chair with Die around and presented him to the smaller man.

"Perfect," he said and paid the amount of money the haircut was worth.

In his chair Die took some moments before he got used to his new hairstyle while he was still watching his reflection in the mirror. Truth be told he didn't like it much. It was too smooth, kind of flattened, but if it served its purpose, then he would live with it.

After that Kaoru had randomly entered different shops, one after another, until he finally seemed to be pleased with one in particular. Before Die had even the time to realize that he was supposed to get changed into the fine thread, Kaoru pushed him in the direction of a cubicle. The salesman was already giving them weird glances but the former angel didn't notice anyway, just turned to face his friend with raised brows. "Will you wait here?"

"No, I'll run off to Mexico." Kaoru rolled his eyes at him and closed the curtain, leaving Die to himself within the cubicle. "Get changed now."

"You won't really run off, will you?" He didn't know for sure but at least he was

guessing that this was supposed to be a joke. Even if it was anything but funny. Yet, Die quickly got changed and pulled the curtain aside as soon as he was ready. "Kao?"

"I'm here," he replied and cast his eyes off the coat he had been taking a look at in the meantime. His eyebrows rose in admiration, he couldn't help it – he was a genius in deciding what to make guys wear. Die was absolutely gorgeous. A satisfied smile built upon Kaoru's lips and he nodded at the other man.

"Looks good?" In search for a body-sized mirror Die shifted his gaze from left to right, before he finally spotted one and went to take a look at himself. Apart from the fact he was clad in nothing but black, he liked the way he was looking. It was a bit dark but somehow fine, as if he were a man as wealthy as Kaoru.

The lawyer sent a curt nod to the salesman who had been patiently waiting. Kaoru was absolutely pleased with his choices today and therefore he also bought the coat for Die to wear. He needed more than a plain jacket in case the weather would get worse, plus that nights were chilly already. And from the outside it was as if another man entered the hotel as soon as they were back. In a way Die didn't look the same anymore but once he was staring at people again, one instantly recognized the redhead.

"About this dinner..." Buttoning his sleeves Kaoru intently looked at the man who silently stood in front of the window and was once again staring out to see the ocean. Slowly Die turned to face his friend, who was busy checking his outfit in the mirror. "I'm gonna introduce you as my assistant and we won't mention that you're living in my house. What exactly you're doing won't matter. Just try to show some manners. I know you can do that." He suddenly caught Die's gaze in the mirror and smiled. "Just be your charming self."

In return Die smiled back brightly. Compliments he liked. Why Kaoru was advising him to conceal some things, he didn't understand though. But it didn't matter. He trusted the lawyer and he would surely have his reasons. "I won't disappoint you, Kao."

He was about to turn and wriggle into his jacket when the way Die had addressed him made Kaoru stop all movement. "One more thing, Die," He had stopped to mind it long time ago but this evening it wouldn't be alright. "Don't call me Kao tonight."

The smile temporarily vanished from the redhead's lips. He had grown a liking to addressing the lawyer with his pet name but he even understood that in order to show their business relation, he had to stop saying it, at least until the dinner was over. "Alright, Kaoru."

"Good boy," the smaller man smiled. He could deny it for as long as he wanted, but honestly speaking he liked to spend time with his new 'assistant'. He was easy to handle and plainly honest, instead of being cynical or false in his friendliness. So be it as it may, even if his brain was damaged since he thought he had been an angel, he was still a likeable company.

When Kaoru and Die entered the restaurant, they were instantly guided to a table

with two other persons already waiting, a man and a woman, and Die could literally feel the tension between Kaoru and the other lawyer, even if they exchanged polite gestures like shaking hands. "Long time no see, Ken. Let me introduce my assistant to you. This is Die." He motioned with his hand to the redhead before he turned to actually face him. "Die, this is Ken, an old friend of mine, and the beautiful woman here is his wife, Sumi."

"Good evening." Asked to show his good manners, Die bowed to each of them, before he sat down next to Kaoru, who was already about to order them something to drink.

"Assistant, Kaoru? You don't need support for a dinner, do you?" The man chuckled and cast a short glance at his wife who was looking rather bored. "I would've thought you'd bring a date and not your assistant."

"I didn't mention anything about what he's assisting me with," Kaoru shot back with a smile. "But I wouldn't want to lie to you. He's not my date. I'm afraid I have to disappoint you there." And with that statement he had successfully avoided a silly argument about whether he needed support or not. "Die's familiar with Reiji's claim. Therefore I thought he might want to get to know you."

"I see." Ken noticeably observed the red-haired man for a moment as if he tried to find more information in his appearance. It was unlike Kaoru Niikura to bring someone else, so the other lawyer of course reasoned that Die must be someone important. Important to Jinji Sakamoto most likely. "Well Die, isn't it a pleasure to work with Kaoru? I once did as well before he decided to work against me instead of with me."

"I'm sorry for that," he replied with a small smile, not sure what to answer. "I like working with him very much."

Luckily Ken didn't press on any further but instead focused on talking to Kaoru. It appeared that he had been right about Ken's tries to intimidate the other man. But they were in vain, Kaoru obviously too smart with all his replies. The only one who slowly grew uneasy was Die but because of completely different reasons. Also, Ken seemed to become grumpy little by little. Once they had finished eating, his wife excused herself and went to the ladies room, before her husband followed shortly after. It was the perfect occasion for Die to talk to Kaoru in private.

"Can you swap places with me?" The redhead cocked his head to one side and gazed at his friend in hope.

"No," Kaoru replied curtly since he could give a good guess why Die was asking. "You're sitting perfectly fine there opposite Sumi."

"But she's doing things!" Although he was only whispering, his voice still sounded a little high-pitched. "Like with her feet on my legs and that's really anything but comfortable. Can I at least ask her to stop that?"

"No." This time the other man turned to face Die. "Just try to survive it."

Pouting, Die leant back and crossed his arms. It was the first time he was maybe a little mad at Kaoru for making him doing this. He didn't like the woman's feet on him at all. And whenever her husband was deeply absorbed into conversations with Kaoru, she was also staring at him as if she wanted to eat him. That was unpleasant as well. She could smile, then he'd return the smile. Or she could talk to him, then he'd chat with her. But that stare drove Die up the walls!

For some moments Kaoru watched Die sulking in his chair. It was weird, the feeling that Kaoru had. Normally he would grow annoyed at this disobedient behavior but there he was, just a little proud that the red-haired man was so utterly immune to her attempts of seduction. And it was damn cute, too. With a sigh, Kaoru put his hand on the other man's thigh. "Listen, Die. This is important. Just try to play along, ok?"

"But it's not fair." He whined and cast a glance at the lawyer, still sulking. Yet, the affectionate touch made him a little weak. "What's it good for anyway?"

"Life just is not fair," Kaoru tried to make his point clear. He reassured himself with a glimpse to the restrooms that neither Ken or Sumi weren't on their way back yet, before he went on. "Ken isn't playing fair and nor am I. He wanted this dinner for one reason: to make me back off before the trial's even started. That's why I just want you to sit here and do what you can do best. Just look gorgeous, Die. Can you do that for me?"

Under the intent stare of Kaoru's dark eyes Die couldn't help but to give in. Besides, the compliment hadn't passed him by unaffected either. He had never heard Kaoru say something like this before, that Die was gorgeous. He liked that. "Fine, but I still don't get it. What's it good for that she's groping my legs with her feet?"

"It's pissing Ken off. That's why." Drawing back his hand from Die's thigh, Kaoru just shrugged. "I knew Sumi wouldn't be able to resist and Ken's becoming nervous and doesn't concentrate on what he's saying. So in the end I gain more info about Reiji than I was supposed to know."

"I see." A small sigh escaped Die. "You're quite calculating, you know?"

That the redhead just said it as a matter of fact, Kaoru didn't expect but it also impressed him. With a chuckle he admitted: "I know. Maybe life taught me to."

There was a short silence before Die spoke up again. "You're using me."

But all it did was to make Kaoru show a small grin. "Want me to make it up to you?"

The other man returned to smile. "Would you? How?"

Lowly the lawyer laughed. "I'll think of something, ok?"

Nodding Die agreed and grinned, looking forward to whatever Kaoru was up to. He didn't know why but he liked the way he made him feel, as if he'd do something especially for him. As if he cared. But if Kaoru truly cared, he didn't know himself.

Since he had made the offer, it appeared that he cared but when had he started to? Hell, he even flirted with Die in some sort of way and it only occurred to him now. Even worse was that he didn't mind at all. He liked it and not because he had any plain motive, desiring a shag for the night. No, because he simply enjoyed to exchange nicely ambiguous phrases with Die.

Soon enough Ken and Sumi came back and settled down again. All the time their dinner went on, Die bravely put up with the woman's frank measures to gain his attention. Yet, he was feeling even a little bit more anxious since he could feel her husband's death glare. Luckily Ken was fed up quickly and ended the evening with another polite excuse, before he grabbed Sumi's hand and pulled her away with him. Sighing, Die made a mental note not to spend another dinner with the two of them, even if Kaoru would bribe him.

Back in their hotel room Die sat down on his bed and tried to figure out how to make the TV work. It was different from Kaoru's and therefore he had some mild problems with the remote. On the other side of the bed Kaoru got rid of his jacket and loosened his tie, before he simply pulled it above his head and threw it aside. He stretched his neck and stifled a yawn, when there was suddenly a defeated groan coming from his redheaded room mate, who had cast the remote aside and gave up with the damned thing. They looked at each other for a moment, neither men saying a word, before Die shrugged and grinned.

"You could give me a back massage, if you're bored." Kaoru hadn't really meant it seriously, although he could certainly need a massage. A job where one had to sit bent above books and papers was worse than to be a professional athlete.

"Do you think I can do that? I mean, I don't really know how." Curiously Die tilted his head, inspecting the other man's frame. Then he took a look at his hands, wriggling his fingers a little. "Guess I can't really break anything though."

"You'd really do anything I ask you to, hm?" Inwardly Kaoru laughed, simply amused, light-hearted even. There seemed to be nothing that would make Die back off, that was apart from leg-groping women.

A little perplexed Die gazed back at the other man. Was it that much surprising that he would give it a try? He didn't think so, not at all. "It's no big deal," he shrugged, "is it?"

"No," Kaoru smiled, "it isn't." It was the most honest smile he had given in a long time. He always teased, being quite frank and cocky even, but the redhead's pristine way of thinking made even a rude request sound harmless. And it really wouldn't be a big deal at all. Not if Kaoru considered Die a friend. He hesitated for another moment, just trying to find anything in the other man's appearance that spoke against this one step closer to friendship. But there was simply nothing.

"Well?" Die's eyebrows rose while he was slipping out of his jacket and opening the two top buttons of his shirt, since it was pretty much strangling him. "What do you want me to do?" He crawled closer to the other man and sat back on his heels. "Shall I

just put my hands here?" Cautiously Die's palms touched Kaoru's shoulders. "Or then, you better remove your shirt first. Right?" He wasn't completely sure but from what Die had watched in the time he had been an angel, humans gave massages to one another on their naked skin. Maybe there were different techniques though but from the feel of his fingers on his friend's back, it was really weird to touch him through the fabric of his shirt.

Taking a glimpse back across his left shoulder, Kaoru simply didn't move at all. It was crazy, all the different situations he got himself into with Die, and it still was nothing but nice. But it made things difficult. Hard not to just turn and kiss that red-haired guy senseless. Yet, Kaoru knew what he wanted and it was not to screw Die. Nonetheless he could maybe start to take him as a friend. "Right," he lowly said and forced his gaze off the other man, before he opened the shirt button by button until he could slide it off completely. "I'll lie down and you just do as you think. I'm gonna tell you when something's not okay."

It was the best solution from Kaoru's point of view. Because he for sure wasn't a masseur either and couldn't properly explain what Die had to do. Either he'd do it well or they would just stop. Once Kaoru had lied down on his belly, Die knelt above him and placed his fingers on each side of his shoulders. "Ok then, I'm gonna start now." He just hoped he wouldn't cause any harm, even if it was very unlikely to happen. He had washed this back before, now he could just gently knead it. And that's what he tried, pressing down his fingertips with light pressure, digging his thumbs into the flesh and running his palms across the warm and smooth skin. It really didn't feel too bad. "Just tell me when I hurt you or something..."

As if. There was only this one thought left in Kaoru's mind once Die had started to work his magic fingers. As if. It was truly not easy to keep shut up, not to sigh in contentment or to just utter stupid things like 'oh yes' or 'so good'. He even bit his bottom lip in order to suppress any sort of evidence about the given pleasure. Only when he trusted his voice, he told Die to go on. After that there was a comfortable silence between them before the redhead's thoughts drifted back to the dinner they had had with Ken and his wife.

"Kao?" When something nagged his mind, he just needed to voice it out. "Ken said something about you formerly working with him and that you decided to work against him instead. How did he mean that? Is it true?" Die really could not imagine why Kaoru would suddenly just decide to work against someone. The vision was scary. Today Die was working for and with Kaoru. And tomorrow? Would that just change?

It took some time and effort for Kaoru to make his mind work right now. He had almost drifted off, at least close to not thinking for once in his life, when Die had uttered his questions. "Well yes, sort of. At first we ran the law office together, as partners. But we didn't get along too well. Ken wasn't pleased with my choice of clients." The memory was blurred in his mind but when he recalled it, Kaoru remembered his partner's complaints. "I started as a nobody whereas Ken had already had some pretty good connections. But he kept on complaining until one day he threatened me that if I wouldn't do as he wished, he'd make sure to kick me out. It was an empty threat, really, but back then I was majorly pissed, and behind Ken's back

I started to snatch away all of his precious, rich clients."

It had been an act on blind rage, vengeance of some sort, but at that time Ken had hurt Kaoru's pride and that had been nothing he could accept. To Die it sounded a little confusing, yet unmistakably like an argument that could've been solved differently. "And you couldn't settle your disputes otherwise?" He lowly asked, not sure if it had been right what Kaoru had done. But at the same time he thought that Ken had been unfair too, threatening his partner to kick him out. "It sounds pretty bad to me."

"It was," Kaoru simply admitted. "But you see, Die, I have done my job well. Just that I never made the money Ken made and he thought that he could boss me around, because his clients paid more than mine. Still, I won more trials and I wanted to prove that I was the better lawyer. But once I had started to steal away his clients, there was no way back, settling disputes. When he found out, he threw a fit. But I had won. Ken quit." Thinking back now it had probably been the start of Kaoru's true career. Sure it had taken sacrifices. "On the other hand we would've split up our partnership anyway sooner or later. We just didn't get along."

"I see," Die tried to understand, but as so often he came to realize that human relations and actions were hard for him to grasp. "I guess that's what humans mean when they talk about learning something the hard way."

"Guess so," the other man cheerlessly chuckled, simply because Die had spoken of humans as if he were none of them. "But this business is hard. Hard and time-consuming. Nothing is for free."

Those callous words caused the redhead almost to flinch and he stopped to move his fingers for a moment, before he mentally cleared his mind and went on with the massage. "Well, as long as you like what you're doing."

"I do," Kaoru replied without to think twice. "I really do. I just don't like most of the clients."

"And why is that? Can't you chose them?" Again it wasn't easy to understand for Die. Why would Kaoru want to help anybody he didn't even like?

"I can and I cannot," he said within a small sigh. "There are just some people you can't say No to and most of the clients I got from Ken were pretty important people. One thing led to another and I got quite popular amongst their kind. And now they step into my office and demand that I help them. Besides, they pay a pretty penny. Why would I decline?"

"I don't know. Maybe because you don't like them? You said so yourself." Naturally Die couldn't think of anything else. "Wouldn't you be able to survive if you only defended those you like? Those who aren't that important and rich."

"Die, I'd be able to survive on the money I have on my bank account right now." It was a fact and not even meant to sound arrogant. "I'm just into deep. There are some

clients I just don't wanna piss off. And as long as I can cope..." He didn't finish the sentence, didn't feel the need to. It was as simple as that to him.

"Have you become a lawyer because of your dad?" It was another sudden thought that popped up in Die's mind and he remembered the conversation he'd had with Toshiya. "Toshi told me something like that."

At first Kaoru didn't say anything at all. He had never expected Die to know any about this but Kaoru should've guessed that his best buddy wouldn't be able to keep his babblings short. The mentioning of his father brought memories he usually didn't share with anybody else. "Yeah," he said in an emotionless voice, trying to appear casual about it. "Basically he was the driving force."

"Was he good?" Curiosity got the better of Die and he would just love to know more about the role-model of his role-model. "Better than you?"

"The best," Kaoru simply replied and even smiled a little at the thought of how much he had admired his father when Kaoru had been still a little boy. "It was fascinating to watch him work or when he told us about some cases. One of his first clients was actually Jinji Sakamoto with some copyright problem, nothing serious though."

"Really?" Just the idea of Sakamoto in connection with Kaoru's dad made the other man smile. He could bet that he would've liked his friend's dad a hell lot too, just like Sakamoto. "How did he die?"

"Car accident," the lawyer gave away, a little more at ease while he was talking with Die about that matter. "It wasn't his fault. The driver of the car that hit his fell asleep. Happens every day," he tried to play it down but it still hurt. Kaoru had always missed his dad and sometimes he just hoped that angels indeed existed, so his father would be able to see what his son had become.

"I'm sorry for that. I bet he would be really proud of you now." As if Die could read the other man's mind, he spoke his thoughts. "But you've still got your mom to be proud of you, haven't you?"

"We lost touch," Kaoru spoke his mind before he had even thought about it. "She married again but the guy she chose simply didn't like me. And when he found out that I was not even straight, he made me leave. Which I didn't mind that much since I knew what I wanted to do with my life."

"Oh my..." A long sigh escaped from between Die's lips. Were there any intact human families left these days? What was the problem in Kaoru being gay that this man had made such a fuzz? God for sure didn't forbid homosexuality. It was love and love went before anything else. About Kaoru's mother the red-haired ex-angel couldn't judge, not so far. "I wonder what my parents were like and if they're still alive. If they liked each other. Or me. And if I had siblings..."

"You don't know?" There was a doubtful snort coming from the man underneath, before he just couldn't help but turn and look at Die smartly. But once he saw those

innocent eyes staring down at him, he had a pretty good guess. "Oh right, you don't remember your past life. Not even your family?"

Die just shook his head and shrugged. "It's strange 'cause I don't even know how old I am and for how long I've been an angel. Maybe just for two years and then my parents would probably be still alive and possibly even around me, but I don't recognize them. Or then, I might've been an angel for a hundred years already and my parents are surely dead by now. I just don't know. It's weird."

"Weird indeed." Not just that but also crazy. But still the thought was scary when a person just didn't know their own people. But then Kaoru simply couldn't believe it. If he did, he'd be just as nuts as Die. Taking a deep breath, he propped himself up on his elbows and just looked at the redheaded guy above him. "I suggest we get some sleep now. Your massage did wonders and if you hadn't bugged me with your questions, I would've fallen asleep."

He didn't mean it as a bad thing, really not, but Die wasn't sure. "So... it was good? And sorry, I mean for bugging you."

"It's okay." He meant it. Kaoru had spoken about things that were long overdue to be talked about with someone and in a way he felt even a little better now. Smiling, he poked Die's leg. "And yes, you were good. Now get off me before I make you."

Usually that phrase ended in another man trying to provoke Kaoru, just to make him prove his point, but Die simply obeyed and crawled off the smaller man. With ease the lawyer slid off the bed and went into the bathroom but when he saw his reflection in the mirror, he couldn't help but wonder if he still were the same guy like so many years before. He sure wasn't the little boy anymore that watched his dad in awe and beyond doubt he wasn't even that fierce and stubborn, but silent teenager he had been during college. He was not nearly the idealist he had been when he first started to run the law office together with Ken. So naturally he wondered. Who had he become? Would his father truly be proud? The longer Kaoru looked at himself, the more he found that he didn't even know the guy who was looking back at him. Tearing his gaze off the mirror, he bent down and splashed some water into his face. Now wasn't the time to think about these things, he concluded and turned to make his way to the other man.

Die had already sneaked under the covers and was patiently waiting for Kaoru to come back and join him. He was a little bit nervous though, since he had never shared the bedroom with another person before. But at the same time it was sort of pleasant and less lonely. Once Kaoru had removed his pants, he slid under the covers as well and just took a last glance at Die who responded with a bright smile. "Good night, Die," he more or less mumbled and switched off the light of his bedside table. "Turn off your light."

"Good night, Kao," the other man replied and did as he was told, only to keep his grin in place in the darkness of the room. He stifled a small yawn and blinked with his eyelids, before he turned on his side and tried to watch his friend in the dark. He could only make out his outlines but it didn't matter. Maybe in his human form Die could

watch out for someone, doing that better than in the time he had been an angel. "Sleep tight."

"Mmh." Feeling Die's eyes on him, Kaoru turned his back to him and closed his eyes. "Sleep now." It had surely been a decade since he had last shared the bed with someone he didn't screw as well, so what else would they do other than to sleep? At least Kaoru desperately wanted to, maybe just to rest his mind or maybe just to forget the touch of those lively fingers on his back. He didn't know. But he did know that he really liked to fall asleep now. Luckily he did after what seemed like an eternity.

At the other side of the bed Die easily fell asleep, having Kaoru beside him. It was oddly calming.

When Kaoru woke up the next morning, his mind swam with pictures of a weird dream he had had. He couldn't remember much about it, just some distorted images of him and Die and then there was his father talking to an angel, sending him out to watch after his son. It had been a vision Kaoru didn't want to give too much thought about and therefore he tried to make his still sleepy brains work and heavy eyes to focus on reality. But the faster his mind grasp the now and here, the more he became confused by the warm body that was obviously pressed against his back and the weight of a heavy limb around his waist. Die. No doubt about it. But when and how and why? One thing Kaoru was sure about: he hadn't done anything even close to have sex with the other guy and that's why he could only come up with one reason behind Die's behavior. He was plainly clingy.

Kaoru's first thought was to get away from Die but that was easier said than done since he was practically glued to him and his embrace wasn't weightless either. Besides, Kaoru's bones still felt a little too heavy and it was kind of cozy, he had to admit that. And if he were really honest to himself, then he felt strangely safe. Die indeed owned a strong frame for someone with such a lean body. All in all it was rather pleasant to lie within his arms if there weren't his hot breath that tickled Kaoru's skin and caused the tiny hair on his back to stand. He could already feel goose bumps build on his flesh, leaving only two options. He either snuggled backwards against Die right into the welcoming warmth or he escaped the redhead.

The wiser decision got the better of Kaoru and he carefully freed himself from the arm that was sprawled almost possessively across him. He wriggled away from the other man and quickly got up, a hardly audible sigh escaping him. As he glanced back at the sleeping figure, a small smile ghosted across his lips because Die did look like an angel, peacefully taking his breaths with his lips slightly opened. His dark eyelashes stood out against the pale skin of his face while bangs of his bright red hair were messily surrounding it. But Kaoru forced his eyes off Die and walked over to the window, lighting a cigarette.

Could he of all people really fall for such a plain and naïve guy like Die? One who was also kind of nuts. Yet, it wasn't anything that mattered. If Kaoru really fell for the guy, he wouldn't care about something as trivial as his sanity. The only thing that was truly important was nothing else but the other man's feelings and whether Die liked him

more than anyone else, Kaoru couldn't tell. How should he when the redhead did everything basically out of utter friendship because he didn't even know how it would feel to fall for someone. Would he even make a difference in genders?

There were ways to find out though. But how to romance Die, or anyone in general? Usually Kaoru was the one who just had to answer to men's advances. He never tried to make them fall for him, never wanted them to anyway. However, all he could try, was to be nice for a change. At least nicer than he usually was. A tiny smirk adorned his features as Die suddenly stirred and looked at Kaoru out of sleepy eyes. "Prepared for me to make up for your efforts last night?"

"Huh?" The redhead wasn't even properly awake yet, let alone prepared for anything. Slowly his mind recalled yesterday's events and Kaoru's promise to make it up to him. "What have you planned?", he asked with a raspy voice and lifted his head off the pillow.

"We go to the beach," Kaoru announced with a triumphant grin.