Exactly My Type

by Humanity's Shortest Soldier

Summary

Furihata wasn't expecting much when he posted an ad for a part-time babysitting job, but one look at the man who called him in for an interview tells him that he's about to get a lot more than he bargained for.

Notes

Hey everyone! So this was a prompt request I got on Tumblr for a Nanny/Single Parent AU for Akafuri, and well, it obviously got wildly out of control, lol. I originally planned to finish the entire thing before beginning to post it, but I couldn't quite help myself. Chapter 2 is already in the works, so with any luck it should be up soon!

See the end of the work for more notes.
First Meetings

Furihata was shocked to receive a response so quickly, considering he only placed the ad three days ago.

Posting ads in the paper for babysitting wasn’t what Furihata had planned on doing at the age of twenty six, but here he was. After graduating from college a few years ago, he’d tried multiple times to find a job in his field with no success. As it turned out, biology majors weren’t in high demand.

After bouncing around from a few part-time jobs, one of his friends from high school got him a position working at a grade school as a teaching assistant. Kuroko had always been great with kids, so it didn’t surprise anyone when he became a kindergarten teacher. When Furihata heard that Kuroko was looking for help in the classroom, he offered to help out.

The pay was enough to get him by, but more than that, Furihata discovered that he enjoyed working with kids. And that, according to Kuroko, he was good at it. It was enough to make him wish that he’d majored in education instead. He liked helping them learn things, and listening to them talk. Kids always had a weird sort of confidence, in that they didn’t care what they said, or who might be around to hear it. They simply talked, and absorbed new information like sponges. It was a freedom that Furihata wished he could have.

Unfortunately, after two years, Kuroko moved. Kagami, another high school friend and Kuroko’s long-time boyfriend, had finally gotten a spot in the NBA. Being the supportive person Kuroko was, he quit his job and followed Kagami to America to live his dream.

Furihata was happy for them, obviously, even if it left him with a few setbacks. The teacher who replaced Kuroko quickly decided that a teaching assistant wasn’t necessary, and had all but booted Furihata out the door.

He picked up where he left off, working two part-time jobs that barely covered the rent for his one bedroom apartment. He still kept an eye out for any positions in his field, but it was a dream that was fading fast.

About a week ago, he met with his parents for dinner. His mom had sensed his dejected mood right away, and had pulled him aside before he left. He ended up breaking down, and explaining the whole thing. He told her how useless he felt, and how it hurt to put so much effort into something with so little response.

“You know,” she began, after Furihata had calmed himself down. “Maybe you’re looking in the wrong direction. I’ve never seen you happier than when you were working with those kids.”

Furihata had been happy at the school, but without an education degree, it was next to impossible that he’d ever find another job there. When he told his mom as much, her response had almost made him laugh.

“Who says you have to be at a school to work with kids? I hear babysitters make pretty decent money nowadays.” She tapped a finger to her chin. “Oh! Or maybe a nanny? That could be even better.”

Furihata the nanny, he thought with chagrin. He honestly didn’t know if his mom was trying to help him at this point. He knew she meant well, but the thought was so embarrassing he dismissed it immediately.
But the thought kept bouncing around his head. He really did miss working with kids. Maybe he
could even help out a family in need or something. And if the pay was decent…

It couldn’t hurt to try, right? It wasn’t like his situation could get much worse.

So he put an ad out, not expecting much. He had a good recommendation from the school and
Kuroko, but he wondered if two years working as a teaching assistant would really be enough to
catch anyone’s eye.

After getting a response three days later, apparently it was.

Furihata read the email with wide eyes. The sender was from a man named Akashi, who was
searching for a nanny to look after his five year old son. He didn’t go into a lot of detail, instead
asking to meet Furihata in person to go over everything.

Furihata responded, agreeing to meet at Akashi’s house that weekend. The situation seemed a little
odd, but he figured if Akashi was willing to meet his price, it couldn’t hurt to go check it out.

On his way to Akashi’s, however, Furihata wondered what exactly he’d gotten himself into. The
houses got bigger and further apart as he drove to Akashi’s address, and he checked and double
checked that he was reading the numbers right.

When he finally pulled into the long driveway with the address posted outside, Furihata considered
turning around. He expected to be watching some average businessman's kid, not...not this. The
house loomed on the horizon, massive, with a wide green lawn.

He tightened his grip on the steering wheel, and drove forward. The least he could do was talk to the
guy, even though he had a sense he would be rejected immediately. Someone with this kind of
money could certainly do better than him.

Gathering his determination, he made his way up the clean front steps. He stared at the huge front
door and, taking a deep breath, rapped his knuckles on the wood.

He heard someone’s voice, but he couldn’t make out what they said. A moment later and the door
pulled open, and Furihata desperately hoped his jaw wasn’t on the floor.

The man who opened the door was not at all what Furihata expected. He planned on meeting a
generic Japanese businessman, with premature grey around the temples and a worn, tired face.

Akashi had none of those features. His hair was a bright, unnatural shade of red, with crimson eyes
to match. His pupils were an odd shape, vertical and almost cat-like, with thin eyebrows above them.
His skin was pale and flawless, with slim, angular features.

All in all, it was the most attractive face Furihata had ever seen.

“You must be Furihata-san,” Akashi said. It took Furihata five whole second to register the words,
his thoughts in a frenzy.

“Ah, y-yes,” he stuttered, feeling an embarrassed blush spread across his cheeks. Hopefully Akashi
wouldn’t notice.

Akashi stepped aside, holding the door open. “Please, come in.”

Furihata walked in, noticing that the inside of the house looked even nicer than the outside. He tried
to subtle about his gawking as he slipped his shoes off, taking in his surroundings. Every surface was
sparkling clean and polished, without a trace of a child to be seen.

Akashi led the way to a formal sitting room, where a servant immediately brought out two cups of tea. Furihata took a seat on the expensive-looking couch while Akashi sat across from him in an armchair.

Furihata hoped his trembling hands weren’t noticeable as he took a sip of his tea. Honestly, he had no idea why Akashi was even going to humor him with an interview. Someone like him could clearly do much better than some nobody like Furihata.

“Thank you for coming on such short notice,” Akashi began, interrupting Furihata’s thoughts.

Furihata tried not to stutter with his response. “Um, it w-was no trouble, really.” He hesitated a moment before adding sheepishly, “Honestly, I was surprised to get a response so fast, since, you know… I don’t have any experience with this.”

Furihata cursed his rambling. Good job, Kouki. That’ll convince him to hire you for sure.

Much to his surprise, Akashi laughed. It was a soft sound, and Furihata found himself staring again. Akashi was even more good looking when he smiled, which wasn’t fair at all. Furihata tried to snap himself out of it as Akashi spoke again.

“What if I said that was the very reason I choose you?” Akashi asked, titling his head to the side slightly.

Furihata blinked a few times, trying to clear his head. That wasn’t the answer he expected. “Well, uh… then I guess you made a good choice?” Furihata resisted the urge to smack himself the forehead. Could he sound any more unsure?

Akashi chuckled again before his expression turned serious. “I’m sure you have questions, so allow me to explain,” he said, taking a drink. He placed the cup back on the saucer before fixing his crimson gaze on Furihata again. “I have been through four nannies in the past two months.”

Furihata fought back a wince. Was Akashi’s child that bad? Or worse, was Akashi that picky over his nannies? Either way, Furihata was probably screwed…

“They were all professionals, you see. The very best in the business, with high recommendations. Unfortunately, that turned out to be the problem.” Akashi frowned slightly, his eyebrows pinching in the middle.

Akashi continued, his brows furrowing further. “As a child of a single parent for the better part of my childhood, I know what it’s like, to be raised by professionals. They view you as a paycheck, a job to be dealt with until it’s time to return home.”

Despite the soft tone, Akashi’s words were heavy. Furihata was surprised to hear such personal information, and it made his heart ache a little. He’d been raised by two loving parents, who were always there, whether it be for sporting events or help with homework, or even just someone to sit and listen to him on bad days. He couldn’t imagine growing up without that.

“The one’s I hired for my son were much the same. While they did their part in watching him, or cleaning up after him, they were also cold towards him. It’s a feeling I remember myself. And…”

Akashi paused, looking at Furihata with a pained expression. “I don’t want him growing up in same environment I did. Which is what led me to contacting you.”
Furihata’s head buzzed with all the information he’d just been given. He wasn’t expecting to hear something so heartbreaking from someone he just met, let alone someone as refined as Akashi.

But it explained everything. Furihata relaxed slightly, now fully understanding the situation.

And he wanted to help.

“That’s…” Furihata began, and then started over. “Thank you. For telling me all that, I mean. That’s really awful, that you were treated like that. Both of you. No one should have to go through that.”

Furihata hoped that he sounded sincere, rather than like the rambling idiot he thought he came off as. Apparently he did, because Akashi smiled at him again, with something like relief.

“Thank you, and I’m happy to hear that you understand,” Akashi said warmly. “Is it safe more me to assume that you are still interested in the position?”

Furihata nodded firmly. “Yes, definitely.”

“I’m glad to hear it,” Akashi said. “As for the finer details, I work late into the evenings during the week, unfortunately, so I would need you to be available full-time during the weekdays. Is that alright?”

Furihata bit his lip. He’d been hoping for a weekend thing, or maybe late afternoon hours, since he planned on keeping his two part-time jobs during the week. He hesitated, not sure how to answer.

“Is there a problem?” Akashi asked, when the silence dragged on.

“Well…” Furihata began apprehensively. “It’s just that… I work during the week. I have two part-time jobs, but… I guess I could try to reschedule for night shift hours if I need too.”

Furihata tried to imagine working here all day, and then still having to go to work until the morning hours. He repressed a shudder.

“I don’t believe that will be an issue,” Akashi said confidently. “He reached into the inner pocket of his jacket and pulled out an envelope. “I realize it’s a much bigger job than what you planned for, so this was going to be my offer in terms of payment. If it’s not enough, I’m sure we can work something out.”

He slid the envelope across the table. Furihata picked it up, confused. When he posted the ad, he’d included a price per hour that he was willing to accept, but even after posting it, he felt he might be asking too much.

Furihata opened the envelope and unfolded the piece of paper that was inside. He read the numbers, and then read them again. And again.

“Are you…” he tried to choke out. “Are you serious?”

Akashi gave him a firm look. “I am one hundred percent serious, Furihata-san.”

The number written was nearly double what he made at both his current jobs combined.

“Is it enough?” Akashi asked. “If not, I can--”

“No!” Furihata blurted. “I mean… this is a lot of money. I don’t know if I’m comfortable accepting all this.”
Akashi leaned forward in his chair, a new level of intensity radiating off of him. “This is very important to me, Furihata-san. I will meet any price if it means the best for my son.”

Furihata looked at the numbers again, and then up at Akashi, with the burning fire in his red eyes and stern expression. He thought about his jobs, and how hard it would be to get them back if he quit and this nanny thing fell through. He thought about the money, and he thought about Akashi, a determined father trying to protect his son from a cold childhood.

Finally, after a long internal debate, he folded the piece of paper back up and slid it into the envelope. “I accept,” he said confidently.

Akashi, who had gone stiff when Furihata resealed the envelope, smiled. He sat up in his chair, and stretched a hand out to Furihata, who took it with a sweaty palm.

“Then, Furihata-san, I believe we have a deal.” They released their hands, and Akashi had the decency to not wipe his off on his pants as he stood up. He nodded towards the east wing of the house, the relieved smile still on his face.

“Would you like to meet him?” Akashi asked.

Furihata nodded, not having a single clue as to what was lying ahead of him.

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Akashi led the way to a bedroom at the far end of the hallway in the east wing. He stopped at the second door on the left, knocking twice on the wooden door.

“Come in,” a small voice called from inside.

Furihata found it a little strange that Akashi had knocked on the door, considering that the kid was only five, but he didn’t comment. Instead he followed quietly as Akashi pushed the door open and headed inside.

“Katsuo,” he announced. “There’s someone here I’d like you to meet.”

Katsuo looked up from the small table he was sitting at, a crayon between his fingers, and Furihata stifled a gasp. It was like looking at much smaller, much blonder version of Akashi.

The child’s hair wasn’t exactly blond, but almost a honey-golden color. His large eyes were the exact same shade, almost glittering in the afternoon sunlight streaming in from the windows. And while the color was surely a product of his mother, his eyes, which were an exact replica of Akashi’s, were his dominating feature.

Katsuo’s cat-like eyes flickered between himself and Akashi, before his lower lip jutted out in a pout. “Is this another one, dad?”

Furihata looked to Akashi in confusion before the realization hit him - four other people had probably been introduced to him in much the same way. Even a child was bound to catch on eventually.
“He is,” Akashi said carefully. “But Furihata-san—”

“-- is here to be your friend,” Furihata finished. He stepped further into the room, walking up to Katsuo before squating down in front of him. “It’s nice to meet you, Akashi-kun. My name is Furihata Kouki.” He stretched his hand out towards him.

Katsuo stared at his hand for a moment before taking it in his much smaller one. “It’s nice to meet you too, Furihata-san.”

Furihata laughed. “You don’t have to be so formal with me, Akashi-kun. Just Furihata is fine. Or Furi, if you want. That’s what most of my friends call me.”

Golden eyes blinked at him a few times, looking far more contemplative than a child of five should be able too. “Okay,” he said after a moment. “But that means you can’t call me Akashi-kun.”

Furihata gaped for a moment before playfully tapping a finger to his chin. “Hmm… then how about Katsu-kun?”

Katsuo beamed at him. “I like that.”

“Well then, Katsu-kun, it looks like we have a deal.” Furihata smiled and extended his hand again. They shook on it, and Katsuo turned his attention back to the paper in front of him.

“What are you drawing?” Furihata asked, leaning over. “Can I see?”

Katsuo slid the paper over. Scrawled on the sheet was what appeared to be a horse, with green fields in the background and red barn, all underneath a bright yellow sun in the upper right of the page.

“Wow!” Furihata exclaimed. “This is really good. Do you like horses?”

Golden hair bobbed as Katsuo nodded quickly. “Daddy has three of them.” He held up his fingers. “A white one, a brown and white one, and spotted one.”

Furihata turned to look at Akashi, who was silently observing from the doorway. His arms were folded across his chest, but there was a soft smile on his face, almost one of awe.

“I had a horse growing up,” Akashi explained, pushing away from the doorframe. He made his way over and knelt on the other side of the table. “I thought Katsuo might like to learn to ride as well.” He shot a smile to his son.

Katsuo pouted again, his lower lip jutting out a little. He crossed his arms. “I can’t ride by myself yet. Dad says I’m too small.”

Furihata fought the urge smile as he responded. “Well, horses are reallllly big. You wouldn’t want to fall off and get hurt, would you?”

Katsuo raised his chin, almost defiantly. “I wouldn’t fall off.”

Akashi reached over and ruffled Katsuo’s hair affectionately. “I promise you’ll be able ride alone soon. You’ve been doing very well with the trainer.”

“Okay,” Katsuo admitted in defeat. A half second later and his expression brightened again. “Can I show Furi the horses?”

Furihata and Akashi exchanged a glance before turning back to Katsuo.
“How about next time?” Furihata offered. “It’s almost dinner time, and I’ve gotta get home soon.”

Katsuo frowned a little. “When’s next time?”

Furihata looked to Akashi for an answer, since they hadn’t actually discussed when he would start.

“Does this Monday work for you?” Akashi asked, sounding hopeful.

Furihata smiled before turning back to Katsuo. “I’ll see you on Monday,” he promised.
Chapter Summary

Furihata is enjoying looking after Katsuo, and learns a few things about Akashi in the process.

Chapter Notes

Holy crap, an update a week later? Look at me go! Haha, hopefully the trend continues.

Also I want to say thank you, for all the kind, positive reviews on the first chapter. I honestly wasn't expecting it, like, at all. So thank you guys very much!

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Furihata’s first official day at Akashi’s went a lot smoother than he expected.

Thankfully, the weirdest part was simply showing up. A servant answered the door when he arrived bright and early Monday morning, and Furihata wasn’t sure why he was expecting Akashi to be there. Or why he was so disappointed when he wasn’t.

The older man was nice, though, and gave Furihata a quick tour around the house before directing him to Katsuo’s room. Furihata remembered Akashi from the other day, and knocked first, waiting for permission to enter.

Katsuo called for him to come in, and Furihata pushed the door open, greeting him as he entered the room.

“Good morning, Katsu-kun.”

Katsuo’s face lit up when he saw Furihata. “Furi!” he said excitedly, bounding off his bed. “You came back!”

“Of course,” Furihata told him with a laugh. “I promised I’d come back, didn’t I?”

Golden eyes stared up at him for a long moment, the brightness fading slightly. “Yes, but… everyone else never came back.”

Furihata’s heart broke a little at hearing that. He knelt down again, directly in front of Katsuo. “Well, I’m not everyone else,” he said reassuringly. “And I’m not going anywhere.”

He immediately felt bad for promising something he wouldn’t be able to keep. After all, Akashi had told him before he left that this job was only until Katsuo started school, which was only a few months away.
Furihata would have to leave someday. All he could do was hope that Katsuo would understand when the time came.

“What would you like to do today?” Furihata asked, changing the subject.

Katsuo stared at him curiously, thinking the question through before answering. He turned back towards his bed and grabbed a book of his nightstand before bringing it over to Furihata.

“Can we read?” he asked hopefully. “I need help with some of the words still, and I wanna finish it.”

“Yes,” Furihata told him easily. Reading was simple enough.

Katsuo led the way to his bed, climbing on and folding his legs. He reached over and patted the space next to him, so Furihata situated himself beside him, settling in.

Katsuo read out loud in a clear, calm voice that was surprising for a child of his age, although Furihata was beginning to realize that Katsuo was a little different from other kids he’d worked with. He only needed help with words he was unfamiliar with, and after Furihata explained them, Katsuo would repeat them back, rereading the whole sentence again so he could remember it.

The rest of the day passed smoothly. After finishing the book, Katsuo insisted on taking him outside to show him the horse’s, listing off each of their names and telling Furihata which one was his favorite, and how old they were, and how the white one, named Yukimaru, had been Akashi’s when he was a teenager.

Katsuo let him know when it was lunch time, which was apparently a scheduled event. He led the way confidently to the kitchen, where a meal for the two of them had been laid out on the table.

The food was delicious, far better than anything he’d ever had before. Apparently a professional kitchen staff also resided somewhere in the house.

After lunch, they watched a few educational programs that Katsuo seemed more excited about than any other five year old would be. Furihata found it amusing, the way Katsuo intently watched the screen, absorbing and nodding along to everything he learned. At the end of the show the host asked a series of questions, to review the material. Katsuo got every one of them right.

All the while, servants buzzed around the house like silent shadows. Furihata felt the odd urge to talk to them, or to acknowledge their existence in some way. He held back, though. After all, Katsuo seemed perfectly content to ignore them, so Furihata did the same.

The two of them passed the remainder of the afternoon putting together puzzles in Katsuo’s room. They were halfway through when there was a knock at the door.

Akashi stepped into the room, smiling as his eyes flickered to the puzzle pieces scattered across the table. “I hope I’m not interrupting.”

“Dad!” Katsuo pushed away from the table, running over to Akashi and craning his neck to look up at him. He reached up and grabbed Akashi’s hand, tugging him over to the table where Furihata still sat.

“Furi and I are almost done,” he said cheerfully. “See? It’s the Kiyomizu-dera temple.”

Akashi knelt down, studying the pieces. “That’s very impressive,” he told Katsuo with a smile. “Especially since most of the pieces look the same.”
Katsuo nodded energetically. “Furi is really good at puzzles! He helped me do the outside edge first, and then we stacked them together by color, so they’d be easier to find.”

Akashi looked up, and now that soft smile was directed right at Furihata. He couldn’t explain why his heart skipped a beat.

“That does sound like the best strategy,” Akashi said. Furihata blinked dumbly before Akashi turned back to Katsuo. “What else did you do today? Did you have fun?”

Katsuo spent the next ten minutes telling Akashi everything they had done that day. Furihata had to admit, the kid had an impressive memory. He easily recalled every detail, from things Furihata had said about the horses, to the ending of the book they read at the beginning of the day.

Akashi listened intently, smiling and nodding along with Katsuo. Every now and then, his eyes would flicker over to Furihata, and those red eyes never failed to make his heart pound.

“I’m very happy to hear that you had fun today,” Akashi told Katsuo, ruffling his hair with a smile. “However, I believe it’s about time for Furihata-san to return home.”

Katsuo pouted, turning towards Furihata. “Can’t we finish our puzzle first?” he asked hopefully.

Furihata almost gave in, looking at Katsuo’s pleading expression. But he knew if he let Katsuo talk him into it this time, he’d never be able to say no to him.

“I’d love to,” Furihata said. “But I’ve gotta go home and eat dinner so I can sleep. That way, I can be here bright and early tomorrow.” Katsuo nodded sadly, lowering his gaze to the table.

Furihata reached out and put his hand on Katsuo’s shoulder, giving him a warm smile when he looked up. “I promise we’ll finish the puzzle first thing tomorrow, okay?”

Katsuo stared at him for a long moment before finally nodding, a resigned look on his face.

Furihata said goodbye soon after, gathering up his things. Akashi stood up, leaving Katsuo with the puzzle, and walked up to him.

“All I need to walk you out,” Akashi said, holding the door open.

Furihata nodded politely. “Thank you.”

Akashi shut the door, and they made their way down the hall. Once they were out of earshot, Akashi turned towards him.

“I can’t thank you enough, for agreeing to stay.” He turned and looked back at Katsuo’s door. “He seems to like you,” Akashi continued in a soft voice. “He seems happy.”

“It’s no problem. Really,” Furihata said honestly. Sure, he’d be out of a job in a couple of months, when Katsuo went to school, but even after one day, he already felt it was worth it. “I’m glad I can help out. He’s a good kid.”

Akashi smiled. “I agree,” he said easily. His face fell a moment later. “I must admit I worry about him, though. I’m concerned that despite my best efforts, I might still be failing at giving him a normal childhood.”

Surprisingly, Furihata felt like he understood what Akashi meant. Not only did Katsuo live very differently than any other kid Furihata had met, he also behaved much differently. Most kids his age
didn’t have the focus to sit and work on a five hundred piece puzzle without getting bored, or distracted. Nor did they grow up with butlers and servants waiting on them hand and foot.

“He’s a little different,” Furihata admitted. Akashi turned towards him, and Furihata smiled reassuringly. “That’s not a bad thing, though. Kids his age usually are a little different.”

Akashi laughed a little. “I’ll have to take your word on that, Furihata-san. You are the expert, after all.” He met Furihata’s gaze, with a warm smile. “That does make me feel better. Thank you.”

For some reason, Furihata felt a blush creep up his cheeks. He turned away and cleared his throat, as quietly as he could. “Is there, uh, anything he’s interested in?” Furihata asked, changing the subject. “Like games or sports or something?”

“Hmm…” Akashi hummed in thought. “We do have a basketball court out back, behind the stables. I’ve taken him out a few times, but I’m afraid I haven’t been able to very often.”

Furihata brightened. “That would work great, actually.”

Akashi tilted his head slightly. “Do you play?”

“Oh, uh, I use too. Not really on a team or anything, but I use to play for fun with my brother a lot. Now I just watch games when I get the chance” Furihata was already making plans, of things he could teach and show Katsuo when they got the chance.

“Well, I’m sure Katsu will enjoy it,” Akashi said, with a smile that almost seemed like he was hiding something. As to what, Furihata couldn’t guess.

Akashi showed him to the door, and the two of them bid good evening. Furihata drove home, oddly excited to return.

He wasn’t sure what would happen, but he knew it would be interesting.

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Furihata’s first week passed by quickly.

He fell into a comfortable routine easily, and he found himself looking forward to going back each day.

Katsu had piano lessons on Tuesday’s and Thursday’s, which nobody mentioned. It wasn’t until Thursday, when Furihata arrived earlier than usual, and passed the instructor on the way out the door.

Furihata had hurried inside, and soon found Katsu, still seated at the piano, his little brows pinched as he studied the notes on the sheet.

“Hey,” Furihata called as he walked in. Katsu looked up instantly, his expression brightening. “I didn’t know you played the piano.”
Katsuo frowned a little, looking almost annoyed. “I’m not very good yet. I wanna be able to play like
dad does.”

Furihata wasn’t surprised to hear that Akashi played the piano. There wasn’t really anything Furihata
could picture Akashi not being able to do.

He sort of had to laugh, at Katsu’s complaint. Furihata had learned pretty quickly that Katsuo was
impatient, and often very demanding of himself.

He’d even wondered, at first, if Akashi was the cause of that pressure. That thought was quickly
stomped out, though, after Furihata talked to Akashi about it one afternoon. Akashi admitted he often
worried about that very thing, even going so far as telling Furihata a few details about his own
childhood, and how perfection was expected from him at every turn.

Akashi said he was always very careful, to avoid putting any kind of pressure on Katsuo. He found it
troubling, and slightly alarming, that Katsuo held that mindset regardless.

So Furihata had been doing his best, to deter any thoughts like that. He stood next to the piano
bench, and Katsuo slid over, giving Furihata room to sit down.

“Well, I’m sure you’re dad has been playing for a lot longer than you, Katsu-kun.” He gave Katsuo
an encouraging smile. “I bet you play great, and you’re only going to get better the longer you
practice.”

Katsuo eyed Furihata for a moment, trying to hold his disheartened expression. Furihata stared back,
his smile growing wider. Finally, Katsuo’s mouth twitched, and he laughed.

“Will you play a song for me?” Furihata asked. “I’d like to hear you play.”

Katsuo agreed eagerly, despite his claim that he wasn’t good. And of course, he played each of the
children’s songs perfectly, without a sour note to be heard. Furihata listened in slight awe, a feeling
he was getting use to the longer he was around Katsuo.

Furihata also learned that Katsuo was strangely neat for a child. He never left a mess, and always
cleaned up before moving on to their next activity. He never cried, or became upset. Instead he
handled any problem he encountered in a very rational, very level-headed manner.

All in all, taking care of Katsuo was turning much easier, and much more rewarding, than Furihata
ever expected.

Other than seeing the horses, Katsuo preferred to spend most of his time playing indoors, so it took
Furihata nearly another week before he managed to get Katsuo to agree to play basketball. Katsuo
had to show Furihata where the balls were kept, and then led the way out to the yard.

Furihata supposed he shouldn’t have been surprised, to see that when Akashi mentioned having a
basketball court, that he meant a full size, official looking court. Two pristine hoops sat on either end,
but there was a shorter, child-sized hoop stationed in the middle, out of the way. It seemed like a later
addition, as though Akashi had the shorter hoop installed after Katsuo was born. It made Furihata
wonder why the court was here in the first place, if it wasn’t purposely built for Katsuo.

For all Akashi said about not taking Katsuo out here very often, the kid understood the basics pretty
well. He could dribble for a long period without fumbling the ball, and he knew how to line a shot
up so it hit the backboard in just the right place.

Furihata taught him the rules of a game he use to play a lot with his brother, when he was younger,
where they would take turns copying each other’s shots until one of them missed. Every miss resulted in a letter of a word, usually a short one, and whoever had enough letters to spell the entire word would lose.

Katsuo caught on quickly, and insisted on taking the first shot. He stood close to the hoop and lined it up, a concentrated look on his face, and took the shot. The ball rolled around the rim before dropping in.

“Good shot, Katsu-kun!” Furihata retrieved the ball and jogged over, taking Katsuo’s place, standing exactly where he had shot from.

He dribbled a few times, and shot the ball. It hit the backboard and fell easily through the net.

Katsuo caught the ball and looked up at the hoop. “Lucky,” he said, smiling at Furihata. “I made that one too easy.”

Furihata laughed. “You think so? And here I thought I made a good shot.”

“Nope,” Katsuo grinned. He moved several feet back from the hoop, and off to the side a little. “There’s no way you’ll get this one.”

Katsuo shot, and Furihata raised his eyebrows in surprise when the ball went in. He looked back at Katsuo, only to be met with a proud smile.

Furihata crossed his arms. “I think Katsu-kun might be better at this than he let on,” he said playfully. Katsuo just smiled.

The game took a while, since Furihata kept matching Katsuo’s shots. And even when Katsuo eventually missed a basket, Furihata was reluctant to make any difficult shots. They traded points back and forth, and over an hour later, Katsuo was declared the winner by one letter.

Katsuo held both his arms up in victory, and Furihata knelt down to give him a much-deserved high five. Furihata couldn’t help but notice how happy he seemed, so he made a mental note to bring Katsuo out here more often. After all, the kid really did have talent.

They started playing around, talking and taking shots. At one point, Furihata took off running, ball in hand. He jumped, and dunked the ball through the hoop. Sure, the hoop was way shorter than regulation, but Furihata thought it might look cool to a five year old.

Of course he was wrong.

He landed, and turned to see Katsuo’s reaction, only to meet with crossed arms and an unimpressed child.

“What?” Furihata chuckled. “Nothing?”

Katsuo shook his head. He turned and pointed to one of the tall, normal-sized hoops on either end of the court. “Can you do it on those ones?” he asked. “Dad and his friends do all the time.”

Furihata blinked. “Your dad can dunk?” he asked incredulously. Akashi wasn’t that much taller than Furihata was. Plus he had only ever seen Akashi in dress pants and a button-up, so it was hard to imagine him out here, doing anything other than casual play with his son.

“Yup,” Katsuo nodded.
“Huh,” Furihata said, kind of dumbfounded. He shook his head a little, smiling. “Well, I guess I’m not that surprised. I bet your dad can do anything.”

Katsuo walked over to Furihata, and stared up at the shorter hoop, his brows pinched together. “Do you think I’ll be able to do it?”

He ruffled Katsuo’s hair. “Absolutely.” Furihata said truthfully. An idea occurred to him suddenly, and he grinned. “Hey, why don’t we give it a try right now?”

Katsuo gazed up at him, tilting his head in confusion.

“Here,” Furihata said. “You hold the ball, and then I’ll--” He bent down, and lifted Katsuo up, settling the boy on his shoulders. “--give you a boost. No problem, see?”

Katsuo almost dropped the ball, holding on for dear life, one of his tiny hands grabbing onto Furihata’s hair. Furihata gripped Katsuo’s ankles securely. “You alright up there?” he asked.

“...yes,” Katsuo answered. Furihata got the impression that Katsuo definitely wasn’t use to being picked up, at least not like this.

Furihata laughed a little. “You’re okay. I’ve got you, see?” He gently squeezed Katsuo’s legs. “Now, are you ready? This is gonna be the best basketball move anyone has ever seen.”

The hand gripping Furihata’s hair like a vise relaxed. “Okay. Let’s do it,” he said, excitement creeping into his tone.

Furihata ran forward, very slowly, calling out moves as he went in a fake announcer voice. “To the left, and a fake to the right. Could it be? Are they going for the ultra-rare double dunk? It’s never been attempted before!”

Katsuo laughed, as Furihata neared the hoop. He rose up on his toes, and he felt Katsuo lean forward. A second later, and the ball dropped through the net.

“Woo!” Furihata called loudly. Katsuo giggled, louder than ever, and joined in with cheering. Furihata heard the sound of hands clapping, and he smiled wider than ever, at Katsuo’s joy.

A moment later however, when they quieted down, the sound of applause continued. Furihata blinked in confusion, before whirling on his feet.

There, leaning against the fence opening, stood Akashi, smiling broadly and clapping.

“Dad!” Katsuo cried, wiggling to get down. Furihata lowered him to the ground, and Katsuo ran across to the court to Akashi, grabbing his sleeve and gazing up at him with obvious excitement. “Did you see?”

“I did,” Akashi answered, kneeling down. “And I think that might have been the most impressive move I’ve ever seen.”

Furihata couldn’t explain why he suddenly felt self conscious, when he had no reason to be.

Katsuo led Akashi onto the court, smiling up at him the whole way, telling him how he’d won their game earlier, and about all the shots he’d made.

“I’m sorry I missed it,” Akashi said. He looked over at Furihata. “But I’m glad to hear that you had fun with Furihata-san.”
Katsuo nodded, his golden hair bouncing. “Furi’s great. Even if he can’t dunk like you can.”

Akashi laughed. “Well, perhaps his skill lies elsewhere.”

Furihata rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly. “Heh, not really,” he chuckled. “I just love the game, that’s all.”

Akashi gave him an approving look. “I personally know that occasionally, that fact alone can outweigh any skill your opponent might possess, and can be far more valuable.”

Furihata turned away at the compliment, his skin feeling strangely hot. “Um… t-thank you,” he said sincerely.

“Dad,” Katsuo interrupted, tugging on Akashi’s sleeve again. “Do you think Furi could play with the Miracles?”

_Furihata thought. Why does that sound familiar?_

“That would be interesting to see, wouldn’t it?” Akashi laughed. “Perhaps we can schedule something the next time Aomine is in town.”

_Why do I know that name…? And why…_ 

_Aomine...Miracles...basketball…_

Several things snapped into place at once.

Aomine Daiki was a professional player in Japan, that Furihata had heard about as far back as middle school. But more than that, Aomine had been part of a group notoriously called “The Generation of Miracles” throughout middle and high school. Furihata use to read about them all the time, in sport magazines, and news articles.

There had been five original members, including Aomine Daiki, Kise Ryota, Midorima Shintaro, Murasakabara Atsushi, and…

“You’re… you’re Akashi Seijuurou.” Furihata said in disbelief. He stared at Akashi with wide eyes. “From the Generation of Miracles.”

Akashi looked back, his expression one of equal surprise. He blinked, and then chuckled softly. “I haven’t heard that name in several years.”

_Well, Furihata thought, eyes flickering between Akashi and his golden-haired son, things couldn’t get much weirder than this._

Chapter End Notes

So this chapter had a lot of Katsuo fluff, but I promise, Akashi will become more involved in the next chapter.

Thank you so much for reading, and you can follow me on tumblr [here](#) if you want news on updates!
Chapter Summary

Furihata finds himself growing more and more attached to two things.

And neither one of them can be his.

Chapter Notes

Woo, another update! And it's a day early! I'm trying very hard to stick to a weekly update schedule, so hopefully I can keep it up! This chapter is a bit longer than the others, but I'm sure that's not a bad thing. (Can you believe that a simple prompt request got this out of control? I can, because it's akafuri, and I have a problem, lol)

Hope you guys enjoy it, and thank you all once again for all the amazing feedback! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nearly two weeks later, Furihata managed to find the time to meet with two of his best friends for lunch at a local cafe. It wasn’t easy, with all their conflicting schedules, but it was something the three of them tried to do every couple of weeks. It’s a chance for them to keep each other updated on what’s going on with their lives, even if the only thing Furihata has to talk about these days is Katsuo and his redheaded father.

“Wait, wait, wait,” Fukuda interrupted. “You’re telling me you played basketball with Akashi Seijuurou? The Akashi Seijuurou?!”

Furihata shrugged a little. “Well, yeah. I mean, he asked if I wanted to play a game of one-one-one with him, and there was no way I was gonna pass that up.”

He purposely left out the embarrassing part of the story about how he started fangirling before realizing this is my boss, and definitely not appropriate, and his son is watching. He’d apologized profusely, and Akashi had thankfully taken the whole thing with good humor. The next thing Furihata knew, Akashi was rolling up the sleeves of his shirt and challenging him to a match.

“Dude, that’s insane,” Kawahara said, eyebrows raised. “I’m gonna take a shot in the dark and guess that he won?”

Furihata laughed, not offended in the slightest by the assumption. “I didn’t score a single point,” he admitted with a smile. “Not that I really expected to.”

Despite years of not playing with any regularity, Akashi was just as dominating as he’d been in high school. As soon as they stepped onto the court, Akashi held a new level of intensity that Furihata had never felt from him before. Every move he made was quick and elegant, and every basket he scored was done with a pin-point precision that was borderline mechanical.
It had been thrilling and slightly terrifying to watch, and Furihata had enjoyed every second of it.

Katsuo had enjoyed it too, if his cheering from the sidelines had been any indication. Towards the end of their second game, Akashi had passed the ball, much to Furihata’s confusion. He’d whirled around only to see the ball in Katsuo’s small hands, as he made a basket on the smaller hoop. Before he knew it, Furihata was suddenly chasing two Akashi’s around the court…

“So what’d you guys do next?” Kawahara asked, his eyes flashing with mischief. “A romantic candle-lit dinner, maybe?”

Fukuda snorted. Furihata gaped at his friends, his eyes flickering between the two of them. “W-What’s that suppose to mean?” he sputtered.

“Oh c’mon, Furi! It’s obvious you’re crushing on him,” Kawahara said. Fukada nodded in agreement.

Furihata could feel the warmth spreading across his face. “I am not,” he said defensively. “I don’t know what you guys are talking about.”

There was no way he had a crush on Akashi. Just like there was no way he’d spent the majority of their basketball match staring at the exposed skin of Akashi’s throat after he undid the first few buttons of his dress shirt. He certainly hadn’t gotten distracted by the delicate curve of Akashi’s barely-visible collarbones, or the way his forearms flexed each time he dribbled the ball. And there was no way he’d paid any attention at all to the way Akashi’s perfectly styled hair had gradually disheveled, clinging to his forehead with sweat…

“Hello?” Kawahara sang. “Earth to Furi!” He waved a hand in front of Furihata’s face. Furihata jumped, startled out of his thoughts.

Furihata shook his head in an attempt to clear it. “Sorry. I w-was, uh… thinking--”

“--about your hot boss?” Kawahara finished with a smirk.

Furihata knew his face had to be about a million shades of red, so there was no point in denying it. After all, Kawahara was right.

He buried his face in his hands and groaned in exasperation. “It doesn’t matter anyway,” he mumbled between his fingers.

“What makes you say that?” Fukuda asked. “I mean, it sounds like you two get along pretty well. And obviously you’re attached to the kid.”

Furihata pulled his hands away. “I’m not attached--”

“Oh, don’t even,” Kawahara cut it. “Seriously, how many times have you shown us that picture on your phone now?”

The picture in question was one that he took last week. After wracking his brain trying to come up with new and fun things for Katsuo to do, Furihata had finally settled on fingerpainting. The kids from the kindergarten class always loved it, and what five year old boy didn’t like to get a little messy?

Furihata should have guessed that Katsuo would be a little different.

While he seemed keen on the idea of painting, he was hesitant at first to use his hands. “Won’t I get
dirty?” he’d asked, holding up his hands and flexing his fingers.

“Yeah, a little,” Furihata had laughed. “We’ll wash it off right after, though.”

Katsuo agreed, but only on the condition that Furihata painted a picture too. Thankfully he’d thought ahead, and under the assumption that Katsuo probably didn’t have any clothes that were paint-friendly, he’d brought one his plain white t-shirts for him to wear, just in case. After getting him into, the two of them had set up their canvases with their backs to each other, deciding to surprise each other when they were finished.

When they were both done, Furihata had turned around, only to almost fall off his chair from laughter.

Katsuo stood there with his painting clutched between his hands, smiling as he showed off his artwork. Furihata’s borrowed shirt hung down to his knees, the sleeves nearly falling to his wrists. But that wasn’t why Furihata had laughed.

While the shirt was surprisingly clean, Katsuo’s face was smeared with paint. Yellow’s, blue’s, and green’s streaked his pale skin, some of it sticking to his hair where he’s brushed it out of his eyes. The best part was that he seemed completely unaware of it.

Somehow, Furihata had managed to regain enough composure long enough to snap a picture, portraying a very disgruntled Katsuo, before rushing him to the bathroom to clean up. Katsuo made him promise to delete it, but Furihata had shown Akashi, when he got home that night. Akashi had immediately asked to be sent a copy, to which Furihata had happily complied.

“It’s cute…” Furihata muttered, glancing down at the table.

“It was cute,” Kawahara agreed. “The first eight times you showed us. It’s like you’re a proud mom or something.”

Furihata opened his mouth to dispute that statement, but Fukuda cut him off. “Anyway… I still don’t think you should be so quick to give up. I mean, I’ve never even heard you say anything about the kids’ mom or anything.”

Furihata blinked. “… I haven’t heard anything about her either.”

It’s the first time he’s even thought about her, really. Katsuo’s mom. He felt an idiot for not thinking about her sooner. Akashi never mentioned her, and neither did Katsuo. There weren’t any portraits or pictures around the house, no trace of a woman’s presence anywhere.

“Really?” Fukuda asked, surprised. “That’s odd.”

“But,” Kawahara added. “It probably means he’s single.”

Furihata threw his hands up in exasperation before letting them fall back on the table. “Even if he is, why would he go for me anyway? I’m his nanny. And he’s…”

Perfect, Furihata thought to himself. And not to mention so far out of my league it’s not even funny.

“That could be a good thing, though,” Fukuda said thoughtfully. “I mean, he wouldn’t have hired you if didn’t trust you, or want you to be around him or his kid.”

Kawahara laughed. “Dude, it’ll be like a scene straight out of romance drama! The hot, rich parent falls in love with his sweet, innocent nanny…”
“Oh my god,” Furihata groaned, slamming his forehead down on the table to hide his embarrassment.

He endured another twenty minutes of ridicule before finally managing to change the subject. It wasn’t that he didn’t appreciate the help. He knew his friends had good intentions. But they couldn’t understand how useless any of it was since they hadn’t actually met Akashi. If they had, well, Furihata was pretty sure they’d understand.

Akashi was just so kind, on top of everything else. Furihata didn’t know a whole lot about him, but he knew enough to know that Akashi hadn’t had the easiest upbringing. And yet here he was, trying to do everything in his power to make sure his son didn’t have to experience the same thing.

Katsuo had been so happy, on the basketball court the other day. And Akashi had been so bright, laughing and playfully teasing Furihata. He’d been exhausted, but Furihata had kept up the best he could. Seeing Akashi enjoying himself, watching him and Katsuo play together… it had made Furihata’s heart melt. And at the end of the day, when they were heading back into the house together, Akashi had stopped him, with a gentle squeeze of his shoulder.

“Thank you,” he’d said, his crimson eyes full of warmth. “I believe that was the most fun I’ve had in a long time.”

Furihata’s heart had pounded, and not from exertion. “I—I had fun too.” He narrowed his eyes, and gave Akashi the most determined look he could. “I’ll take you on again, anytime you want. Only this time, I’ll win.” He shot a playful look at Katsuo. “As long as I don’t get double-teamed again.”

Katsuo had giggled, squeezing Akashi’s hand. Akashi had smiled down at his son before turning towards Furihata, a smirk lingering on his lips. “I would be more than happy to take you up on that offer, Furihata-san.”

Furihata didn’t have the words to describe how that day had made him feel. He’d never felt so happy before, so… belonging. Spending time with Akashi and Katsuo, seeing both of them laugh and have fun…

It broke his heart to know that it couldn’t last.

It was stupid, Furihata knew. He could rationalize his attachment to Katsuo, at least a little. After all, Furihata spent hours with him nearly every day. He was such a sweet kid. Of course he was going to get attached.

His interest in Akashi was much harder to Furihata to justify, not that he really blamed himself for it. Outwardly, Akashi was everything a person could want. He was smart, rich, and heart-stoppingly attractive. But he was also so much more that that. He was kind, and funny, and so determined to give his best, whether it be in basketball or providing for his son. He was caring and gentle, and it only made Furihata want to know him more.

But, he tried his best to push those thoughts away. As much as he didn’t like it, he was almost glad that he only saw Akashi briefly, at the end of each day. It made not thinking about him a little easier.

Instead, he focused on enjoying his time with Katsuo. Currently, they were seated in his room, a board game sprawled across the table. They were tied on wins, so Furihata had suggested a tie-breaker before it was time for him to leave.

Katsuo rolled the dice, and moved his piece around the board, taking an early lead. He stuck his tongue out at Furihata as he took his turn.
“Oh yeah?” Furihata asked playfully. “Just wait until you see this!” He threw his dice down, rolling a measly three. Katsuo laughed, and happily moved Furihata’s piece for him.

The game progressed, with Katsuo still holding a strong lead. Furihata had learned pretty quickly that Katsuo was very competitive, but at the same time, he also enjoyed a challenge. He didn’t take any pride in achieving an easy win, something Furihata had discovered after Katsuo challenged him to shougi a while back.

Furihata sorta knew the rules, but he hadn’t really played the game in years. He figured he knew enough to keep up with a five year old though, so he had accepted the challenge anyway.

It didn’t take long for him to realize he’d made a mistake.

Katsuo knew shougi very well, to the point where Furihata was pretty sure he could even win some competitions. It was amazing to watch, even if Katsuo was less than pleased with the results.

“Furi doesn’t know how to play at all,” he’d told Akashi when he arrived home. “I beat him in all five games.”

Furihata had rubbed the back of his neck, slightly embarrassed. “I, uh, haven’t played in a while, and I never really played a lot to begin with…”

Akashi laughed a little before kneeling down to Katsuo. “Maybe you could teach him,” he’d said. “Or perhaps Furihata-san knows a few other games you could play.”

So Furihata had been on the hunt for board games. He still lost quite often, especially if the game involved any sort of strategy, but Katsuo seemed to enjoy them regardless.

Katsuo rolled again, his game piece moving further and further ahead of Furihata’s. They were down to the last stretch when Furihata’s cell phone rang.

His heart jumped into this throat when he saw Akashi’s name on the screen. “H-Hello?” he answered.

“Good evening, Furihata-san,” Akashi said calmly. “I apologize for the short notice, but I’m afraid I’m going to be stuck here for while. Would it be terribly bothersome for you to stay another hour or so?”

This wasn’t the first time Akashi had to stay late at the office. In fact, Furihata got the impression that it wasn’t an uncommon occurrence. Furihata didn’t mind staying late, but he knew of someone who was going to be disappointed.

“Yeah, of course I can. It’s no problem,” he said into the receiver. He glanced over at Katsuo, only to find golden eyes staring up at him, his little eyebrows pinched together.

He heard Akashi sigh. “Once again, I’m indebted to you,” he said softly. He sounded tired, Furihata thought.

“Don’t worry about it. Really,” Furihata said. “I, uh, I’ll see you later, then?”

“With any luck,” Akashi said, a bit dryly. “Will you please tell Katsuo I’ll be home as soon as I can?”

Furihata nodded. “Yeah, sure thing.”
They said their goodbyes, and Furihata ended the call. He didn’t even have time to put his phone away before Katsuo spoke.

“That was my dad, wasn’t it?” he asked.

Furihata hesitated. Katsuo was always so disappointed whenever Akashi had to stay late.

“It was him,” Katsuo pressed. “He’s not coming home, right?”

“He’ll be home,” Furihata quickly reassured him. “Just…a little later than usual.”

Katsuo crossed his arms, his lower lip jutting out. “I knew it.”

“Hey,” Furihata said gently, scooting closer to him. “He’ll be home as soon as he can, okay? You know your dad wouldn’t stay unless he had too.”

Katsuo sat silently for a moment before dropping his shoulders. “Yeah… I know.”

Furihata reached over and brushed his hair back, causing Katsuo to meet his eyes. “C’mon, let’s get back to our game so you can finish kicking my butt,” he smiled. “I’m sure your dad will be home before you know it.”

Katsuo turned his head away from the game, a frown still etched on his face. “I don’t wanna play anymore.”

Furihata’s chest squeezed painfully. He knew this wasn’t easy, for Akashi or Katsuo. He wished there was something more he could do to help.

“Okay,” Furihata said easily. “We’ll think of something else to do then.”

“Like what?” Katsuo asked, sounding curious in spite of himself.

Furihata thought hard. He knew another game wouldn’t lift Katsuo’s spirits. He needed something more distracting, and more time-consuming. He tried to remember what he liked to do, when he was upset as a child…

He snapped his fingers. “How about we build a blanket fort?” he asked. “We can hide in there, and surprise your dad when he gets home.”

Katsuo looked at him blankly. “What’s a blanket fort?”

Now it was Furihata’s turn to be confused. “You’ve never built a fort before?”

Katsuo shook his head.

Furihata opened his mouth to ask, but decided against it. “I’ll show you, then.” He pushed away from the table and stood up. “I’m gonna need some help, though.”

Katsuo blinked up at him. “What do I do?”

“Well,” Furihata began with a smile. “You get the most important job. I need you to go grab every blanket you can find. Think you can handle it?”

Katsuo nodded eagerly, a smile already on his face. He turned and raced off, yelling a quick “Okay!” over his shoulder.
Furihata started moving the furniture around the room, sliding the table over and pulling the small bookshelf a little closer. He grabbed some chairs from the formal sitting room, and pulled Katsuo’s pillows off his bed, clearing the space.

A few minutes later and Katsuo returned, his little arms loaded with several blanket and sheets. They dragged on the ground, and Furihata rushed over to grab them before he tripped.

They worked together, making the perfect building team. As Furihata draped the sheets over the chairs and table, Katsuo would hand him books to hold it down. He sent Katsuo out to grab a few of the throw pillows off the couches, while he put the finishing touches to the outside. Once he returned, they started working on the inside, layering the floor with thick blankets and packing it full of pillows.

Furihata grabbed Katsuo’s bedside lamp, and plugged it back in so it could sit inside the fort, giving them some light. The two of them stood back and admired their work with matching grins before crawling inside.

It wasn’t very big, but they could both easily sit inside. Katsuo flopped happily on the pile of pillows and buried himself in the blankets. Furihata couldn’t resist reaching over and tickling him, laughing at the squirming bundle. Katsuo broke free, and pounced on Furihata, giggling the whole time. They wrestled playfully, tickling each other and laughing. It all came to an abrupt halt when one of them bumped into one of the chairs, and the roof the fort dropped significantly.

They both froze, afraid to move in fear of sending the whole thing crashing down. After a moment, Furihata shifted, easing towards the exit.

“Furi?” Katsuo said nervously.

“It’s alright,” Furihata assured him. “I’ll fix it up in no time.”

He slid out and pulled the sheet back tight, doubling the amount of books to hold it down. Before he crawled back in, he grabbed a few coloring books and a box of crayons.

“Here.” He handed the books to Katsuo. “Maybe we should try something a little less destructive.”

Katsuo giggled, but accepted the books. They each choose a picture to color, and Katsuo sprawled out on his stomach while Furihata hunched over in the cramped space. They worked in mostly silence, other than occasionally commenting on each other’s artwork. It was calm and peaceful, and time passed without either of them really taking notice.

So they both jolted a little, when the door suddenly pushed open. They exchanged glances for a second before Katsuo’s face lit up, and he hurried to crawl towards the exit.

“Dad!” he called, peaking through the flap. “Look what Furi and I made!”

Furihata could hear Akashi’s footsteps come closer. “I see,” Akashi said, sounding perplexed. “It looks quite impressive.”

Katsuo stretched an arm out. “You gotta come in! We’ve got all kinds of stuff in here.”

“I would love too,” Akashi said warmly. Furihata could see Akashi’s shoes through the opening. His heartbeat skipped a little.

“Wait!” he called quickly, starting to move towards the opening. “Let me get out fir--”
He didn’t get to finish before Akashi was crawling through the opening, Katsuo tugging on his sleeve. Furihata scooted back as far as the fort would allow, his pulse hammering. Before he knew it, Akashi was sitting directly across from him, with Katsuo seated in his lap.

_This was close_, Furihata thought to himself. _Way too close_.

Akashi hugged Katsuo close to his chest, and smiled at Furihata in a way that filled his stomach with butterflies. “I see the two of you have had an exciting day,” he said, raising an eyebrow.

Furihata stared dumbly, his brain not working. Thankfully, Katsuo answered for him. “Uh huh,” he nodded enthusiastically. “We petted the horses and finished our puzzle and I beat Furi in a bored game then we built this!”

“It sounds like it was the quite the adventure,” Akashi said with a chuckle, kissing the top of Katsuo’s head. “Who’s idea was the fort?”

Katsuo pointed right at Furihata. “Furi’s! He said he use to build them all the time when he was a kid, and that he’d show me how since I’ve never seen one.”

Akashi turned his crimson eyes towards him. “I, um, I’m s-sorry about the mess,” Furihata apologized quickly.

They really were sitting close, Furihata realized suddenly. So close that their knees were almost touching. His heart pounded so loud he wondered if Akashi could hear it.

“It’s no trouble at all,” Akashi assured him. He eyed the makeshift tent, looking around. “It’s something I never would have thought of, to say the least.” He looked back at Furihata with warm eyes. “I believe this is my first experience with one as well.”

Furihata wasn’t surprised to hear that, given what he knew about Akashi’s childhood. It also explained why Katsuo had never heard of one.

Akashi gazed down at Katsuo, resting his forehead against his hair. “I’m sorry I had to stay late again,” he apologized softly.

Katsuo pouted a little. “It’s okay,” he said, only sounding a little sullen. “Furi was here.”

“I’m very glad he was,” Akashi said quietly, and with so much feeling that it made Furihata’s face heat up.

“Me too,” Katsuo agreed, smiling up at Furihata.

Akashi pulled away, and ruffled Katsuo’s hair. “I do have some good news, however. A surprise.”

“For me?” Katsuo asked excitedly, craning his neck to look up at Akashi.


“What would you think if I took the day off tomorrow and we went to the zoo?” Akashi asked.

Katsuo’s golden eyes widened to the size of saucers. “Really? Tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow,” Akashi confirmed with a smile. “Does that sound like fun?”
“Yes!” Katsuo screeched, twisting in Akashi’s lap and flinging his arms around his neck.

Furihata smiled fondly, watching the two of them. He knows Katsuo is going to absolutely love spending the day with Akashi. Now that he thinks about it, Furihata wonders if that’s why Akashi had to work late tonight, to make up for him missing tomorrow.

And since Akashi will be here, it means that Furihata doesn’t have to work tomorrow. He hasn’t had a Friday off in a long time, and already he’s wondering what his friends might be up too.

As though reading his thoughts, Akashi turned his attention back to Furihata. “I hope you don’t mind taking the day off? I can still pay you for the day, if need be.”

“Oh, no!” Furihata waved his hands in front of him. “I mean, no, I don’t mind having the day off. And you don’t need to pay me, really. It’s no problem.”


Akashi and Furihata stared at each other. Katsuo looked between the two of them, his head whipping back and forth.

“What?” he finally asked.

“Well…” Furihata began, still looking at Akashi. “This is a surprise for you and your dad. Don’t you wanna spend the day with him?”

Katsuo nodded, but his confusion didn’t lessen. “Why can’t I spend the day with both of you?” he asked. He turned his golden eyes on Akashi. “Furi can come too, right dad?”

“Of course Furihata-san can join us, if he’d like,” Akashi said. “But maybe you should ask him if he’d like too before making assumptions.”

Katsuo looked at Furihata, with pleading eyes. “You’ll come, right Furi? Please?”

“Katsuo,” Akashi chided gently. “It’s not polite to beg.” He met Furihata’s gaze, and cleared his throat. “Would you like to join us, Furihata-san? I must admit that I would also enjoy your company, but please don’t let us pressure you into agreeing. The day off is yours, if you’d like it.”

Furihata’s eyes flickered between the two Akashi’s, unsure what to say. On one hand, he definitely wouldn’t mind spending the day with Akashi and Katsuo. In fact, that was pretty much his idea of a perfect day. But on the other hand, he didn’t want to intrude on Akashi spending time with his son. He knew the two of them rarely got the chance to do things like this.

Two sets of cat-like eyes, one red and one gold, stared at Furihata. He felt like he couldn’t give an answer without disappointing the other. Finally, he leaned forward, and covered Katsuo’s ears with his hands.

“Okay, I’d love to go with you guys, but… are you really sure you want me too?” Furihata asked quietly. “I totally understand if you don’t, and I’ll tell him no.”

Furihata bit his lip, and Akashi tilted his head a little. Katsuo’s brows were furrowed, clearly annoyed that he was being left out of the conversation.

Akashi leaned forward a little, and gestured for Furihata to do the same. His heart pounded in his chest as he complied, until their faces only a few inches apart.
“If I am to be honest, Furihata-san, I would like it very much if you joined us,” Akashi said, his voice low and silky. Furihata was pretty sure Akashi wasn’t doing it on purpose, but he felt a blush spread across his face at the tone. “In fact, there’s a chance I might even enjoy it more than Katsuo.”

The little fort they were sitting in suddenly felt about ten times smaller, the air around them drawn close. Akashi pulled back, and all Furihata could do for a moment was stare, his brain trying to process the words.

He felt a little lightheaded, suddenly. And way too warm.

Katsuo wormed his way out of Furihata’s hold, pushing his hands away from his ears. He stared up at Furihata, his little brows pinched together. “Are you coming or not?” he demanded, crossing his arms.

Furihata looked at Katsuo, and then up at Akashi, and made one of the easiest decisions of his life.

“Of course I’ll go,” Furihata said, smiling at Katsuo. He grinned in excitement, leaning back in Akashi’s lap with satisfaction. Furihata felt the same warm feeling that he always felt, when Katsuo was happy.

And then he looked up at Akashi, and felt a different kind of warmth. Tomorrow, they would spend the day together. All three of them.

Excitement drummed in his veins, at all the possibilities.

Tomorrow couldn’t come fast enough.

Chapter End Notes

Oh, the suspense. I know I promised more Akashi last chapter, but I'm not really sure I delivered on that? Plenty of Katsuo fluff, though.

See you guys next chapter!
A Day in Paradise

Chapter Summary

Furihata spends the day with Akashi and Katsuo at the zoo. He planned on enjoying the day to the fullest, but he didn't expect the painful knowledge that he'll never get another one like it.

Chapter Notes

I'm gonna start off with a long apology, because seriously, THIS CHAPTER TOOK ME SO LONG TO WRITE, I'M SO SORRY. I've had about half of it finished for a while now, but then the holidays happened, and some crazy shit (good shit) has been happening in real life, and the whole thing kind of got away from me for a while? Also I'm in the process of trying to quit smoking, and I usually smoke A LOT when I write, so it's been hard to sit down without that old habit there. BUT I FINALLY DID IT and I can't apologize enough for taking so long. Thank you so much to everyone for their patience, and kind words here and on Tumblr. It really helped me through this, and I promise the next chapter won't take so long. (It's already started, as a matter of fact!) I also bumped the chapters from 5 to 6, because this chapter is the longest yet (it's well over 6K), and I still didn't get everything it that I wanted to, so I cut it early and decided to save it for the next chapter!

As always, I hope you guys enjoy! And thank you all again for sticking with me! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For the second time since he started working there, Akashi is the one who answered the door when Furihata arrived in the morning.

“Good morning, Furihata-san,” he greeted, holding the door open with a smile. Furihata’s heart skipped a beat, just like it had been doing ever since their conversation in the fort yesterday…

After he agreed to join Akashi and Katsuo, Furihata had left pretty quickly. It had been strangely hard to breath, it that small space with Akashi looking right at him. He managed to stay long enough to confirm a meeting time before excusing himself, rushing out before Akashi could even offer to walk him to the door like he usually did.

It took Furihata forever to fall asleep last night, with Akashi’s words running through his head like a broken record.

“In fact, there’s a chance I might even enjoy it more than Katsuo.”

What the hell did that even mean? Furihata tried a hundred different reasons in his head, but none of them made any sense. Sure, Akashi had said he had fun, playing basketball all those weeks ago, but how did that translate into spending an entire day together? It’s not like they really even knew all that much about each other either. For all Akashi knew, Furihata could be the most boring person on the
And as far as enjoying it more than Katsuo... was that even possible? Katsuo had basically begged for Furihata to go. Did that mean that Akashi had wanted him to go that badly too? That's sort of what it sounded like, only it made absolutely zero sense why Akashi would want to spend his day with someone like Furihata. His son's nanny.

Still, Furihata had agreed. Even if he couldn’t figure Akashi out, that didn’t mean he wasn’t going to make the best of today. He’d be lying if he said he wasn’t the least bit curious to see what Akashi was like outside of the house. And there was no way he was going to pass up spending some extra time with Katsuo.

After all, they only had so much time together.

But now, seeing the warm smile on Akashi’s face, he wondered how he was going to survive the day, especially if Akashi kept looking at him like that. Like he was really happy to see him, for some reason.


“Furi!” an excited voice interrupted from inside. Furihata heard the sound of quick little footsteps, and then there was Katsuo, worming around Akashi’s legs to peer out the door.

Furihata couldn’t stop the beaming smile that formed on his face. “Hey, kiddo,” he said with a laugh. “Good morning to you, too.”

Akashi moved aside, and Katsuo bolted outside, grabbing Furihata’s hand and tugging him towards the cars. “C’mon, let’s go!”

“Katsuo, be patient,” Akashi chided gently. He couldn’t quite hold back a smile as he looked at Furihata. “I apologize, he’s been like this all morning.”

“Only cause Furi’s late!” Katsuo defended, letting go of Furihata’s hand. He walked over to Akashi and took hold of his wrist. “You said you’d be here at eight, and it’s already--” He studied Akashi’s watch for a moment. “--eight fifteen.” He looked up at Furihata with an accusing expression.

“Huh? Am I?” Furihata blinked, pulling out his phone to verify the time. Katsuo was right. Furihata felt a shiver of panic run down his spine. He’d never been late before. “Oh god, I’m so sorry--”

“Please, don’t worry about it,” Akashi interrupted. “It’s no trouble, honestly.” He rested his free hand on Katsuo’s head. “Isn’t that right, Katsu?”

Katsuo looked up at Akashi, and then over at Furihata, apparently debating over whether Furihata deserved forgiveness or not.

After several seconds, he smiled. “Yeah, okay,” he agreed. Relief washed over Furihata, and he laughed.

“Thank you, Katsu-kun. It won’t happen again,” he promised, smiling back.

“Good,” he said, narrowing his eyes a little. Akashi laughed.

There was a long pause of silence, the three of them eyeing each other. Finally, Katsuo spoke up again. “So can we go now? Please?”
Furihata and Akashi exchanged amused glances, and Katsuo’s impatient frown deepened.

“Yes, I believe we can,” Akashi finally said. “Just let me inform the driver…”

Akashi turned to head back into the house, and Furihata spoke without really thinking about it. “Hey, w-wait!” he called. Akashi turned back to him, one eyebrow raised curiously. Furihata fidgeted with his fingers a little. “Um...I could drive? You k-know, if-- if you want?”

Akashi blinked. “Are you sure? I wouldn’t want to impose.”

Furihata nodded jerkily. “Yeah! I, uh, I know the way, and I figure it might be more convenient?” Akashi kept staring at him, and Furihata shuffled his feet. Maybe he shouldn’t have said anything, or maybe Akashi thought it was weird…

Just as Furihata was starting to sweat, Akashi smiled, tilting his head a little. “In that case, I would more than happy to ride with you.”

Furihata sighed with relief. He reached for his keys, and took a step towards his car. Thankfully he’d cleaned it the other day…

Katsuo tugged on Akashi’s sleeve, his whole face lighting up. “C’mon, dad!”

“All right, come on then,” Akashi said with a laugh.

And then they were off.

The car ride went mostly okay. It was kind of weird, to have Akashi in his boring old car. He found himself driving with the utmost care, constantly aware of Katsuo bouncing in the backseat, chatting on with excitement about all the animals they were going to see. Furihata couldn’t stop smiling.

He was also painfully aware of Akashi sitting in the passenger seat, far closer than what Furihata was use to. It reminded him of the fort from yesterday, when they were close enough to touch. The scent of Akashi’s cologne filled the car, delicious and inviting. Furihata cracked his window a little to help him think.

They got a pretty good parking spot, and Akashi held Katsuo’s hand as they headed towards the ticket booth. Furihata hung back, digging through his pockets to find his wallet.

The woman at the counter handed Akashi the tickets, and they moved aside. Furihata stepped up to the booth when Akashi stopped him, pressing a ticket into his palm.

“Wh-what?” Furihata stuttered, staring at the ticket in his hand. “What’s this?”

“It’s a ticket, Furihata-san,” Akashi said with a laugh. “I hope you won’t mind accepting this gift from me.”

Furihata could feel his mouth hanging open, and he worked to close it. “Are...are you sure? I mean, I can pay you--”

Akashi shook his head. “I won’t hear of it,” he said, raising his chin a fraction. “You can consider it
payment for driving here, if you’d like. Although that wasn’t my intent.”

Furihata was definitely going to look at it that way, because it made more sense than Akashi just giving him a random present. “Thank you,” he said sincerely, bowing slightly.

Akashi just smiled, and led the way inside.

Katsuo immediately caught sight of the gift shop, and he pointed towards the sign. Akashi managed to convince him to wait until the end of their trip, promising to buy him something then.

The first section of the zoo was smaller, with only a few animal groups to see. Akashi grabbed a map, and they headed towards the entrance to the Arctic area.

Katsuo eagerly rushed toward the glass to see the seals swimming, shooting through the exhibit like torpedos. After that, the three of them paced the fence of the wolf enclosure, playing a game to see who could spot one first. Katsuo climbed up on the small split rail fence, finally finding a white one curled up between some bushes.

Katsuo made a point of reading all the information listed at each exhibit, scanning the signs and posters with a concentrated look. Then he would rush back over to Akashi and Furihata, filling them in on what he learned. It was still amazing, Furihata marveled, how quickly Katsuo could memorize things.

Once they managed to pry Katsuo away from the polar bear enclosure, they headed towards the bridge that led to the larger, main part of the zoo. Katsuo stopped at the beginning of the long ramp, looking up at Furihata and raising his arms, in a gesture that demanded pick me up.

Furihata couldn’t help laughing. Ever since Furihata had put Katsuo on his shoulders during their basketball game, Katsuo had begun requesting to be picked up whenever he got the chance. It might be the start of a bad habit, but Furihata could never find it in himself to tell Katsuo no.

He lifted Katsuo easily, settling him on his shoulders. Katsuo tangled his hands in his hair, holding on as Furihata started walking. Akashi followed next to him, shaking his head a little.

“You realize he’s only doing this so he won’t have to walk,” he said with a smile. “As soon as we reach the other side he won’t be able to get down quick enough.”

“Yeah, I figured,” Furihata chuckled. Katsuo was apparently too distracted craning his neck to look over the edge to dispute that statement. Furihata grinned.

They made their way up, and crossed the long bridge over the street. They descended the ramp on the other side, and sure enough, Katsuo started squirming the second Furihata’s foot hit the pavement. Furihata set him down carefully, and he rushed over to Akashi. “Where are we going next?” he asked, bubbling with excitement.

“Well,” Akashi began, pulling the map out of his pocket and showing it to him. “If we go to the left, it’s the Aviary House, or to the right is the African Safari. Which would you prefer?”

Katsuo studied the map for a moment before tapping the paper with a finger. “Safari,” he said very seriously. “I want to see the lions.”

“As lions it is, then.” Akashi said with a smile, taking Katsuo’s hand and leading the way.

As they walked along the pathway, Katsuo reached out and grabbed Furihata’s hand, now holding onto him and Akashi. Katsuo continued on happily, swinging both his arms as he walked in
between. Furihata couldn’t resist looking over at Akashi, only to find him staring right back, his crimson eyes bright.

Warmth spread across his face, and he looked away, hoping Akashi wouldn’t notice.

Furihata’s eyes wandered, taking in the scenery around him. He couldn’t help but notice the other people around them. Young couples, kids being pushed in strollers, and a few stressed-out parents trying to corral their children, all rushing by in a blur.

He wondered how the three of them looked, to those people. Furihata glanced down at Katsuo, and how one of his hands was wrapped around Akashi’s, the other holding onto his own. A lot of the families he saw were walking in a similar way, all smiles and laughter.

Is that how they looked…? Like...like a family?

Furihata shook the thought from his head as quickly as it formed. Katsuo was not his kid, in any sense of the word. And he never would be, by any definition. Then there was Akashi…

Furihata glanced up, his eyes flickering over to Akashi. His mouth was moving, as he looked down at Katsuo, the two of them apparently having a conversation that Furihata wasn’t paying any attention too.

He was too busy trying to squash the sudden pain in his chest.

They arrived at the first exhibit, and Katsuo immediately broke free, running up to peer into the tiger pen. He turned his head and called to both of them to hurry up, pointing eagerly to the tiger sleeping on the rock ledge.

Furihata forced himself to ignore the painful squeeze his heart gave, as he made his way over with Akashi. He was going to enjoy this trip, for all that it was worth.

After all, it was the only one he was going to get.

They walked through the rest of the safari, stopping to see the elephants and the lions, while Katsuo stated facts about each one. As they were headed over to the giraffes, a steamy whistle blew from around the corner. Katsuo’s eyes lit up.

“Dad!” Katsuo turned towards Akashi, staring up at him with pleading eyes. “Can we ride the train? Please? ”

Akashi chuckled. “I don’t see why not,” he said. He lifted his gaze to Furihata, his eyes as bright as ever. “What do you think, Furihata-san?”

Katsuo looked at him too, with those huge golden eyes that Furihata couldn’t resist. “Sounds good to me,” he responded, unable to keep the smile off his face. He glanced over at the line of people who were already rushing around the corner. “We’d better hurry though, or else we’ll have to wait for the next one.”

Furihata barely finished his sentence before Katsuo was taking off. “Let’s go then!” he called impatiently.

“I suppose we better hurry up, before we get left behind,” Akashi said, giving Furihata a look that was far too similar to the one from the fort, when they were sitting close enough for their knees to touch. Furihata nodded, following behind, his throat dry.
Akashi insisted on paying for admission, despite Furihata’s protests. They boarded quickly, Furihata sitting across from Akashi in the narrow space. Katsuo was sitting next to Akashi, peering over the guardrail with anticipation. After a few minutes, the whistle blew again, and the train started moving on it’s track around the entire safari.

Furihata felt a weird sense of joy, looking at the scene across from him. Katsuo was practically leaning over the side in his efforts to get the best view possible, eagerly pointing out every animal he spotted in the huge field. Akashi had one of his hands on the back of Katsuo’s shirt, his face a mixture of concern and amusement as he watched his son.

Trying to be sneaky, Furihata dug his cell phone out of his pocket, and snapped a quick picture. He forgot to turn the sound off, though, and Akashi’s eyes flashed to his face as soon as the click went off.

“S-Sorry,” he apologized, ducking his head a little. “I should have a-asked first.”

Akashi pursed his lips. “Not at all,” he said, shaking his head a little. “Quite the contrary, I’m very glad you thought of it. I’m afraid I have a terrible habit of forgetting such things.” His eyes got all warm again, and when he spoke again, his voice was soft. “Once again, I seem to be very fortunate to have you around.”

Furihata blinked, trying to get his brain to work. “O-Oh, uh… it– it’s no big deal. Really.” He fiddled with his phone a little. “I, um, I can take more, if… if you want?”

Akashi’s smile slipped into a smirk, his expression turning playful. “Only on the condition that I’m allowed to take photos of you as well.”

Furihata knew his face had to bright red by now. “I--you--” He struggled to find the right words. “Why?” he finally spit out.

Why on earth would Akashi want pictures of him? So he could remember the nanny he hired for a couple of months?

“Is there something wrong with that?” Akashi asked innocently.

Furihata sucked in a breath, about to launch into all reasons why yes, there was something wrong with that, when Katsuo reached back and tugged on Akashi’s shirt, demanding his attention as the train passed a herd of zebras.

The ride ended soon after, and the three got off the train. As they were headed towards the exit of the safari, Katsuo asked Akashi if he could ride the carousel before they left. Akashi knelt down, and pulled Katsuo closer, making a show of whispering in his ear. Katsuo giggled as Akashi straightened, rushing over to Furihata and yanking on his arm.

“What’s going on?” Furihata asked in confusion.

“Dad said I could ride, but only if you came with me,” Katsuo explained, tugging him towards the carousel.

Furihata glanced over in disbelief at Akashi, who was grinning slyly.

“Furi?” Katsuo whined, breaking Furihata’s stumbled thoughts. “Please?”

“Y-Yeah, okay,” he stammered, turning away from Akashi, his face burning. He followed Katsuo to the beginning of the line, he brain still trying to come up with a reason for Akashi’s behavior that
made sense.

He glanced down at Katsuo, who was bouncing with excitement, staring wide-eyed at the flashing lights. He wondered…

“Hey, Katsu-kun?” Furihata said nervously. Katsuo looked up at him curiously. “Um, what did your dad say to you over there?”

Katsuo shrugged. “He said he wanted to see you ride, but that you’d only do it if he said that was the only way I could ride it.”

“Oh,” was all Furihata said. That made even less sense. Why would Akashi want to see him ride some carousel meant for kids?

Furihata found out pretty quickly, once they got on the ride. Katsuo ran around, carefully inspecting each animal before choosing a zebra. Furihata took the leaping gazelle next to him.

The ride started, spinning slowing as the animals rose up and down. Furihata glanced around, unable to keep the goofy smile off his face at the cheerful music and flashing lights. Katsuo was laughing next to him, holding on tightly to the pole in front of him.

“Look!” Katsuo shouted suddenly, taking one hand off to point at the crowd. “There’s dad!”

Furihata followed where Katsuo was pointing, and sure enough, there was Akashi, standing in front of the guardrail.

With his phone out. Snapping pictures.

Furihata’s jaw dropped, and warmth flooded his face. He turned away as the carousel spun past Akashi, but not before he caught sight of the grin on his face.

The ride ended minutes later, and Furihata’s brain was still trying to process all that had happened.

Furihata helped Katsuo down the steps, and they walked over to Akashi. Katsuo rushed towards him, and Furihata narrowed his eyes a little as he approached, his cheeks still pink. Akashi laughed.

“I hope you’ll forgive me,” Akashi said as Furihata approached. “I couldn’t quite help myself.” His eyes twinkled as he added, “I suppose you could consider it revenge.”

“Y-Yeah, it’s fine,” he said, still embarrassed. An idea occurred to him, and he tried his best to mimic Akashi’s mischievous expression. “B-But just so you know, two can p-play at this game.”

“Oh?” Akashi inquired, raising an eyebrow. He stepped closer, and Furihata’s heart pounded in his ears. “In that case, challenge accepted, Furihata-san.”

Furihata gulped. Akashi was close, only a foot away. The music from the carousel sounded strangely far away, considering they were standing right next to it. He stared into Akashi’s eyes, as the rest of the world seemed to melt away…

A tug on his arm pulled him back into reality. Katsuo was standing between them, gazing up impatiently. “Where are we going next?” he asked.

“Oh, u-um,” Right, we’re at the zoo, Furihata reminded himself. “Uh, what’s closest?”

Akashi checked the map, seeming oddly out of it himself. “The Reptile House is straight ahead, followed by the petting zoo and the Cafe.” He glanced down at Katsuo. “Does that sound like a
“Yeah!” Katsuo cheered. Akashi grabbed his hand again as they started walking. Furihata hung back a little, trying to clear his head.

*He’s just being friendly,* Furihata told himself. Akashi probably didn’t get the chance to hang out with people outside of work very often, even if this could technically still be considered *work,* since Furihata was basically one of his employees. Which only made the whole situation ten times worse.

Still, Furihata was having a hard time shaking off the weird tension he felt, whenever Akashi looked at him. He could only hope that Akashi wouldn’t notice…

Because what would happen if he did? Furihata didn’t even want to think about it. Akashi would probably fire him on the spot, for being so unprofessional. After all, there was no way he want someone like *that* to be babysitting his kid, or spending any time in his house.

They made their way through the Reptile House without any disruptions. Furihata snapped a few more pictures of Katsuo, with his face pressed against the glass cages as he tried to identify the different species of snakes and lizards.

He took another one of Akashi too, when he wasn’t paying attention. He’d been a few feet back from the enclosure with a massive snake inside. His nose had wrinkled as he watched the serpent slither across one of the logs, and Furihata hadn’t been able to resist taking a picture of the disgust on his face.

“You don’t like snakes?” Furihata asked curiously.

Akashi shook his head a little. “Not particularly. There’s something unnerving about an animal with no legs or claws that can still manage to kill you. And this species isn’t even venomous.”

Furihata couldn’t hold back a chuckle, because *of course* Akashi would have a perfectly detailed reason.

After they cleared the Reptile House, they made their way over to the small petting zoo. Katsuo rushed up eagerly to read the display board out front, listing all the different activities for the day.

Akashi paid for a small bucket of food at the entrance, and Katsuo happily ran off to go feed the goats and sheep. Other kids swarmed around, and Furihata made his way to a nearby picnic table, watching Katsuo fondly.

He searched around for Akashi too, but he was nowhere to found, despite his bright red hair. He stood up, craning his neck to see over the crowd. Katsuo’s golden hair was easy to spot, but Akashi didn’t appear to with him.

Just as Furihata was starting to get worried, a voice spoke from right behind him.

“Looking for someone?”

Furihata jumped, whirling on his feet. Akashi stood just behind him, holding two slushies in his hands and biting back a grin.

“I apologize for startling you,” Akashi said, not even trying to hide the amusement in his voice.

Furihata chuckled shakily, pressing a hand over his thudding heart. “It’s fine,” he practically sighed with relief. “I didn’t see you leave, and I wasn’t sure if maybe we got separated or something…”
Akashi’s eyes flickered over to Katsuo for a moment before returning to Furihata. “I figured he’d be occupied for a while, so I thought the two of us could use a break.”

He smiled, and handed Furihata one of the sushies. He accepted it without really thinking, staring dumbly as Akashi took a seat across from him. He hurried to sit, remembering to thank Akashi for yet another unexpected gift.

They both sat in silence for a while, watching Katsuo as he moved between the different animals, easily mingling with the other kids. He stroked the neck of a goat, laughing with the little girl next to him as she held out a handful of food. Furihata couldn’t keep the smile off his face.

“Furihata-san?”

He jerked in his seat, snapping out of his thoughts. He looked at Akashi, who was watching him with an odd look on his face.

“Y-Yeah?” he asked, feeling nervous.

Akashi studied his drink for a moment, his brows pinched in the middle. Furihata felt a wave of unease wash over him. It must be bad, he couldn’t help thinking, if Akashi was hesitating this much.

“I wanted to thank you again,” Akashi began, “for taking the time to join us today.”

He felt a pang of guilt run through him. Even though Akashi and Katsuo had both asked him to come, he still felt a little selfish for agreeing. Akashi probably thought Furihata decided to come along to give him a hand keeping an eye on Katsuo. And while that was part of it, it wasn’t the full reason why Furihata had joined them.

But it wasn’t like Furihata could just say, “I came because I really like you, and I wanted to spend more time with you and Katsuo because in another month I won’t be able too and it’s gonna break my heart when I have to leave.”

“Oh, u-uh, it’s no big deal,” he finally stammered. “I don’t mind at all, really.” Furihata scaped at the shaved ice with the end of his straw, unwilling to meet Akashi’s gaze.

“It’s a relief to hear that,” Akashi said, his voice full of warmth. “Having you here means a great deal to me.”

A shiver ran down Furihata’s spine. He opened his mouth, planning on downplaying Akashi’s statement, only to immediately snap it closed when a hand reached across the table to cover his own.

Furihata stared dumbly at the pale hand. Blood rushed up to color his cheeks, and he was sure even his ears must be bright red. His hand tingled under the warmth of Akashi’s, and the buzzing chatter of the crowd around them seemed to fade away.

“I know I’ve said it before,” Akashi continued, and Furihata struggled to hear him over the heartbeat pounding in his ears. “But I can’t express how grateful I am. You gave up so much to take this job, with little benefit towards yourself.”

All Furihata could do was blink. Akashi’s looked over at Katsuo, and he smiled fondly. “Katsuo has been so happy since you’ve been here. It was more than I ever could have dared hope for.” Akashi turned back to Furihata, his eyes soft. “He’s quite fond of you.”

Furihata swallowed thickly. “I… I’m fond of him, t-too.”
Akashi smiled at that, squeezing Furihata’s hand. Butterflies fluttered through his stomach at the small gesture. And for a second, he couldn’t help but wonder what would happen, if he were to flip his hand over and intertwine his fingers with Akashi’s…

“Furihata-san...” Akashi said hesitantly. His brows were furrowed again, as he studied their hands resting on the table. “This may seem rather abrupt, but I feel as though I should tell you…”

Furihata held his breath, hanging on every word.

Akashi met his gaze, raising his chin. “I wanted to tell you that I--”

“Dad!”

Both of their heads snapped to the side, spotting Katsuo rushing over to them. He ran up to the table, panting heavily, his food basket hanging empty in one hand.

“Dad,” Katsuo said again, grabbing Akashi by the sleeve. “They have bunnies and stuff you can hold, but they said I need a parent with me.” He put on his most pleading face, golden eyes shining in the sunlight. “Will you come? Please?”

For the first time that Furihata had seen, Akashi looked totally caught off guard. He stared at Katsuo for a second, blinking a few times.

After what seemed like forever, Akashi smiled. “Of course,” he agreed easily, as though nothing had happened. He turned to Furihata. “We’ll be right back.”

Furihata nodded as Katsuo cheered, tugging excitedly on Akashi’s arm. As he stood up, Akashi squeezed his hand again, brushing his thumb over his knuckles. Before Furihata could even respond, Akashi was gone.

He wasn’t sure how long he sat there. His brain felt like quicksand, like no matter how hard he struggled, he kept falling deeper into the same thoughts.

Furihata had no idea what had just happened. What was Akashi going to say? Was he going to thank him again, or was something worse? Had he noticed the way Furihata was always blushing and stammering around him? Did Akashi think he was far more attached to Katsuo than he should be?

Any one of those could be the answer. Furihata couldn’t help but think that it must be bad, given Akashi’s serious expression.

Once again, he tried to do his best to shove the thoughts away. If it was something bad Akashi wanted to tell him, he’d get to it eventually. There was no point wasting time thinking about it when he should be enjoying the little time he had left.

So he pushed to his feet, pausing to throw their drink containers away, and headed over to where Akashi and Katsuo were huddled together. They were standing with a small group of kids and parents while a zoo keeper hovered around them.

Katsuo currently held a black and white rabbit is arms, gently petting between its ears. Furihata smiled at the overjoyed expression on his face. Without really thinking about it, Furihata pulled out his phone and started snapping pictures.

He wandered closer after a few minutes, kneeling down next to Katsuo. After a few minutes the rabbit was passed along in exchange for a guinea pig. Furihata took a turn holding him so Katsuo could feed him a piece of lettuce, laughing the entire time.
Akashi spoke to him normally, without any trace of the seriousness he had earlier. Furihata felt his nerves settle a little. It couldn’t be too bad if Akashi was still smiling and laughing along with him.

It took another hour or so before they managed to get Katsuo away from the petting zoo. He pouted for a minute before Akashi told him they were going to get food. They hadn’t eaten since breakfast, and Furihata suddenly realized he was starving.

They found a table in the crowded cafe to order lunch, although it was closer to dinnertime. Katsuo chattered in between bites of food, talking about all the exhibits they still had yet to see. Furihata and Akashi struggled to eat quick enough before Katsuo was finishing his plate and bouncing eagerly in his seat.

Akashi offered to pay for Furihata’s meal when they were finished, but he declined, saying that Akashi had already paid for more than enough. They barely managed to throw their trays away before Katsuo took them each by the hand, tugging them out the door.

Katsuo rushed off to the first exhibit they came across. Akashi and Furihata stayed back, standing a few feet apart.

Just as Furihata started to worry that things might be awkward between them, Akashi spoke suddenly. “I give him twenty minutes.”

Furihata blinked. “Um...what?”

“Katsuo,” Akashi elaborated, nodding towards him. “At the rate he’s been going all day, and now that he’s eaten, he’s due for a crash any minute now.”

Furihata chuckled. “Yeah, that’s true,” he agreed. “I’m kinda surprised he made it this far.”

“He’s quite determined when he wants to be,” Akashi said with a smile. He turned to Furihata, one eyebrow raised. “Any guesses on how long he’ll last?”

“Hmm…” Furihata hummed. Katsuo still seemed pretty energetic, and Furihata knew from experience that getting Katsuo to admit he was tired was like pulling teeth. “I’ll say forty-five minutes.”

Akashi checked his watch. “You’re on, Furihata-san.”

Twenty-six minutes later, and Akashi was carrying an exhausted Katsuo. His arms were wrapped around Akashi’s neck, his face nestled against his shoulder, out like a light.

They made the long walk back in comfortable silence. The sun was just starting to set, and Furihata sighed at the cooler air. His legs ached a little from all the walking, and he was looking forward to the car ride back to Akashi’s.

Akashi stopped outside the gift shop, looking at Katsuo’s sleeping face. He nodded towards the entrance with a smile. “Do you mind?” he asked. “I did promise to get him something.”

Furihata shook his head. “No, not at all.”

He held the door open for Akashi, and they spent the next couple of minutes walking around the store. Finally, Akashi stopped in front of a shelf that held stuffed lions, in a wide range of sizes.

“Would you grab that one for me?” Akashi asked, lifting a hand off of Katsuo’s back to point at the largest one.
Furihata laughed as he reached for stuffed lion. It was easily the size of Katsuo, with a full, fluffy mane. He wrapped his arms around it as they headed to the checkout counter.

Akashi paid, and they made their way towards the exit of the zoo. They found the car pretty easily, and Furihata held the door open so Akashi could buckle Katsuo into the backseat. Furihata set the lion in next to him, and softly closed the door.

They both sighed a little when they settled into the car. Akashi gave him a knowing smile. “It’s been a long day, hasn’t it?”

“Yeah,” Furihata agreed, running a hand through his hair. “It was fun though.”


Furihata blushed again. “I s-should be thanking you, for inviting me.”

“It’s no trouble at all,” Akashi assured him. He hesitated for a moment before adding, “Quite the contrary, I enjoyed your company very much.”

If Furihata’s face wasn’t bright red before, it definitely was now. He was grateful for the dim lighting. “I, uh...I e-enjoyed yours too,” he stammered quietly.

He started the car, unwilling to meet Akashi’s gaze. The hum of the engine filled the silence, giving him something else to focus on other than the frantic pounding of his heart.

They made quiet small talk on the way home. Furihata felt strangely on edge, for some reason. Or maybe a little sad, that the day was over. He wasn’t likely to get another one like it in the short weeks he had left.

He tightened his grip on the steering wheel, trying to squash the sudden ache in his chest.

Furihata pulled into Akashi’s driveway, parking as close to the front door as he could get. He hesitated a little, unsure if he was invited inside or not.

Akashi unbuckled his seatbelt. “Would mind helping me get him inside?” Akashi asked lightly. “I don’t think I’ll be able to carry him and and lion.”

“Sure, no problem.” Furihata turned the car off and got out, grabbing the stuffed lion from the backseat. Akashi lifted a sleeping Katsuo into his arms, careful not to wake him. Furihata closed the door behind him as they walked to the front door.

It was late, much later than Furihata usually stayed. He was surprised by how empty the house was, the servants either in bed or home for the night.

Furihata opened the door to Katsuo’s room to let Akashi in. He leaned against the doorframe, unable to keep the soft smile off his face as he watched Akashi tuck Katsuo into bed.

It was a sight he’d never had the chance to see before, and made sure to memorize this moment, since he probably wouldn’t get to see it again.

When Akashi straightened, he stepped quietly into the room. He stood next to Akashi, leaning over a little to set the stuffed lion next to Katsuo.

They both stood there in silence, watching Katsuo sleep. Akashi gently brushed the hair off Katsuo’s
forehead before turning to Furihata and nodding toward the door.

Akashi quietly closed the door, and Furihata immediately headed in the direction of the front door. After such a long day, Furihata figured that Akashi wanted nothing more than to relax before heading to bed himself.

As usual, when it came to the Akashi’s, he was wrong.

“Would you like a drink?” Akashi asked, taking a step towards the kitchen.

“Oh, u-uh,” Furihata faltered a little, torn between giving Akashi the alone time he probably wanted and taking the chance to spend more time with him. “Are...are you sure? You don’t have too…”

“I never offer anything unless I’m sure, Furihata-san,” Akashi said, his tone teasing. “You should know that by now.”

Furihata couldn’t help but laugh a little. “Yeah, good point.”

“Come,” Akashi said. Or ordered, really. “It’s the least I can do.”

In the end, Furihata followed Akashi into the kitchen, where he pulled two wine glasses out of the cabinet. His stomach flipped nervously as Akashi popped the cork on a bottle of wine.

Furihata didn’t think Akashi had meant alcohol when he offered a drink. Furihata wasn’t a big drinker, even in his college days.

Maybe this wasn’t a good idea after all.

Regardless, when Akashi poured a glass of the red liquid, Furihata took it without a second thought. No matter what happened, it was bound to be interesting.

Chapter End Notes

I hope it was worth the wait! I'm not sure how well the subtle flirty stuff is coming across, but I hope it's working, lol.

Also, the zoo I described is a real place. I did some research about Japanese zoo's, but I couldn't find any maps or descriptions that were detailed enough that I felt comfortable using, so I just use the zoo where I live? Here is a link to the website and picture of the map if you wanna check it out!
Alone at Last

Chapter Summary

Akashi and Furihata finally get some alone time, and talk about past relationships. And with wine involved, there's no telling what will come of it.

Chapter Notes

Hello? Is anyone still here?

Hey guys! So obviously, it took me an extremely long time to update, and I'm very, very sorry about that. Real life got a little crazy, and work picked up, and basically all my motivated went on vacation.

But I'm back! And I'm here to kick some ass. I've been beating myself up for months over this fic (and a few of my other ones, oops) and I'm ready to come back to writing with a vengeance!

Thank you to everyone who has left comments on this so far! I read them whenever I'm feeling unmotivated, and the guilt always makes me want to get back into it. Also a big thank you to everyone who sent me messages on tumblr to ask me about this fic, as that was a real awakening that people were actually waiting on me, lol.

As always, I hope you guys enjoy! I hope the wait was worth it!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Furihata sat on the couch, running his finger nervously around the rim of his glass. He watched the liquid tremble slightly, and he took a deep breath in an effort to slow his heart rate.

It probably didn’t help that Akashi was sitting right next to him, much closer than he was use to.

*Just calm down,* Furihata told himself. *You’ve talked to Akashi a bunch of times. Just because he invited you to stay late and offered you wine and squeezed your hand earlier in the day doesn’t mean this was any different…*

Furihata repressed a shiver at the memory. He could still feel the ghost of Akashi’s touch on his hand, the way his fingers had skimmed across his knuckles. It had been such a gentle action, compared to the stern expression on his face.

Panic rose in Furihata’s throat, remembering that look. Akashi had been full of smiles and laughter all day, with the exception of that moment. He couldn’t help but think Akashi must have had something bad to tell him. But if it was bad news, then why would he touch him in such a soft, caring manner?

Furihata’s thoughts raced in circles, his unfocused eyes staring off into the corner of the room.
He jumped, his gaze snapping back to Akashi. The wine sloshed in his glass, and Furihata quickly steadied his hand. Thankfully, he managed to avoid spilling any on Akashi’s expensive carpet.

“Sorry,” Furihata apologized sheepishly, ducking his head. “I, uh, I-I zoned out a little, I guess.”

“Please, don’t worry about it.” Akashi smiled gently. “I didn’t mean to startle you.”

“It’s okay,” Furihata said quietly. Akashi took a sip of his wine, and Furihata did the same. “So, uh… what’s up?”

Akashi smiled over the rim of his glass. “Nothing in particular,” he said with a shrug. He tilted his head slightly. “I can’t help but feel that you seem a little on edge.”

Furihata laughed nervously. “A little, I g-guess.” He fiddled with his glass again, looking down. “To be honest, I feel like I’m intruding or something.”

“Of course you’re not,” Akashi countered immediately. “I invited you. You have no need to worry.”

“Yeah, I k-know.” Furihata smiled weakly, running his fingers through his hair. “I just…” He paused uncertainly.

“It’s different, isn’t it?” Akashi asked, finishing his thought. “Without Katsuo around. I believe this is one of the few times we’ve been alone.”

Furihata nodded, hoping the blush on his face wasn’t as obvious as it felt.

Akashi leaned forward a little, staring into his own glass. “I must admit, it’s a bit selfish of me, asking you to stay.”

Furihata’s head snapped up, his brows pinched in confusion.

“It is not often that I get the chance to talk to someone like this,” Akashi continued. “Between work and being home with Katsuo, I rarely have time for much else. And even when I do, there aren’t many people I feel comfortable with.”

Furihata blinked, his mouth falling open slightly. Akashi felt comfortable? With him, of all people? He was trying to make sense of that when Akashi glanced up, looking almost embarrassed. Furihata rushed to compose his expression.

“I know hearing that must sound odd,” Akashi added, chuckling lightly, and Furihata was strongly tempted to nod in agreement. “And I know it’s not fair of me, to ask you to stay past your normal hours. Especially given that you already sacrificed your day off to join us.”

“It’s okay,” Furihata told him quickly. “Don’t worry about it.”

Akashi lowered his gaze again, and took another drink. Furihata couldn’t help thinking that he looked a little sad. Like he was really bothered about this, for some reason. Furihata wracked his brain for something else to say.

“I, um…” Furihata hesitated, dropping his own gaze down to his glass. “I f-feel comfortable with you, too?” His eyes flickered up to Akashi and back down again. “So you don’t h-have to feel bad or anything. And I’m glad you asked me to go with you guys today. I had a lot of fun.”

Furihata ducked his head, embarrassment rising up. He meant everything he said, but it felt weird to
say it in front of Akashi. The last thing he wanted to do was say something that caused everything to blow up in his face.

The silence hung heavy in the air. Furihata sneaked a peek from under his hair to see Akashi watching him.

“I’m glad to hear you say that,” Akashi finally said, smiling a little. “I was worried the two of us might have pressured you.”

Furihata laughed. “It would’ve been hard to say no to him,” he agreed, thanking his lucky stars that he’d said “him” instead of “you”. “But I was happy to go, and it’s not like I had anything else to do, so…”

He took a long drink, hoping that would force him to shut up for a few moments.

“There’s no one else you’d rather spend time with?” Akashi asked curiously, and Furihata almost choked on his wine.

“Well, u-uh… I mean…” he sputtered, his mind racing. He knew he was putting too much implication behind the question, but he couldn’t stop himself from over-thinking. Akashi was probably just asking about his social life, or about his friends or family. There was definitely no way he was asking if Furihata preferred his company over others.

Furihata rubbed the back of neck awkwardly. “I don’t really s-see people that much?” He wasn’t sure why he said that like a question. “I mean, I hang out with a few people from college, but they’re usually busy with work and stuff, so we don’t really get to see each other very often.”

“I understand,” Akashi said sympathetically. “I use to make a point to get together with my old teammates before Katsuo was born. It was difficult, with how scattered we all are, but it was possible.” Akashi looked into his drink for a long moment before quietly adding, “Those meetings have severely dropped in frequency since my ex-wife left.”

Furihata jerked his head towards Akashi, his eyebrows raised in surprise. Akashi looked startled too, as though he’d spoken without thinking about it.

“I didn’t…” Furihata trailed off, still blinking in shock. “I didn’t know you were…”

He cut himself off before he could say “divorced”. Of course he didn’t know Akashi was divorced. Akashi never mentioned anything about her, and Katsuo never did either. And it wasn’t like Furihata had any right at all to ask Akashi about it.

And from the looks of it, Akashi hadn’t meant to say anything about it.

“Sorry,” Furihata murmured quietly. “That was r-really rude of me.”

“There’s no need to apologize.” Akashi sighed, running his fingers through his hair. “I should be the one apologizing. I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable by revealing personal information.”

Furihata shook his head. “I’m not uncomfortable,” he said, his nerves making him ramble again. “I don’t mind at all, but if you didn’t mean to talk about it, or don’t want to or whatever, it’s totally fine. I won’t bring it up, if you’d rather I just forget about it.” He tapped his fingernail against his glass. “I know you’d probably rather not talk to me about this kind of stuff.”

He took a long drink of his wine, nearly finishing his glass. His stomach flipped uneasily. They sat in tense silence for a moment before Akashi spoke.
“Quite the contrary, I find you very easy to talk too, Furihata-san,” Akashi said softly.

Furihata sat stunned, his heart pounding. He couldn’t believe what Akashi was saying, about him of all people.

Akashi was watching him, apparently waiting for him to say something. He tried to clear his head, to think of something to say…

“Oh,” Furihata finally breathed, and immediately resisted the urge to smack himself in the forehead. Akashi was sitting next to him, saying all these nice things, and that was the best he could come up with? “Is, um… is that a g-good thing?”

To Furihata’s increasing surprise, Akashi laughed, and most of the tension in the room vanished in an instant. “Yes, I would say it’s a good thing,” he said, still chuckling. “I’ve almost forgotten what it’s like, to be around someone I feel comfortable talking with.” He hesitated for a moment, giving Furihata an uncertain glance. “I hope I’m not pressuring you in any way. Of course, you are under no obligation for any of this. You have already gone above and beyond what I hired you for.”

“I don’t mind.” Furihata replied instantly. He flushed a little, realizing how eager he probably sounded. “As long as you don’t mind talking to me,” he added, ducking his head a little. He paused for beat, before quietly adding, “I’ve been a little c-curious, to be honest. About… your ex-wife. I would have asked, but I know it’s not my place.”

Akashi swished his wine around the glass for a moment. “Truthfully, I’m surprised you hadn’t asked sooner. I know I gave you very little details when I hired you.”

Furihata shrugged a little. “I really didn’t even think about it until a few weeks ago.”

Akashi lifted his glass to his lips, and drained that last of the liquid. He reached across the coffee table for the bottle and brought it to the rim of his glass. He paused, and glanced over at the nearly-empty glass in Furihata’s hand. “Would you like more?”

“Yeah, sure,” Furihata said, quickly finishing the wine before holding the glass out. Akashi carefully poured him another full glass. “Thank you.”

“You’re very welcome,” Akashi told him, smiling lightly as he filled his own glass.

They both sat in silence, taking slow sips of the wine. Furihata chewed his lower lip nervously. He couldn’t help but wonder what Akashi was thinking, if he was upset or not about talking about this. He seemed willing enough, but Furihata couldn’t help but feel like he had overstepped a boundary somehow.

The longer the silence went on, the more uneasy Furihata felt. Maybe he should change the subject, or fake a phone call that he had to leave, or…

“Her name was Kimiko,” Akashi began suddenly, interrupting Furihata’s thoughts. “We were first introduced when we were sixteen, although we didn’t officially begin our… courtship until we turned eighteen.”

Furihata turned his head, giving Akashi his full attention. Akashi was looking into his glass again, tracing one finger along the rim absentmindedly.

“It was an arranged marriage,” Akashi continued, and Furihata blinked in surprise. He knew arranged marriages were a thing, but he had never met anyone who had one. “It was something I had been dreading my entire life, but I tried to go into it with a positive attitude. I hoped that I would find
a relationship like my parents had. Their marriage was also arranged, but they were genuinely, perfectly happy together.”

Furihata had heard Akashi talk about his parents before, on a few occasions. He knew his mother had passed away when he was young, and that he rarely saw his father due to business in other countries. He got the sense that Akashi and his father weren’t on the best terms, but had never asked to confirm it or not.

“There were several suitors that my father deemed acceptable,” Akashi went on. “I sincerely tried to make the best of it, and develop a connection with each one of them, but…” He trailed off, his brows pinched in the middle. His mouth pulled down in a slight frown. “They were all the same, just as I feared. All they cared about was impressing me, or my father. After a few conversations, they all tried to become what they thought I wanted them to be. I never felt like I truly got to know any of them.”

Akashi looked sad, as the gazed across the living room. Sympathy tugged at his heart, and Furihata found himself speaking without really meaning to.

“I’m sorry,” he blurted, and Akashi turned to look at him. “I m-mean, uh…” Furihata shrunk into the couch a little. “I bet that must have been hard. I can’t imagine what t-that must feel like.”

Akashi’s mouth flickered a little, almost pulling up into a half smile. “Unfortunately by that time, I was quite use to it. I endured people trying to gain my favor all through middle and high school.” His gaze dropped again. “There were very few people I felt I could be myself around, and even fewer who felt they could be themselves around me.”

Akashi fell silent, pausing to take a long drink of wine. Furihata copied him, taking a tentative sip.

“Kimiko was different, however, right from the beginning,” Akashi continued. “She made it clear immediately that she wasn’t there to earn any favors.” He chuckled a little dryly, shaking his head. “She knew exactly what she wanted, and she was willing to do anything to get it.”

Furihata shifted in his seat. “And… what did she want?”

Akashi met his gaze, still wearing that small smile. “Ironically, she wanted roughly the same thing that I did. Which was that neither of us wanted to be forced into a relationship with someone we didn’t want to be with.”

Furihata nodded hesitantly. “That makes sense,” he agreed quietly. He wasn’t sure if Akashi wanted his opinion or not, but he felt like he had to say something. “I don’t think anyone would want that.”

“It might surprise you how many of those girls were invested in that very idea,” Akashi responded. “Most of them, like myself, were raised with that ideology in mind. Many of them were looking forward to that future.”

Furihata blinked, and nodded slowly. He never thought of it like that. Those girls probably thought nothing of having an arranged marriage with someone they barely knew. To them, it must have seemed normal.

“The more Kimiko and I talked, the more we realized that we weren’t going to be happy, regardless of who we chose,” Akashi said, and his tone was a little somber. “She was experiencing similar issues with her suitors, in that she didn’t feel connected with any of them.” Akashi tapped his finger against his glass, and he huffed a dry laugh. “I suppose you could say we bonded over our mutual dislike of our current situation.”
Furihata felt a little flicker of hope, that maybe the story finally had some happiness in it. “So… I guess you did connect with someone? At least a little?”

Akashi looked up at him, and ran his fingers through his hair. “In a way, I suppose you could say we did.” His brows knitted together, and his mouth tugged down on one side. “It wasn’t… romantic, however. She made it clear she wasn’t interested in me, and I felt the same way about her. Despite our similar feelings regarding the marriage, we were very different people, with very little in common.”

“Oh,” Furihata said slowly. “I just-- I thought that since you got married, maybe you…”

Akashi smiled sadly. “In an ideal world, that would have been the case, but unfortunately it wasn’t.” He fixed his serious gaze on Furihata before continuing. “We decided to marry each other based purely on business, rather than spending our lives with someone under false pretenses. We made it very clear to each other, and to our parents, that our relationship would be nothing more than a facade. And they agreed, as long as certain conditions were met.”

“Conditions?” Furihata asked. That sounded… not great. And he had an idea what one of those ‘conditions’ might have been.

“I know this must sound strange to you,” Akashi said softly. “And cold. But our arrangement wasn’t unheard of, in the world I was raised in. It seemed like the best option, at the time.”

Furihata waved his hands apologetically. “I didn’t mean anything bad!” he said quickly. “Like, I’m not judging or a-anything.” He ducked his head. “I’m sure I would have done the same thing, if I was in that position.”

Akashi laughed a little, and Furihata relaxed slightly. “Please, don’t apologize. I didn’t take any offense.” He smiled, and Furihata hesitantly returned it.

They sat in silence for a moment, both of them sipping on their wine. Furihata cleared his throat. “So, a business relationship. How did that work?”

“Quite well, actually, in the beginning. Akashi smiled at him again. “We both played our perfect roles when in the public eye, and maintained a carefully composed private life when we were alone. In a way, it was almost like nothing had changed.”


Akashi chuckled. “It very much wasn’t. The two of us were quite proud of ourselves for cheating the system.”

The silence dragged on again, and Furihata sensed that the story was about to take a turn. He swallowed nervously. “I… I’m guessing it didn’t last?”

Akashi gazed into his glass for a long time before answering. “She was the one who first brought up the idea of having a child.” He paused for a moment. “Producing a heir was one of the conditions of our marriage, and at the time, we agreed easily, deciding to cross that bridge when we got to it.”

Furihata shifted uneasily as Akashi continued. “At first, I wasn’t keen on the idea of a child. I was afraid that I might end up being like my father, and that any child I had would end up experiencing the same pressure and isolation that I had felt.”

An ache blossomed in Furihata’s chest at Akashi’s tone, and he resisted the urge to reach across the space between them and comfort him. But Furihata had never been good at words, and he didn’t
know if a reassuring touch was even wanted, much less needed.

So he stayed quiet, and anxiously waited for the rest of the story.

“Despite my fear, I was hopeful,” Akashi went on. “I thought a child might bring us closer together. I was determined that our child would have a different life than the two of us had experienced. And with that mindset, I agreed to try.”

Akashi reached for the wine and refilled his glass. He glanced over at Furihata and slightly raised the bottle in an offer. Furihata blinked, and looked down at his glass, surprised to find it empty. He hadn’t even realized he’d finished it.

“The pregnancy went well,” Akashi said after refilling his glass. “We went to appointments together, and spent more and more time with each other decorating the nursery. I was excited, and I found myself thinking that perhaps things could be different after all.”

“After Katsuo was born, I didn’t notice immediately that things began to change again.” Akashi sighed, and took a long drink. “I was thrilled with Katsuo, but Kimiko was getting more and more distant as the months passed.”

He turned and looked at Furihata was a serious expression. “She was a great mother, don’t get me wrong. But we weren’t a family, not in the sense I was hoping for.”

“What happened?” Furihata asked quietly when Akashi didn’t continue.

Akashi met his gaze for a moment before glancing back at his glass. “She filed for divorce not long after Katsuo’s first birthday. And I supported it. Neither of us were happy, and as much as she loved Katsuo, she knew she would never be able to give him the life he deserved. She gave up full custody, with the promise that when Katsuo was old enough to understand, that he contact her if he wished.”

“That…” Furihata began gently. “Doesn’t sound as bad as I was expecting. I actually think that was really mature decision.”

Akashi nodded. “I agree with you. Overall, I think things have turned out far better than if we had stayed together. We’re both happier, for one thing, and I can only hope that Katsuo will understand when the time comes.”

“He will,” Furihata said immediately. “When you tell him everything, he’ll understand.”

“Thank you.” Akashi smiled. “It means a great deal to me, to hear that from you.”

Furihata blushed and ducked his head, taking a small sip of his wine. His head snapped back up a moment later when Akashi pushed to his feet. Furihata watched in confusion as he disappeared around the corner.

He sat in awkward silence, debating on whether or not he should get up and follow. Was Akashi upset? Had he said something offensive? Furihata chewed on his lower lip, his gaze flickering between the glass in his hand and the hallway that Akashi had gone down.

Moments later, Akashi returned, and Furihata relaxed when he saw the thick book he was carrying. Akashi joined him back on the couch, and Furihata jolted slightly when Akashi sat much closer than he had been, their knees almost touching.

Akashi smiled at him warmly, not seeming to notice the blush on Furihata’s face. “I brought some
pictures, if you’d be interested in seeing a few?” He settled the book on his lap.

Furihata blinked dumbly and nodded. “Yeah, s-sure. I’d love too.”

He watched eagerly as Akashi flipped open the cover of the album, settling the open pages between their laps. Akashi turned a few pages, and Furihata’s jaw dropped when he stopped on their wedding photo.

Kimiko was even more beautiful than Furihata had imagined. She was dressed in a western-style gown that fit her thin frame perfectly, and her long, golden hair was pulled up and away from her face in a crown of jewels and flowers. She was the picture of elegance, and exactly what Furihata would have expected of Akashi’s wife.

And speaking of Akashi...

Furihata let his eyes trace Akashi’s image over and over again. He was in a dark suit that looked like it was made for him, and his hair fell perfectly across his forehead. The smile on his face was angelic, and Furihata would have believed they were a perfectly happy couple if he hadn’t heard the story beforehand.

“Wow,” Furihata finally managed to breathe. “You both look great. She’s really beautiful.”

Akashi laughed, and Furihata was glad the tense atmosphere from before seemed to have vanished. “She is,” he agreed. He paused for a moment before adding, “Not quite my type, though.”

Furihata really wanted to ask what Akashi’s type was, but that felt like crossing a line. “Too blonde?” he joked instead.

“I suppose you could say that,” Akashi chuckled. He looked at Furihata, his gaze oddly intense. “I prefer brunettes.”

For some stupid reason, Furihata blushed. He forced himself to laugh, hoping the hide the fact that he suddenly felt way too warm.

Akashi flipped through a few more pages, and Furihata caught glimpses of them at different public events, arms wrapped around each other with picture-perfect smiles. He finally came to a stop at a photo of himself, Kimiko, and newborn Katsuo in a hospital room.

Furihata leaned in closer for a better look. “Aww,” he cooed, unable to help himself. “He’s so tiny! And look at all that hair already!”

“It was quite the surprise,” Akashi agreed lightly. “Everyone kept saying how strongly he resembled her until he opened his eyes.”

Furihata laughed. “Yeah, the eyes definitely overpower the hair color. I thought the same thing the first time I met him.”

He found himself studying Akashi’s eyes as he said this. He’d never seen eyes like Akashi’s before. They were almost cat-like, and their vibrant red might have been terrifying if they didn’t look so warm right now...

When he realized what he was doing, Furihata jerked his head down, focusing back on the book between them. It was only after Akashi started flipping through more pages that Furihata noticed that he hadn’t looked away from his eyes.
Akashi stopped on few more pages, showing more of Katsuo’s baby pictures. Furihata laughed at the embarrassing ones and cooed at the cute ones. Akashi told him a few stories about each one, and somewhere in that Furihata managed to drain another glass of wine without really noticing.

“I hope I haven’t bored you,” Akashi said as he closed the album. He set it on the table in front of them, next to the half-empty bottle of wine.

Furihata shook his head. “No, not at all. Actually,” he paused, feeling heat rise on his cheeks again. “This was really nice. I don’t know, I guess I feel like I know you better?”

God, I sound like an idiot, Furihata thought to himself. Must be the wine talking.

Akashi smiled at him, and butterflies assaulted his stomach. “I’m happy to hear you feel that way,” Akashi told him. He tilted his head a little curiously. “If I may ask, what about you? Are you seeing anyone?”

Furihata choked on his drink. “Me?” he sputtered dumbly. He rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly. “I, uh… no, I’m not.”

Akashi’s eyebrows knit together. “Really?” he asked, sounding surprised for some reason. “I find that hard to believe.”

“Really, really,” Furihata told him with a chuckle.

Akashi was still watching him intently. “If it’s not to forward… why not?”

“Why not?” Furihata repeated. What did he mean, ‘why not?’ Just look at me, Furihata wanted to say. I don’t exactly have a lot going for me. He ducked his head, feeling like an idiot all over again. “I dated a girl for a while in college, but we broke up a few years ago. And I’ve been busy with work and stuff, so…”

“I see,” Akashi said, a thoughtful look on his face. He turned his gaze back on Furihata. “It’s almost a shame. I believe anyone would be very lucky to have you.”

Furihata blinked, and he stared slack-jawed at Akashi. Anyone? he thought to himself in disbelief. ...even you?

He clamped his mouth shut before he could say those words. He opened it, hesitated, and clamped it shut again. Instead, he took a drink of his wine, keeping his eyes on anything but Akashi.

“Thanks,” he finally managed to say. He kept his gaze down. “I, uh, don’t know if I can really agree with that, though.” He laughed a little, and his eyes flickered to Akashi. “I think that more applies to you.”

Now it was Akashi turn to laugh, and he ran his fingers through his hair. “I’m flattered,” he teased, a grin on his face. “It’s not that easy, however. I also haven’t been out with anyone in quite some time.”

“Really?” Furihata asked, genuinely surprised. “You’re not with anyone?”

Akashi shook his head. “I am very much single,” he said lightly. “I’ve been out with a few people, but I haven’t been in a committed relationship since Kimoko.” He paused, and fixed his gaze on Furihata. “I do have my eye on someone, though.”
Furihata stared into Akashi’s eyes, his mind blank. “Oh…” he murmured, hoping he didn’t sound as disappointed as he felt. Of course Akashi had his eye on someone. She was probably amazing, and pretty, and smart, and funny, and…

“I don’t know if they feel the same way,” Akashi continued, and Furihata struggled to focus. “They’re very hard to read.”

“Of course they do,” Furihata blurted without thinking. “I mean, uh… if it’s someone you know, I’m sure they must like you. You’re a great guy.”

Okay, it had to be the wine, because if Furihata didn’t know better, he would swear Akashi’s cheeks looked a little pink right now.

“I-- thank you,” Akashi said, taking a drink. “I will try and keep that in mind.”

Furihata nodded, and fixed Akashi with the sternest gaze he could muster. “Good, cause I’m serious. You’re one of the most amazing people I’ve ever met.” He knew he was embarrassing himself, and he knew he was rambling, but he couldn’t help himself. “It’s really gonna suck when Katsuo goes to school, and you won’t need me anymore. I probably shouldn’t say it, but it’s true.” He paused, and dropped his eyes to his glass. “I’m really gonna miss him.”

“I understand,” Akashi said gently. “I can’t say I’m looking forward to it either. He’s very attached to you. As am I.”

His face felt hot again, so he busied himself by taking another drink. I really should have refused that last glass, he thought as his head swam a little. He was definitely buzzed at this point.

A faint thud sounded from somewhere in the house, and both their heads turned. Furihata’s brows furrowed, and Akashi pushed to his feet, toeing around the corner.

“Katsuo?” he called quietly. They both listened intently, but only heard silence. Akashi padded down the hall, and Furihata used the pause to check his phone. His eyes widened when he saw it was nearly two in the morning. He hadn’t even felt the time passing.

He finished his drink just as Akashi returned. “He’s sound asleep,” Akashi said. “It must have been the house settling.”

“That’s good,” Furihata said. “I didn’t realize how late it was.”

Akashi checked his watch. “Oh. I hadn’t either.”

“Sorry,” Furihata apologized. “I didn’t mean to keep you for so long. You must be tired.”

Akashi chuckled. “I believe I should be taking responsibility for keeping you up,” he corrected with a smile.

Furihata tucked his phone back into his pocket, and pushed to his feet. And maybe he was more buzzed than he thought, because he stumbled over his own feet, barely keeping a hold on his empty glass.

Strong arms caught him under the elbows, and Furihata’s free hand landed on a solid chest. He looked up, and his heart skidded to a halt in his chest.

Akashi’s face was inches away, and all Furihata could think about was the feel of his hands on his elbows, and how soft his lips looked, and how perfect …
He leaned in, his mind blank of anything but how Akashi’s lips would feel on his. He stared at Akashi’s mouth, only inches away. His hand slid slightly up Akashi’s chest. Just a little bit further, and he would finally, **finally** know--

Furihata jerked backwards, yanking his hands off of Akashi. He broke out of Akashi’s hold and stumbled back a few feet, his mouth hung open in horror. Had he really just almost kissed Akashi? Now? After they’ve both been drinking? God, he was such an idiot…

“I s-should go,” he stammered, his face bright red. “I u-uh-- thank y-you for the wine!” He bowed his head awkwardly, and turned on his heel, planning on marching straight to car.

A hand caught his shoulder, and Furihata froze at the touch. *Oh, I am so fired*, he thought helplessly.

“Furihata-san,” Akashi said gently. “Perhaps one of the staff should escort you home. After that stumble, I feel responsible for getting you home safely.” He chuckled a little, and Furihata peeked up from under his hair. “Also, I believe you still have my glass.”

“Oh…” Furihata mumbled. He held the glass out, and Akashi took it. “S-Sorry about t-that.”

Akashi set the glass on the table. “Don’t worry about it,” he said easily. “Now, if you’ll give me a moment, allow me to get you a ride.”

Furihata waved his hands a little. “I’m f-fine, really. You’ve a-already done enough.” He scratched the back of his neck. “Besides, I need my c-car.”

“I’ll have someone follow behind with your car,” Akashi countered. “But I’m afraid I cannot allow to you drive yourself.”

Furihata nodded, not in the mood to argue. And besides, Akashi was right. He just hated the idea of inconveniencing Akashi any further than he already had.

Like almost kissing him.

He shuddered, and waited patiently while Akashi gathered two of his staff. He asked for Furihata’s keys, and he handed them over. Akashi passed them off to an older man, who bowed and headed outside.

A younger blonde woman rounded the corner next, and stood next to Akashi.

“This is Chiyo, and she’ll be driving you home,” Akashi told him. Chiyo bowed her head, and greeted Furihata by name. He awkwardly returned it, still unsure what the proper etiquette was for interacting with the staff.

Furihata stood to follow Chiyo out, but Akashi stopped him again with a hand on his shoulder. He wondered if Akashi could hear how fast his heart was beating.

“Thank you again, for talking with me tonight,” Akashi said sincerely. “If you’re not against it, perhaps we could do it again sometime?”

Furihata blinked. Akashi wasn’t going to fire him? And… and he wanted to talk to him again?

“Y-Yeah,” Furihata nodded. “Yeah, if you w-want. I’d like that.”

Akashi smiled warmly, and squeezed his shoulder. “I very much would.”
Furihata stared at the ceiling of his bedroom, his mind racing. He needed to go to sleep, but every
time he closed his eyes, all he could see was Akashi. They’d been so close, only inches away. It
made his heart pound just to think about it.

*I am so screwed*, he thought to himself, scrubbing at his eyes with the back of his hands.

He rolled over, and buried his head in his pillow. It nearly took another hour, but finally, he managed
to drift off to sleep.

If he couldn’t kiss Akashi in real life, maybe he’d be able to in his dreams.

Chapter End Notes

So, this was suppose to be the final chapter, but as usual, I got carried away, and this
ended up being a million times longer of a scene than I intended. But! We finally got
some Akashi and Furihata alone time, and more flirting, so hopefully that’s a plus? And it
means another chapter! (Which will not take 6 months for me to write, I promise.)

Also, I hope this wasn’t too angsty? Akashi’s backstory took me a really long time to
come up with, and I’m still not sure if I’m 100% happy with it, so let me know?

See you guys next time!
Decisions and Confessions

Chapter Summary

When Furihata accidently hurts the two people he cares about the most, he realizes that he has a decision to make.

He just hopes it isn't the wrong one.

Chapter Notes

Once again, I'M SO SORRY GUYS! I apologize for taking so long to update again! (but a million thanks to everyone who comments or send me guilt-inducing messages on tumblr, lol) but here it is! And I have some good news! (and some bad news oops)

The good news is... this was suppose to be the final chapter, but once I crossed 10k words for THIS CHAPTER, I decided to split it in half. (Bad news: FIC IS STILL NOT FINISHED) A lot goes down in these next two chapters, and I didn't want it to be a ton of information to adsorb all at once.

More good news, since I wrote so much already, the next chapters is already 90% finished! So I plan on posting that within the next two weeks! And I had already planned on doing a little epilogue afterwards, so this fic will end at a total of 8 chapters!

As always, thank you guys so, so much for sticking with me! <3 The response this fic has gotten still shocks me, and your comments and messages mean the world to me! (Thank you tumblr fam for yelling at (and encouraging) me!

I hope you guys enjoy! <33

Also, a lovely friend made me this awesome mood board based on this fic! You can check it out here!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Akashi was calling him.

Furihata stared at his phone, unease curling in his stomach. He was about to take a bite of his dinner, but his appetite vanished as soon as he saw the name flash on his phone screen.

The only time Akashi called him was to let him know when he was working late, and if Furihata would mind staying. He never called on the weekends.

Until now.

He briefly let himself wonder what Akashi could possibly want, until his mind pulled up the image he’d been trying very hard not to think about all day. At the memory of what had almost happened last night, Furihata suddenly decided he probably didn’t want to know.
But his phone was ringing insistently in his hand, and it was Akashi, which left him with no choice. Furihata accepted the call, and pressed the phone against his ear. “H-Hello?”

“Furihata-san,” Akashi’s calm voice responded. “I apologize for calling so late. I hope I’m not interrupting anything.”

He shook his head even though Akashi couldn’t see it. “No, it’s f-fine. I was j-just finishing dinner.”

“Very well,” Akashi said. He paused for a long moment, and Furihata anxiously rapped his fingers against the edge of the table.

“There’s something I was hoping to speak to you about,” he finally said, his voice falling into a more serious tone. Furihata’s stomach dropped.

This was it, he realized. Akashi had thought it over, and now he was calling to tell Furihata that after his inappropriate behavior, he was not to return on Monday.

He foolishly hoped that Akashi hadn’t remembered the almost-kiss, or at the very least, didn’t realize what it was supposed to be. After all, Akashi hadn’t made a big deal about it at the time.

But he was wrong. Akashi knew exactly what Furihata had been thinking, and now he was firing him for it.

The worst part was that Furihata couldn’t even complain. He deserved everything Akashi was about to say.

Furihata swallowed thickly, and tried to keep his voice from shaking. “Okay… um, w-what about?” he asked, even though he already knew.

“It’s about Katsuo, I’m afraid,” Akashi said, and Furihata’s shoulders slumped in relief. It’s not about me, Furihata chanted to himself. It’s not about me, it’s not about me, it’s not about me…

But it was about Katsuo, Furihata suddenly realized. And that was so much worse. His blood ran cold.

“What’s wrong?!” Furihata asked in a panic. “Is he okay? Do you need anything? What can I--”

“He’s fine,” Akashi interrupted, and Furihata felt his heart restart. “I apologize for alarming you. Perhaps I could have phrased that better.”

“It’s o-okay,” Furihata breathed, his hand held against his chest. “I just-- I was worried, c-cause you’ve never called before, and I figured it must be important, and I thought…”

Furihata realized he was rambling, and trailed off into silence. He shifted nervously in his seat, gripping the phone tightly in his hand.

“I understand,” Akashi said, his tone a little warmer. “I appreciate your concern.” He paused again, and Furihata thought he heard him sigh. “Unfortunately, I’m afraid there still is a problem.”

“Oh…” Furihata tensed up again. “What is it?”

Furihata heard the static as Akashi shifted his phone, and this time he definitely heard Akashi sigh. He held his breath, waiting for Akashi to speak.

“It seems that Katsuo overhead part of our conversation last night,” Akashi finally said. “He’s rather
upset.”

When Furihata thought about last night, it was the end of their… conversation that immediately came to mind. But there was nothing in that for Katsuo to hear, or at least nothing for him to be upset about, so that meant…

“Crap,” Furihata muttered. “He heard us talking about Kimiko, right?” He felt terrible, that he played a part in Katsuo hearing about everything. “I’m sorry, I didn’t think about it when I asked, and I--”

“It wasn’t about her,” Akashi spoke up, cutting him off.

Furihata blinked. “It… it wasn’t?”

“I’m afraid not,” Akashi said. He hesitated for a moment. “Actually, this might be easier if it was about Kimiko.”

He’s anxiety spiked again, and Furihata wondered if it was possible to get whiplash. He pushed up from the table and started pacing across his small kitchen, nervously fiddling with the hem of his shirt.

The silence on the other end of the line felt heavy. He wanted to say something, but he was too busy thinking of what Akashi could possibly have to say. There was no way Katsuo could know about the near-kiss, and if he didn’t overhear anything about Kimiko, Furihata was at a loss as to what else it could be.

After what felt like eternity, Akashi spoke. “Katsuo overheard us discussing the fact that you will be leaving soon,” he said softly.

“He-- what?” Furihata asked in confusion. He relaxed slightly, leaning against the kitchen counter. This wasn’t anywhere near as bad as he’d been expecting. “He already knew that, didn’t he?”

“I was under the impression he was aware of it, but apparently not,” Akashi said. “He thought that you would still be there once he started school.”

Furihata chewed his lower lip. “Oh… what did you tell him?”

“The truth,” Akashi answered with another sigh. “He’s not taking it well.”

Furihata rubbed his free hand across his face, scrubbing at his eyes. It was bad, but still not as bad as it could have been. “I mean… he’ll be okay though, right? He might miss me for a couple of days, but once he gets busy with school and everything…”

*He’ll forget about me,* Furihata thought sadly. *He’ll go to school and make a ton of friends and grow up, and I won’t be there to see any of it.* His throat tightened, and he tried to squash the sudden pain in his chest.

“That’s a very optimistic viewpoint,” Akashi said skeptically. “Although I very much doubt it will be that easy. For either of us.”

There was that *thing* again, Furihata noticed, where Akashi made comments that implied he would miss Furihata as much as Katsuo would. He pushed that thought aside for now, focusing back on the current problem.

“I, uh…” Furihata began uncertainty. “I can try and talk to him about it tomorrow, if you want?”
“I was hoping you would say that,” Akashi said. “That was the reason I called. I thought I would give you a heads up.” He paused again, and quietly added, “I don’t know how much good it will do, honestly. It’s hard to tell if he’s more upset with me or you, actually.”

Furihata felt a pang of guilt. None of this was Akashi’s fault. “He can be mad at me, if he wants,” he said quickly. “I’ll tell him it has nothing to do with you. Which is doesn’t.”

“It’s not your fault either, Furihata-san,” Akashi countered.

“Yeah,” Furihata agreed with a nervous chuckle. “But if he wants to mad at someone, it should be me. Since, you know… I’m the one leaving.”

Akashi laughed half-heartedly. “Let’s hope he isn’t mad at either of us. He can be rather determined when he sets his mind on something.”

Furihata’s mouth pulled up a half-smile. “I know.” He could easily recall the many instances he had seen that for himself. “I wonder where he got that from?” he asked teasingly.

This time, Akashi’s laugh was more genuine. “I haven’t the slightest idea,” he responded lightly. “Certainly not from me.” Furihata bit back a smile.

They both sat in silence for a moment. Furihata crossed his arm, adjusting the phone against his ear. He heard Akashi clear his throat, and he spoke.

“I’ll let you go, then.” Akashi hesitated. “Once again, I can’t thank you enough. You’ve made me feel infinitely better about this.”

Furihata blushed, stammering out a response. “Oh, u-uh, it’s no problem. Really.” He cursed his idiotic stumbling “I’m sure he’ll understand.”

“I hope so,” Akashi said. “Thank you again. I hope you enjoy the rest of your evening, Furihata-san. I’ll see you Monday.”

“Y-Yeah,” Furihata said, relieved that he still had his job. “See you then.”

Furihata ended the call, and slumped against the counter. He rested his elbows on the cool surface and buried his face in his hands, running his fingers through his tangled hair.

He never thought things would get so out of control. This was all supposed to be a nice, easy job to make some extra cash, not… whatever it was now.

In a matter of one night, Furihata had somehow managed to not only almost kiss his boss, which was bad enough by itself, but now he had also succeeded in upsetting the one kid he was suppose to be taking care of.

I have to fix this, Furihata thought with determination. He pushed off the counter, and gathered up his dirty dishes. Tomorrow, I’ll take care of Katsuo, he told himself as he turned the hot water on. And then I’ll… figure something out with Akashi.

Furihata grimaced at that last thought. It sounded a whole lot easier said than done, when he put it that way.

But right now, Katsuo was his main concern.

He took a deep breath, and let it out slowly. Everything will be fine…
Furihata arrived early Monday morning with a stomach full of nerves.

He hardly got any sleep last night, unable to turn his brain off. He kept rehearsing his speech over and over again, but it felt even more wrong each time he went over it. Katsuo was important to him, and the last thing he wanted to do was make things even worse than they already were.

And then there was Akashi. He was counting on him, which only added to the pressure.

Furihata inhaled deeply in an attempt to steady his nerves, and knocked on the door.

His anxiety seeped though as he tapped his foot against the porch, waiting for one of the servants to let him inside. Sure, he was a little earlier than usual, but they were usually pretty quick to answer…

The door pulled open, and Akashi stepped outside, dressed sharply in his work clothes. Furihata blinked in surprise and took a step back.

“Good morning,” Akashi greeted, and Furihata noticed right away that his tone was a little more somber than usual.

“H-Hey,” Furihata stammered, caught off guard. It was rare for Akashi to still be home when he arrived, and Furihata had a feeling that it wasn’t a coincidence he was here today.

Akashi slung his bag over his shoulder. “I apologize, I can’t stay long.” He glanced back inside the house for a moment before meeting Furihata’s eyes. “I wanted to get him settled before I left, and… I was hoping to see you again.”

Furihata swallowed nervously. It must be bad if Akashi had stayed to talk to him. He cleared his throat before speaking. “How, uh… how is he?”

Akashi sighed, and ran his fingers through his hair, displacing a few strands. “Not great,” he answered. He glanced at Furihata before dropping his gaze. “He says he doesn’t want to see you,” he added quietly.

His mouth fell open, but he snapped it shut before Akashi noticed. He told Akashi he would fix this, so he needed to at least pretend he knew what he was doing.

“Kids say that kind of thing all the time,” Furihata lied. He couldn’t recall any of the kids at school ever saying anything like that. But Akashi didn’t need to hear that right now. “He’s probably just confused,” Furihata continued. “I’ll explain everything to him, about why… why I have to leave.”

He said the last part quietly, trying to keep the hurt out of his voice. The last thing he wanted to do was let on to Akashi that he was just as upset about this as Katsuo was.

Akashi let out a breath, and his shoulders relaxed slightly. “Perhaps I’m overthinking this,” he admitted. “I’ve never seen him like this before. But I trust you.” He looked at Furihata intently. “If anyone can comfort him, I believe you can.”

“T-Thanks,” Furihata muttered, ducking his head. His stomach flipped a little. There was so much
riding on this.

But he was going to fix this. He had to.

Akashi bid him a good day, with the promise to see him later. Furihata waved from the porch before stepping inside and shutting the door. He paused for a moment, taking a deep breath, and headed down the hall to Katsuo’s room.

The door was shut, but that was normal. Furihata hesitated for a second before knocking. “Katsu-kun?” he called quietly. “Can I come in?”

“Go away,” Katsuo mumbled, his voice so soft that Furihata had to strain to hear it through the door. His heart sank, but he knocked again. “Katsu-kun… you know I’m not gonna do that.”

There was silence on the other end, and Furihata lifted his fist to knock again. Before his knuckles touched the wood, the door flung open.

Katsuo stood in front of him, his eyes wide and his brows upturned. “You are,” he said stubbornly. “I heard you and dad. You are gonna go away.”

Furihata ached to deny it. “Katsuo…”

“I knew it,” Katsuo said softly. He turned, leaving the door open, and walked across the room. He sat on the edge of his bed and crossed his arms, his head hung low in dejection.

Furihata moved into the room, shutting the door quietly behind him. He joined Katsuo on the bed, sitting right next to him. They both sat in silence while Furihata tried to gather his thoughts.

“Katsu…” Furihata began, and then hesitated. “You know why I have to leave, right?”

Katsuo didn’t look at him, and Furihata wondered if he was going to get an answer. After a long pause, Katsuo shook his head.

It was lie, but he wasn’t surprised to hear it. “Your dad brought me here to take care of you while he was at work,” he began in a gentle voice. “And once you start school, they’ll watch you until your dad gets off work.”

“I don’t want them to watch me,” Katsuo said. He turned towards Furihata, his little eyebrows pinched together. “I want you to watch me.”

Furihata nodded. “I know,” he said sympathetically. “I like watching you, too. But you’ll have so much fun at school, and you’ll make all kinds of new friends.”

“What if I don’t go to school?” Katsuo asked, a bit of excitement creeping into his tone. “Then you can stay.”

Furihata smiled sadly. “You have to go to school, Katsuo-kun. Everybody does.”

Katsuo’s face fell, and he turned away again. “It’s not fair,” he whispered.

“I know,” Furihata said again. He reached out, and gently placed a hand on Katsuo’s shoulder. “I know it’s hard. But you’re gonna love school, trust me. Give it a couple of weeks, and you won’t even miss me anymore.” He tried to smile reassuringly, but it felt fake even to him.

Katsuo pulled away from his touch and turned towards him with an expression that was downright
angry. “Of course I’ll miss you,” he said, the words catching slightly in his throat. “I don’t wanna go to school, and I don’t wanna make new friends, and I don’t want you to go away!”

Furihata had never seen Katsuo throw a tantrum before. He certainly never expected to be the cause of one.

His throat tightened painfully, and he desperately fought back tears. “Katsuo,” he said gently, scooching closer. He extended his arms. “Come here.”

Katsuo looked at him warily. His lower lip trembled, the first tear rolled down his cheek, and he flung himself into Furihata’s arms.

Furihata buried his face in Katsuo’s hair, holding him tightly while he shook with silent tears. Katsuo moved closer until he was practically sitting in Furihata’s lap and clung to the front of his shirt, his face hidden in his chest.

Furihata fought back his own tears as he rubbed soothing circles into Katsuo’s back. He couldn’t cry, at least not yet. Right now, all that mattered was comforting Katsuo.

He wasn’t sure how long they sat like that, but it was enough that Furihata’s legs had fallen asleep. When Katsuo fell quiet, he still didn’t move from Furihata’s lap.

“You said you were my friend,” Katsuo whispered, his tiny voice muffled by Furihata’s shirt. “Remember? When we met, you said you were here to be my friend.”

Furihata rested his chin on Katsuo’s head, pulling him tighter. “I am your friend,” he said gently. “But sometimes…” He paused to clear his throat. “Sometimes, friends have to go away. But that doesn’t mean they’re not friends anymore.”

Katsuo didn’t respond, but Furihata could hear the skepticism in his silence.

“There’s a lot of friends I had in school that I don’t see anymore,” he continued. “But we’re still friends, and I still care about them. And I know they still care about me.”

Katsuo sniffed, and lifted a hand to wipe at his nose. “…are you sure?”

“Super sure,” Furihata told him. “I’ll still care about you very much. And that means we’ll still be friends.”

“Do you promise?” Katsuo asked, pulling back to look up at Furihata. His lashes were wet, and his face was a little red. It broke Furihata’s heart.

Furihata swallowed harshly and nodded, not quite trusting his voice. “I promise,” he finally managed to choke out.

He took Katsuo’s face in his hands, and brushed the drying tears away with his thumbs. He blinked up at Furihata, not looking any happier than when he’d arrived.

“How about we have some fun?” Furihata suggested. He needed to turn the mood around somehow. “Anything you want.”

Katsuo lowered his head and gave a half-hearted shrug. When it became clear that was the only answer he was going to get, Furihata reached out and ran his fingers through Katsuo’s hair.

“Come on,” Furihata encouraged. “Let’s go find something to do.”
He slid off the bed and pulled Katsuo with him, settling him on his hip. Furihata carried him over to the center of the room and gently set him down.

It took a lot of nudging, but Katsuo finally agreed to work on the puzzle they started a few days ago. They sat on opposite sides of the small table, sorting pieces and building the outer frame.

Furihata tried his best to start a conversation. He really did. But every attempt was either met with a one-word answer, a shrug, or sometimes, just silence.

He remained like that for most of the day. Furihata did everything he could think of to get Katsuo to laugh or smile. He was normally such a happy kid, and it killed Furihata to know he was the reason that smile had vanished.

They went out to see the horses, played a few board games, and watched cartoons. Furihata even tried to get Katsuo to head outside for another game of basketball, but Katsuo just shook his head.

By early evening, Furihata had run out of ideas. He had never felt more defeated. All he could think about was how wrong everything was, and how he had screwed up more than he ever thought possible.

There was still close to a month before Katsuo went to school, but Furihata was wondering how he was going to survive. How Katsuo was going to survive.

This wasn’t something that was going to get better. If anything, it was bound to get worse. If Katsuo was reacting like this now, how was he going to act when it was actually time for Furihata to leave?

He didn’t know if he’d be able to bear it.

Furihata tried to focus on the picture he was coloring, but he kept zoning out. Katsuo was either too preoccupied to notice, or he was just as distracted as Furihata was.

They both snapped to attention when the door opened, and Akashi stepped quietly into the room. Before Furihata could even open his mouth in greeting, Katsuo dropped his crayon and latched onto his arm, pressing into his side.

“No!” Katsuo cried out, tightening his grip. He was looking at Akashi. “Furi can’t leave yet.”

Akashi froze a few feet into the room, his eyebrows raised in surprise.

“Hey,” Furihata chided gently. “You shouldn’t talk to your dad like that. You know he’s not the reason I have to leave.”

He brushed Katsuo’s hair back, and he burrowed more against his side. “...I know,” he whispered. He sounded close to tears again.

Furihata looked up, and Akashi was staring at him with pain in his eyes. His chest tightened, and he had to turn away.

Katsuo’s pain. Akashi’s pain. It was all his fault.

Akashi joined them on the floor, sitting on Katsuo’s other side. He put an arm around him, gently rubbing his back.

Katsuo turned from Furihata to Akashi, reaching out and gripping his sleeve. His eyes were watery again. “Does Furi really have to leave?”
Akashi squeezed his shoulder. “Yes, I’m afraid so. But he’ll be back tomorrow, just like he has been.”

Katsuo shook his head angrily, and leaned against Akashi. “Not today. I meant forever.”

Akashi looked up, and met Furihata’s gaze. He gave a slight shake of his head, trying to convey the message of I tried, I really did. And I’m so, so sorry. For everything.

Akashi pulled Katsuo onto his lap, holding him tightly. “Katsuo, you know we talked about this,” he said softly. He kissed the top of Katsuo’s head, resting his chin on his golden hair.

There was a muffled sniffle, and then the sound of a sob. “It’s n-not f-fair,” Katsuo hiccupped, and started crying in earnest.

Akashi rocked him in his arms, brushing his fingers through his hair. “Shhh… it’s okay,” he murmured soothingly. “Katsuo, it’ll be okay.”

Furihata couldn’t stand it anymore. Katsuo crying, the pain that was clear as day in Akashi’s voice… It was all his fault. All of it.

With burning eyes, Furihata pushed to his feet, stumbling a little in the process. “I-- I should g-go.”

Katsuo jerked his head up. “Furi, no!”

“Furihata-san…” Akashi said hesitantly.

Furihata’s throat tightened painfully. He took a few steps backwards, towards the door. “I’m sorry…” he whispered faintly. He had to get out of here, now, before he really started to lose it. “I’m so sorry. I’ll--”

He broke off, and quickly bowed his head before dashing out the door.

Someone called his name, but Furihata didn’t stop. He darted down the hall and flung open the front door, racing towards his car.

He managed to start the car and make it down the driveway before the first tear fell.

Furihata laid on his couch, staring blankly at the wall. His dinner sat on the table in front of him, but he’d lost his appetite halfway through.

He made such a mistake.

He could see that now. And it wasn’t a problem that had just started. It was one that had been going on for months now.

Furihata should have made their relationship clear to Katsuo from the very beginning. He should have made more of an effort to keep some distance between them, to not let Katsuo get as close to
him as he had.

That had been his first mistake.

His second was letting himself get close to Katsuo. And to Akashi, for that matter.

Furihata had known the whole time that it would hurt him, when it came time to leave. But he never expected it to effect Katsuo, and by association Akashi, as hard as it did.

They both deserved so much better. And Furihata had gone and screwed it all up.

He had caused them both so much hurt.

He had to stop it.

But how? Clearly, trying to explain things to Katsuo hadn’t worked. And it didn’t seem like things were going to get any easier during their remaining time together.

What if Katsuo reacted the same way every time Furihata went to leave? What would happen when it finally was time for Furihata to leave for good? Would Katsuo hate him?

Or worse, would he hate Akashi for making him leave?

Maybe…

Maybe it’s better if I never go back.

Furihata’s eyes started to water again at the thought. It felt wrong, but he couldn’t help but think that maybe it was the right thing to do.

It would probably be easier, for everyone except for himself. Akashi would be there to comfort Katsuo in the morning, and the staff would be able to look after him until he went to school. By that time, hopefully he would have forgotten about Furihata completely.

Furihata wiped at his eyes, and took a deep breath to calm himself. If he was going to go through with this… he should at least give Akashi a heads-up first.

With trembling fingers, he grabbed his phone and flipped it open. He hovered over Akashi’s name in his contacts, but hesitated to press the button.

Akashi deserved an explanation, at the very least. And an apology at that. But trying to explain everything over a phone call… it didn’t feel right.

Furihata chucked his phone on the couch and pushed to his feet. If he was going to do this, he needed to do this now, before he broke down and changed his mind. He didn’t let himself think as he snagged his keys off the counter and slammed his apartment door shut.

He was going to do this. He had to.

The road was dark and rainy as he made his way back to Akashi’s house. He’d been so preoccupied, he hadn’t even noticed when it started raining outside. Thankfully he’d grabbed a jacket off the hook by the door before leaving.

He almost turned around a few times. He had no idea what he was going to say, but he tried his best not to think about it. If he did, the more he would end up questioning his decision. He was going to have to wing this, and hope for the best.
When he pulled into Akashi’s driveway and parked his car, he allowed himself one shaky breath before getting out. He ran up to the front pouch, his jacket getting soaked, and knocked heavily on the door.

He pulled his hood up to keep the rain out of his eyes as he waited, arms wrapped tightly around himself. His heart skipped a nervous beat when he heard the sound of faint footsteps approaching.

*This was it…*

The door pulled open, and there stood Akashi, dressed like was ready for bed and looking very confused. “Furihata-san…?”

Furihata’s mouth opened, but no sound came out. He stood there in the rain, in front of the man he had come to care so deeply about, and he couldn’t think of anything to say.

Akashi took a half a step forward, opening the door further. “It’s raining,” he said carefully. “You should come in--”

“No!” Furihata shouted. He flinched a little, and lowered his gaze. “I-I mean…”

He trailed off, his breath catching in his throat. Akashi seemed frozen in the doorway, a mixture of surprise and confusion on his face.

“I… I’m sorry,” Furihata finally whispered. “I r-really am. B-But… I think this is the best t-thing. For Katsuo and f-for me.”

Akashi frowned. “What do you mean?”

“I mean…” Furihata took a deep breath. “I m-mean that-- that I’m not coming back in the m-morning.” He hesitantly met Akashi’s eyes. “I’m q-quitting.”

Akashi’s crimson eyes widened in shock. “Furihata-san…”

Furihata ducked his head. “I… I know it’s not f-fair to you,” he continued shakily. “We h-had an agreement, and I’m b-breaking it, but…” He shook his head, his damp hair sticking to his forehead. “I can’t see him like that again. I can’t stand it.” He swallowed tightly. “I care about him so much.”

The last line was almost a whisper. He tried to fight the tears that were threatening to spill, but it was a losing battle. Akashi remained eerily quiet. Furihata kept his head lowered as he spoke again.

“It’s my fault,” he said faintly. “I should have seen it sooner. I should have *told* him sooner, I should have…”

“Furihata-san,” Akashi said again, his tone unreadable. Furihata shook his head.

He choked back a sob, and clenched his jaw. If he was going to be honest, really honest, then there was something else he had to confess to…

“And… a-and it’s not just Katsuo,” Furihata began. His voice shook with every word. “It’s not j-just him I care about.”

Furihata kept his eyes down, unable to even risk a glance in Akashi’s direction. If he hadn’t already quit, there was no way Akashi wouldn’t fire him as soon as he heard what Furihata was about to say.

“I… I care about you, too. A lot.” Furihata’s face burned in shame. “I have for a w-while now. And
I k-know it’s stupid, and inappropriate, and--”

“Furihata-san,” Akashi interrupted, but Furihata kept on talking.

“I almost kissed you the other night,” he blurted. “When we were drinking. I w-wanted to, but…” Furihata ducked his head, embarrassment washing over him. “It’s w-wrong. It’s not fair for you, to have to be around that. And it’s not fair that I got so attached to Katsuo when I wasn’t supposed to, and then I got attached to you, and I should have--”

“Furihata.” Akashi’s voice was sharp, and Furihata cringed.

I’ll never get hired as a babysitter again , Furihata thought with panic. I should have kept my mouth shut . He gulped, and risked a glance up at Akashi.

Akashi stepped back into the house, still holding to door open in a clear invitation. Or an order. “Come in.”

Furihata’s knees wobbled as he obeyed. He kept his head bowed as he crossed the threshold, his wet shoes squeaking slightly on the tiled floor. He made a point to keep his back to the wall near the door, trying to intrude as little as possible.

Akashi closed the door, and came to stand a few feet in front of him. There was a long pause of silence. Furihata’s stomach flipped nervously.

“You’ve made two very interesting points,” Akashi began. He didn’t sound angry, but Furihata knew that was coming. “One was about Katsuo. And the other was about me.”

Furihata flinched, burning with shame all over again.

Akashi took a tiny step closer. “I’d like to address the latter first.”

His breath caught in his throat, and his entire body tensed. Furihata was prepared to talk about Katsuo, but this… He foolishly hoped that Akashi wouldn’t bring that up. At least not yet.

“You said you almost kissed me,” Akashi said slowly, and the blood drained from Furihata’s face. He braced himself, ready for the worst.

“But did it ever occur to you that I did nothing to stop it?”

Furihata blinked, and his head snapped up. He heard the words, but he couldn’t make any sense out of them. “Did…d-did I…?”

“I said,” Akashi repeated, the corner of his mouth pulling up a tiny bit. “Did it ever occur to you that I did nothing to stop you from kissing me?”

“I, u-uh,” Furihata stammered stupidly, his mind blank. “N-No?”

Akashi chuckled a little, and stepped closer. “I can see that,” he said lightly. “If I had known what you were trying to do, I would have taken things into my own hands, but I couldn’t be sure.” He paused for a moment, and then tilted his head a little, that small smile still lingering on his lips. “As I said the other night, you’re very hard to read.”

“The o-other…?” Furihata started to ask, and then froze. Akashi’s voice echoed in his head.

...I do have my eye on someone...
...I don’t know if they feel the same way…

...They’re very hard to read…

Was… was Akashi saying…?

Furihata’s mind raced, trying make sense of everything. He had to be hearing it wrong, because it sounded like Akashi was saying the impossible.

Akashi’s smile softened. “You’re still confused,” he noted. Furihata nodded dumbly, the tiny movement all he was capable of at the moment.

He took another step, and Furihata inched backwards. He suddenly felt trapped, the room was shrinking. He tried to remember how to breathe.

“Everything you said…” Akashi began slowly. “Is it really so hard to believe that I feel the same way about you?”

Yes, Furihata practically shouted in his head. It's literally the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard another person say.

Akashi seemed to take Furihata’s silence as an answer. His smile fell a little, like the thought made him sad.

“Perhaps I was more subtle than I intended,” Akashi murmured softly. He stepped forward, closing the distance between them again. He was close enough to touch now, and Furihata pressed back against the wall. “Furihata-san, I have been dreading your last day here for months now.”

Furihata’s mouth hung open stupidly, his brain officially giving up. Akashi didn’t seem to notice. “You caught my interest from the very first day you walked in,” he said, watching Furihata intently. “From the kind, caring way you spoke when answering my questions, to the way you walked right up to Katsuo like you’ve known him your entire life, I knew you were somebody special.”

Furihata could barely hear the words over his pounding heartbeat. Akashi could be speaking another language, for all the sense he was making.

“I almost told you,” Akashi continued, and Furihata struggled to focus. “At the zoo. We were sitting there alone, and I kept thinking about--”

“W-Wait…” Furihata interrupted, his brain struggling to connect the pieces. He thought about the serious look in Akashi’s eyes from the other day, and the gentle touch of his hand. “You-- that’s what y-you were going to t-tell me?!”

Akashi tilted his head slightly. “Yes…” he answered slowly. His brows knitted together in confusion. “What did you think I was going to tell you?”

Furihata blinked. “I-- I thought you were going to fire me…” he answered truthfully.

Akashi laughed, and the sound was so genuine and light that it caught Furihata off guard. He stared at Akashi with a mixture of shock and confusion, his mouth hanging open.

Akashi looked back with amusement clear in his eyes. “Do people often attempt to hold your hand when they fire you, Furihata-san?”

Furihata turned bright red. “N-No!” he sputtered, embarrassment washing over him. He lowered his
gaze to the floor. “I j-just… that seemed more p-plausible than…”

A finger caught under his chin, and Akashi tilted his face back up, forcing eye contact. “I was going to tell you,” he said again, his tone soft. Furihata trembled a little at the touch. “I would have, if I had been sure of your feelings. I was worried the attention might be unwanted, and I was unwilling to drive you away from Katsuo for my own selfish feelings.”

“B-But…” Furihata stammered, still searching for a logical explanation to all of this. “you… you were married.” To a woman, he mentally added. Who you had a child with.

“I was,” Akashi agreed lightly. He leaned in a little, tilting his head. “But if you remember, I did say she wasn’t my type.” His eyes flashed playfully, and he fixed Furihata with a very pointed look. “And I’m afraid I was referring to a bit more than just her hair color.”

“Oh,” Furihata said lamely. He ran the words through his head again. And then the realization hit. “Oh.” He looked at Akashi with wide eyes.

Akashi chuckled. He met Furihata’s gaze, his eyes full of warmth. “But you,” he began softly, still lightly touching Furihata’s face. “You are exactly my type. You’re everything I would have looked for, had I known what I wanted.”

Furihata swallowed thickly. His eyes burned, fighting tears again. This was all so much…

He wasn’t sure what his face looked like, but it must have been bad, because Akashi’s expression softened. The gentle touch under his chin turned into a caress, Akashi’s hand cupping his cheek. “Furihata…”

He squeezed his eyes shut, choking back a sob. His emotions were all over the place. He didn’t know whether to be happy, or if he was dreaming, or if he was about to throw up all over Akashi’s shirt…

Akashi gently touched his arm with his free hand. “Are you alright?” he asked, sounding uncertain. “I apologize if I’ve said too much. I thought--”

Furihata shook his head, cutting him off. “N-No. I… I just…” He forced himself to meet Akashi’s eyes. “I don’t know what to do,” he finally whispered. Shame washed over him, feeling more like an idiot with every passing second.

“Well…” Akashi began tentatively, the corner of his mouth pulling up in a crooked smile. “You could always finish what you started the other night,” he suggested playfully.

It took Furihata a long moment to get the implications, but once he did, his body moved, months and months of desire taking control. Without a second thought, he grabbed the collar of Akashi’s shirt and yanked, closing the little distance between them.

And finally, after months of pent-up frustration, Furihata pressed his lips against his.

Some sort of sound escaped his throat. His whole body was tense, waiting for Akashi to shove him away…

He didn’t.

Akashi kissed him back just as eagerly, stepping forward and pressing Furihata back against the wall. He grabbed Furihata’s hip, his fingers digging into the fabric of his jeans.
Furihata pressed himself closer, clinging desperately to Akashi’s shirt. He gasped, his lips parting, and Akashi didn’t hesitate to sweep his tongue through his mouth.

He might have moaned. It was hard to hear over the thunderous pounding of his heart.

Akashi pulled back, breaking the kiss. Furihata stumbled against him, clinging to the front of his shirt. His head was spinning, his breath coming far too quickly.

Something touched his hair, and it took Furihata a moment to realize it was Akashi, nuzzling his head. Furihata hesitantly lifted his head, looking up from under his bangs.

Akashi’s eyes were dark, and full of a different kind of heat. It sent a shiver straight down Furihata’s spine.

Furihata licked his lips, and Akashi’s eyes flickered down. Before he could even blink, Akashi leaned back in and kissed him again.

This kiss was nothing like the first. It was soft and slow, their lips melding together gracefully. Furihata slipped his hands from Akashi’s chest to his neck, where he tangled his fingers in soft, red hair. Akashi wrapped an arm around his waist, pulling him impossibly closer.

Furihata’s head was starting to spin. He tried to remember how to breathe, but it was hard, with Akashi’s lips moving so perfectly against his.

Finally, his knees gave out a little, and Akashi rushed to catch him under the elbows. Furihata looked up, his eyes glazed over. Akashi chuckled, brushing some of the hair from Furihata’s face.

“Are you alright?” Akashi asked, his own voice rough and breathless. It only amplified the heat Furihata could feel coursing through him.

Furihata nodded slightly, still trying to catch his breath. “Y-Yeah…” he stuttered, swallowing thickly. “I’m j-just… a little… d-dizzy…”

“Hmm,” Akashi hummed, shifting his hold on Furihata. “If you’re feeling faint, perhaps you should lie down.”

Furihata blinked, a little surprised. “Oh, u-uh… that’s okay.” He glanced down, suddenly aware of his disheveled state. “My c-clothes are soaked, and I’d hate to r-ruin your couch.”

“That’s no problem,” Akashi told him, his voice dropping suggestively. “Although if that’s your only concern, you could always take your clothes off.”

Furihata’s breath caught in his throat, and he stared at Akashi with wide eyes.

*Did he… did he really just…?*

Akashi stared back, his eyes so dark it was hard to see the red in them.

He was being serious, Furihata realized. And as impossible as it seemed, it looked like Akashi wanted him as badly as Furihata wanted him.

Furihata nodded, and tilted his head up to press his lips against Akashi’s.

Akashi smiled against his mouth, and Furihata felt himself being pulled away from the door. He stumbled to keep up, refusing to allow any space between their bodies as Akashi guided him down the hall. Akashi let out a breathless laugh as they navigated up the stairs, Furihata letting go with one
hand to grip the banister.

When they reached the top, Akashi held Furihata back for a moment. He searched Furihata’s face, looking for something. He seemed satisfied when he found it, whatever it was. Akashi took one of Furihata’s hands, lacing their fingers together with a smirk on his face.

Blushing bright red, Furihata allowed himself to be led down the upstairs hallway, to a part of the house he had never seen before.

Akashi’s bedroom.

Chapter End Notes

A terrible ending, I know lol. But this was the only point that made sense for a chapter break.

Also... anyone else feel like they've been blue-balled? Cause I think I blue-balled myself, lol. I was originally going to put smut in here... but it seemed out of place with all the fluff. However, I'm tossing around the idea of still writing the smut scene, and maybe posting it separately as a one-shot? Let me know what you guys think! (No promises tho, as I have no confidence in my smut-writing abilities, lol)
Chapter Summary

Furihata wakes up, shocked that the dreams from last night turn out to be reality. Somehow, the conversation that follows is even more surprising.

Chapter Notes

Hi guys! I almost stuck to my update schedule this time! (I'm a week late, please forgive me, lol) BUT HERE IT IS!

The final chapter! Well, technically the second to last, but this is the final part of the main story. Chapter eight will be sort of like an epilogue, with a few glimpses into the future to see how things are going. I'm so nervous about ending this, and I hope it holds up to the rest of the story. (Can you believe that I originally wrote things so last chapter and this chapter were going to be one? Thank god I split it up, lol!)

And also... I just want to say thank you? I'm honestly shocked and amazed every day by the response this story has gotten. (I check it everyday, and every hit or kudos or comment just makes me ??? I DON'T DESERVE ANY OF THIS LIKE WHAT?)

Thank you guys so, so much. I honestly can't say it enough. <3 Hopefully I don't let you guys down. I'll see you in the next chapter, and hopefully my next fic after that! (I'm gonna start doing more prompt stuff on tumblr as well!)

As always, I hope you guys enjoy! <33

Furihata woke up slowly.

He shifted against the sheets, burrowing his face further into the pillow. He felt strangely relaxed, for some reason. Even his bed felt more comfortable than usual.

He wiggled again, his jaw popping on a yawn. He stretched his arms across the space of the bed, reaching for his nightstand...

His fingertips brushed against something solid. And very warm.

Furihata’s eyes flew open, and he came face to face with a very sleepy, and very shirtless Akashi.

Akashi blinked his eyes open slowly, bringing a hand up to scrub at his face. He met Furihata’s eyes, and gave him one of the warmest smiles Furihata had ever seen.

“Good morning,” Akashi greeted, his voice still rough with sleep. Furihata could only stare stupidly as a million memories from the night before rushed through his brain.
Furihata felt the heat rush to color his cheeks. He realized his hand was still on Akashi’s bare chest. He yanked his hand back, pulling the covers up to his nose.

Akashi looked dazzling in the morning light streaming through the curtains. His hair was a ruffled mess, but somehow it only made him look even more attractive.

He kept his gaze on Furihata, and he realized he hadn’t said anything yet. “M-Morning,” he finally managed quietly, his voice muffled by the blanket.

Akashi laughed softly, shifting more onto his side to fully face him. “You seem startled.”

“I a-am,” Furihata admitted honestly. He still couldn’t believe any of this was real. The memories from last night… and now waking up next to Akashi... “I feel like I’m dreaming or something.”

He blushed the second the words left his mouth. He really needed to stop saying so many embarrassing things…

Furihata jumped slightly when the comforter was gently pulled away from his face. Akashi was looking right at him, still wearing that soft, lopsided smile.

“I know what you mean,” Akashi said. He paused for a moment. “In fact, I believe I’ve had this exact dream several times before.” His smile grew wider for a moment before dropping, his expression growing more serious. “Although I must admit it’s nice to still have you here now that I’ve woken up.”

Furihata made some kind of incoherent noise, burrowing back under the covers. He had no idea how Akashi could say embarrassing things that like so easily. It probably shouldn’t be surprising, considering some of the things Akashi had said last night. His face burned all over again at the thought.

Akashi chuckled again, and they laid in silence for a moment. Furihata’s heart was beating far too quickly considering he’d only been awake for five minutes.

He wasn’t sure what he was suppose to do now. They were a little preoccupied last night to really discuss anything. But now that Furihata was thinking clearly again, he couldn’t help but wonder if sleeping with someone who was technically his boss was a good idea.

His racing thoughts were interrupted when the blanket was pulled away yet again. He looked at Akashi hesitantly, unsure what would happen next.

Akashi met his eyes with concern, his eyebrows pinching together slightly. “Are you alright?” he asked. “You keep hiding from me.”

Furihata nodded tentatively. “Yeah,” he swallowed thickly, fidgeting beneath the covers. “I just…” he trailed off, lowering his gaze. “I’m wondering wh-what happens now. With… whatever this is.”

There was silence, and Furihata assumed the worst. Maybe Akashi was wrong about everything he said last night. Maybe there weren’t any real feelings, and it was just forced closeness and loneliness that made Akashi think he wanted him. Maybe it was nothing more than a bodily need, and now that it was satisfied…

The bed shifted, and Furihata’s eyes flickered up. Akashi had sat up a little bit, running his fingers through his tangled bedhead.

“Well,” Akashi began with something like a sigh. “I suppose that’s up to you.”
“Me?” Furihata squeaked in surprise. “I… I d-don’t…”

“Yes, you,” Akashi interrupted. He stared into Furihata’s eyes, raising his chin a fraction. “I believe I made myself very clear last night, Furihata-san. With both my words and my actions.” Furihata blushed bright red at that, averting his gaze, but Akashi continued, his tone just as serious.

“What happens now is up to you. Should you choose to remain with your decision from last night, there is nothing I can do to stop you,” he said quietly.

Furihata stared, letting that sink in. The sadness on Akash’s face was making his chest hurt. “I thought that would be what you wanted,” he said tentatively. “Once, you know, you knew everything…”

Akashi shook his head. “Quite the opposite, actually.” There was movement, and Furihata jumped slightly when a warm hand found his beneath the covers, giving it a squeeze. “I’d very much like you to stay,” he said softly.

Furihata’s throat tightened painfully. He felt like crying again, for some stupid reason. Probably because it seemed like his wildest dreams were coming true.

But there was still something that wasn’t sitting right.

“Don’t you think…” Furihata hesitated, clearing his throat. “I m-mean, wouldn’t it be a little…weird… if we’re, uh, together … while I’m technically your employee?”

There was another long pause, and Furihata started to panic again.

“I have no issue with it,” Akashi finally said. “But if the idea makes you uncomfortable, I’m sure we can work something out.”

“I w-would like that,” Furihata said slowly. He squeezed Akashi’s hand back. “I d-don’t want to l-leave either…”

He tried to hide his face again, but Akashi’s other hand caught his chin, turning him back. Furihata blinked, stunned by the sudden brilliant smile on Akashi’s lips.

“It seems that we have nothing to worry about, then,” Akashi said. He gave a tug to Furihata’s hand, pulling him closer. Furihata slid over willingly until he was pressed against Akashi’s chest, his nose buried in the hollow of his throat.

An arm draped over his waist, and fingertips softly traced the shape of his spine. Furihata’s heart was racing a mile a minute. Every touch from Akashi felt like his skin was bursting into flames.

It made it hard to think, but there was still something very important that needed to be discussed.

“What--” Furihata began softly, clearing his throat. “What about Katsuo?”

Akashi’s fingers didn’t stop. “What about him?”

“Well…” he began hesitantly. “I mean, if I’m gonna stay and watch him… but if we’re, you know…” Furihata trailed off, glad that Akashi couldn’t see the blush on his face.

Akashi hummed a little. “I’m sure we can figure something out by the time he starts school,” he said. “Not that I would mind telling him now, but I do see your point that it might be a little odd.”

“Yeah,” Furihata agreed. “I just don’t want to make him uncomfortable or anything, you know? He
might like me as his nanny, but maybe not as…” He broke off, unsure of what they even were, exactly.

“… his father’s boyfriend?” Akashi finished with a laugh.

Furihata jerked his head back to stare at Akashi with wide eyes. Did he really just say…?

Akashi laughed again, his eyes crinkling with humor. “I apologize,” he said with a smile. “Perhaps that was too forward.”

Furihata didn’t say anything. He didn’t know what to think. It should be too forward, but at the same time… it didn’t really feel like it was.

Besides, they had already slept together. What harm could a term like ‘boyfriend’ do?

“Are we--” Furihata paused to clear his throat. “What should we tell him?”

Akashi thought for a moment, his fingers still lightly touching Furihata’s skin. “Well, if we’re going to wait until you’re officially unemployed,” Akashi chuckled at that, “I suppose for now we should simply tell him that while you won’t be his nanny anymore, you won’t be permanently leaving when he begins school either. That you’ll still be here to visit as… a friend.” Akashi grinned.

Furihata nodded absently. “Yeah, that’s okay.” His tone dropped a little, an image of Katsuo with tears in his eyes popping into his head. “I wouldn’t be able to stand seeing him like that again. If he knows I’ll still be around…”

“He’ll be thrilled,” Akashi finished. “Just like I am.”

Furihata squeaked, flushing bright red. He was glad Akashi couldn’t see his face from this angle. He rolled a little, burying his face in between Akashi’s chest and the pillow.

Akashi laughed, and pulled Furihata tighter. “You get flustered so easily,” he commented, his tone warm. He buried his nose in Furihata’s hair. “It’s adorable.”

“Stoooooop!” Furihata groaned, but he was laughing a little. It was hard not too, when he felt so light inside.

They laid in silence for a moment, their breathing slowing. Furihata swore he could feel Akashi’s heartbeat, a strong, steady rhythm under his palm.

“I have a surprise for you,” Akashi said suddenly.

Furihata stilled, lifting his head a little. “A surprise?” he asked in confusion. “For what?”

Akashi pulled back to look at him. “It was supposed to be a going-away present, but… I think it would be better suited if I told you now.”

For some stupid reason, Furihata tensed again. His nerves shot through the roof, but he was also a little excited. He waited, his fingers twitching beneath the blanket.

“I remember you telling me you were working two jobs before accepting my offer here,” Akashi began, and Furihata’s brows knitted in confusion at the direction this was taking. “And I remember you mentioning having difficulty finding a job in your field after graduation, correct?”

Furihata nodded tentatively, still puzzled.
“I asked a few questions around the office, and ended up speaking to an acquaintance of a coworker about you,” Akashi continued. “I told them about your degree as well as your experience working with children.” He smiled slyly. “He was quite interested, to say the least.”

Furihata blinked stupidly. “What-- what do you mean?”

“It turns out a friend of his works at the local high school,” Akashi told him. “That friend also happens to be looking for a lab assistant for the upcoming school year.”

Akashi paused in his speech, as though waiting for Furihata to respond. When the silence dragged on, Furihata’s mouth hanging open like a fish, Akashi nervously carried on.

“I didn’t get you the job,” he said quickly. “Only you can do that. I merely put in a good word, and convinced him to give you an interview.” Akashi’s eyes flickered, growing more concerned. “I apologize if I’ve offended you. I didn’t mean--”

“You didn’t,” Furihata interrupted. “I’m not-- I mean…” He shook his head to clear it. “You… you really did that? For me?”

Akashi nodded, his expression relaxing. “It was no trouble,” he assured. “It was the only thing I could think of to properly repay you. As both your employer and as a friend.”

“You don’t have to repay me,” Furihata stammered, blushing slightly. “I-I was just doing my job.”

“I disagree,” Akashi retorted. “I’ve had plenty of experience with people who were merely ‘doing their job’. They come in, they do whatever is required to get their paycheck, and they leave.” His fingers brushed against Furihata’s arm. “You’ve gone above and beyond what was expected of you.” Akashi paused for a moment, and when he spoke again his tone was soft. “You’ve made him happier. Both of us, actually. And nothing I can do will ever make up for that.”

All Furihata could do was burrow back against Akashi’s chest. He felt the rumble of another chuckle, and he couldn’t help but laugh a little himself. Everything seemed so ridiculous.

“I still can’t believe you didn’t fire me,” Furihata said, only partially joking. A small part of him was still waiting for that reality to come crashing down.

“Even if I felt that was necessary, you didn’t give me much of a chance,” Akashi responded lightly “You told me you were quitting before I could even get a word in.”

He recalled storming up to the door, standing on the porch in the pouring rain. Now that he thought about it, he could remember Akashi trying to interrupt him a few times. Maybe if he would have shut his mouth and listened, he could have made way less of an idiot out of himself.

“Sorry,” Furihata apologized lamely, his ears turning red.

Akashi pulled him closer, nuzzling the top of his head. “Don’t apologize. I can only imagine how difficult it must have been for you reach that decision. Perhaps if I had been clearer, I could have saved you some of the confusion.”

Furihata shook his head. “It’s fine,” he said softly. “I… I guess it all worked out, right? We, uh… cleared things up, and I still have my job--”

“No quite,” Akashi interrupted, and Furihata froze. “You did officially quit last night, and I don’t believe I’ve hired you back just yet.”
“O-Oh…” Furihata breathed, his blood running cold. Maybe this wasn’t going to be as easy as it seemed…

The hand that had been trailing Furihata’s back shifted, moving to slide along his ribs instead. It moved lower, to caress his waist. And then lower still, to the curve of his hip…

Furihata’s breathing hitched, and he pulled back to look at Akashi in bewilderment.

Akashi’s eyes were dark, much like they were last night. His lips were pulled up in one corner, watching Furihata the way a predator watches its prey. It sent chills down his spine, and a flash of heat coursed through his veins.

“I’m afraid I’ll have to conduct another interview,” Akashi was saying. Furihata struggled to pay attention. “Although this one might be a bit more hands-on than the first,” he purred.

Furihata didn’t need to hear anymore. He surged forward and pressed his lips against Akashi’s, bringing a hand up to tangle in his hair.

Akashi made a noise that sounded like a growl, low in his throat. He wrapped an arm around Furihata, rolling over to pin him against the bed. He arched his back, pressing himself flush against Akashi, digging his nails into the bare skin of his shoulders.

Akashi kissed from his mouth to the corner of his jaw, and was in the middle of carving a hot path down his neck when there was a light knock at the bedroom door.

“Dad?” Katsuo called, his voice muffled by the door. They both froze. “Can I come in?”

Furihata went from panting to holding his breath in the matter of a second. Reality smacked him hard in the face, and all of this concerns from yesterday came rushing back.

How the hell were they suppose to explain any of this to Katsuo…

“Just a moment,” Akashi told him, his voice shockingly calm, if not a little rough. He went into action immediately, pushing off of Furihata and flinging back the blankets. While he started digging through a dresser next to the bed, Furihata searched the floor for his discarded clothes. They were both dressed in nothing more than a pair of boxers.

“Should… should I hide in the bathroom or something?” Furihata whispered. His gaze flickered around the room. “I might be able to climb out the window, but--”

“Nonsense,” Akashi said, his voice equally hushed. He threw a clean t-shirt at Furihata, and slipped one on himself. “We’ll think of something for now. We can explain the rest once your nanny duties have ended.” He paused for a second. “If you’re still interested, that is.”

Furihata thought it over for a fraction of a second. He pulled the borrowed t-shirt over his head. “Yeah, o-okay,” he nodded.

Akashi grinned, and sat back down next to him. He leaned in, and placed a soft kiss right on Furihata’s temple. Before the blood could even begin to rush to his cheeks, Akashi called for Katsuo to come in.

Furihata’s heart pounded in his chest as the door knob turned. Everything was happening so fast, and he was still so worried about ruining everything.

This could be it.
The door opened, and Katsuo stepped into the room. He was still in his pajamas, scrubbing sleepily at his eyes.

“Dad, when are you--” He cut off, finally noticing Furihata. “Furi!” he cheered, his whole face lighting up. A moment later and it dropped in confusion. “What are you doing in dads room?”

Furihata cleared his throat. “H-Hey, kiddo,” he said shakily. He threw a helpless glance at Akashi, who gave him a shrug. He racked his brain for any kind of excuse. “I, um… needed some help with, uh… filing my taxes? Yeah! And uh, I heard your dad was really good at that, and he offered to help me, but we fell asleep, so… here I am?”

“It would have been rude to turn Furihata-san down,” Akashi chimed in. He glanced over at Furihata, his mouth pulled up in a smirk. “I hope I lived up to your expectations.”

It took Furihata a second to realize what he was implying. His mouth fell open, and he quickly snapped it shut. It felt like his face was on fire.

Despite the embarrassment at what Akashi was implying, Furihara decided to keep it honest. “B-Better, actually,” he admitted, ducking his head, hoping Katsuo wouldn't notice how red his face turned.

“Hmm,” Akashi hummed, raising his chin a fraction. The satisfied smile on his face was easily the most smug expression Furihata had ever seen.

“Oh,” Katsuo said, drawing their attention back. He glanced between them, his mouth dropping into a pout. “Is… is Fui leaving then?”

The two of them exchanged a glance. Akashi seemed to take a deep breath, and then turned to face Katsuo.

“Come here,” Akashi called gently, extending a hand.

Katsuo moved around to Akashi’s side of the bed. He gripped the covers, and Akashi helped haul him onto the bed. He situated Katuso between the two of them, keeping an arm around his small shoulders.

Katsuo leaned against Akashi, watching Furihata with wary eyes. Furihata didn’t entirely understand why, until he remember the rude way he’d left the previous night. His throat tightened painfully.

“Katsuo,” Akashi said, breaking the silence. “Do you remember what we talk about yesterday? About why Furihata-san has to leave?”

Furihata watched Katsu’s eyes begin to water a little. “You **are** leaving,” he choked, his voice breaking.

Furihata ached to reach across the small space and pull Katsuo into his arms. To comfort him, and tell him that he wasn’t leaving, that he would **never** leave…

But it wasn’t his place to do that. And despite everything he and Akashi had talked about, nothing was set in stone.

“Hey,” Akashi scolded gently, brushing the tears away that were threatening to spill down Katsuo’s cheeks. “We’re going to talk about that, okay? But first I need to you answer my question.”

Katsuo wiped at his face and took a deep breath. “It’s… it’s cause Furi won’t have to w-watch me
when I go to school, right?”

Akashi nodded. “That’s right. Once you start school, you won’t need Furihata-san to be your nanny anymore.” He rubbed Katsuo’s back, and looked up to meet Furihata’s eyes. “But what if he still came over to see you?”

Katsuo looked up hesitantly. “What do you mean?” he asked with a sniffle.

“Well, Furihata-san and I have been talking,” Akashi began tentatively. “I told him how much you and I were going to miss him, and he said that he was really going to miss us, too.”

Both Akashi’s turned to look at him, as though searching for confirmation. So he nodded, and tried to find his voice. “You and your dad mean a lot to me,” he told Katsuo. “I don’t want to leave either.”

“Furihata-san and I feel like we’ve become very close friends,” Akashi continued. “And while he won’t be your nanny anymore, we decided that he could still be our friend and come visit once in a while. Would that be okay?”

Katsuo looked from Akashi to Furihata with wide eyes. “Really Furi? You’ll still come see me and dad?”

Furihata nodded. For some stupid reason he felt like crying again, although he couldn't imagine why. “Y-Yeah,” he told Katsuo. He couldn’t help but ruffle his hair. “As long as you guys want me.”

“Every day?” Katsuo questioned, his eyes lighting up hopefully.

Furihata blinked. He didn’t know if he could guarantee something like that. “Well, uh…”

“Perhaps not every day,” Akashi cut in, and Furihata breathed a sigh of relief. He was worried about making promises he couldn’t keep. The last thing he wanted to do was let Katsuo down later if things didn’t work out. “Furihata-san will have a new job, after all. But I’m sure we can figure something out.”

Katuso wiggled out from under Akashi’s arm and grabbed at Furihata’s sleeve. “You’re really not gonna leave?” he asked, looking up at him with huge, hopeful eyes.

Finally, Furihata let himself smile a little. He couldn’t resist, with how happy Katuso looked. “Yeah,” he nodded. “I’m still gonna come see you.” His gaze flickered to Akashi again, and he added, “You and your dad.”

“Forever and ever?” Katsuo pressed, and Furihata wanted nothing more than to say yes. Thankfully, Akashi answered for him, saving him from having to tell Katsuo no.

“Forever is an awfully long time,” Akashi told him, scooting closer and wrapping his arms around Katsuo. He rested his chin on his shoulder. “How about we start with something a little less permanent?”

Katsuo looked as confused and Furihata felt. Akashi turned his head and looked up at him, his eyes so warm they sent Fuirhata’s heart racing in his chest all over again.

“Furihata-san,” Akashi said, his voice full of confidence. “Would you like to do us the honor of joining us for breakfast?”

Furihata’s breath caught in his throat as two sets of hopeful eyes, one red and one gold, stared at him,
waiting for an answer. This simple invite felt like it carried the weight of the world.

Honestly, it was more than Furihata ever could have hoped for.

“Y-Yeah,” he finally croaked, fighting back joyful tears. He met Akashi’s eyes, and reached out take one of Katsuo’s small hands in his. “Yeah, I’d love to stay.”

*Forever*, he silently added in his head. *Forever and ever*.

“Isn’t that the same shirt you had on yesterday?” Katsuo asked after they finished eating.

Before heading out for breakfast, Furihata had changed back into the clothes he had worn over last night, not wanting to be rude and eat in his underwear, even though Akashi had insisted it was more than okay...

Furihata blushed, rubbing the back of his neck. “It is…” He wished Akashi was here to help him with an excuse, but he was taking a shower before he had to leave for work. “I, uh… forgot to bring a change of clothes with me when I came back last night, and your dad let me borrow some pajamas—”

“I can let you borrow something for the day too, if you’d like,” Akashi cut in, entering the kitchen.

Relief washed over him for a second before he really looked at Akashi. The navy button up he was wearing fit him perfectly, and his hair was still slightly damp from the shower. His suit jacket hung over his arm.

Furihata stared, his eyes roaming over Akashi’s figure as he came closer. He stopped at the kitchen table, adjusting his tie, and that’s when Furihata noticed the reddish mark on the side of his neck, just above the collar of his shirt.

He didn’t have to think very hard about how that mark had gotten there…

“Furihata-san?” Akashi called, and Furihata snapped out of his daze. “Would you like some clean clothes? I can have yours washed if you’d prefer.”

He shook his head slightly to clear it, hoping his face wasn’t as red as it felt. “Y-Yeah, uh, sure,” he stammered stupidly. “If that’s okay.”

“It’s no trouble at all,” Akashi said, smiling warmly. He turned to Katsuo. “Why don’t you go get dressed as well, and Furihata-san and I will meet you in the front room before I have to leave?”

Katsuo jumped out of his chair, yelling an enthusiastic “Okay!” before taking off down the hallway.

Akashi and Furihata exchanged a laugh over the table. Akashi nodded in the direction of the stairs. “Shall we?”
Furihata followed Akashi down the hall, and back up the stairs. His heart beat faster with every step.

It probably shouldn’t be that weird, to be back in Akashi’s room. He didn’t really get a chance to look around last night, and he’d rushed out quickly this morning, letting Katsuo tug him by the hand downstairs.

He stood awkwardly in the center of the room, his arms crossed over his chest, while Akashi began rifling through his dresser.

Akashi straightened, and turned around, a red shirt and a pair of black sweatpants in his hands. “Will this suffice?”

Furihata nodded, taking the clothes. “Thank you,” he told him, bowing his head slightly. “I’m, uh, sorry for the inconvenience.”

“It’s not inconvenient,” Akashi responded immediately. He reached out, and caught Furihata’s chin between his fingers, his eyes full of amusement. “Has anyone ever told you that you worry too much?”

Furihata laughed. “Yeah,” he said, his skin burning at Akashi’s touch. He leaned into his hand a little. “Only every day of my life.”

Akash’s fingers brushed against his cheek. “Are you still worried now?”

He thought about everything that had happened in the last twenty-four hours, and everything that could happen in the following days and weeks. Furihata swallowed nervously and nodded, his pulse racing.

Akashi’s expression softened. “I understand,” he said quietly. He broke into a grin suddenly, taking a lighter tone. “If it makes you feel any better, I’m always right, so you have nothing to worry about.”

It worked, and Furihata laughed. Akashi joined in, and stepped closer, until Furihata could feel his body heat. His laughter died off, his gaze dropping to Akashi’s mouth.

“Your face looks like you did the other night,” Akashi said after a moment, his voice almost a whisper. It sent a shiver down Furihata’s spine. “When you wanted to kiss me.”

Furihata’s heart pounded in his ears. “I do…” he breathed, licking his own lips, completely distracted. He was still holding back, unsure if this was okay or not.

Akashi made his answer loud and clear when he closed the distance between them, pressing his lips firmly against Furihata’s.

Furihata leaned into the kiss instantly, letting the bundle of clothes fall to the floor as he wrapped his arms around Akashi’s neck. He tilted his head and parted his lips, biting back a moan as Akashi swept his tongue through his mouth.

“Kouki,” Akashi mumbled against his skin, and Furihata melted at the use of his given name. He’d done the same thing last night, and it pulled other thoughts to the front of his mind. He gripped Akashi’s shirt, his head starting to spin...

They broke apart, breathless and panting. Akashi dropped his hands to Furihata’s waist, pulling him impossibly closer.

“I have to go,” Akashi breathed, his voice rough. “I don’t think it’s ever been more difficult for me to
“Don’t be late on my account,” Furihata responded. Despite his words, he made no move to loosen his grasp on the collar of Akashi’s shirt. Which reminded him…

Furihata gently touched the red mark on Akashi’s neck. “Sorry about this,” he apologized, ducking his head a little. He felt more than a little guilty about sending Akashi off to work with such an obvious mark on his skin. “I shouldn’t have done it where you couldn’t hide it.”

Akashi laughed, and when Furihata looked up, he was grinning again. “Don’t worry about it,” he assured him. “I’ll wear it like a badge of honor.”

“I-- you-- what! --” Furihata stammered, blushing bright red. He pressed his forehead against Akashi’s chest, hiding his face.

Akashi slid his arms around his back, pulling him into an embrace. He chuckled, his breath tickling Furihata’s ear. “Forgive me,” he said, amusement clear in his voice. “I can’t help myself.”

“Not fair,” Furihata pouted, but he couldn’t help but smile himself.

After what felt like an eternity, and with plenty more teasing, they managed to pull apart long enough for Furihata to change clothes. Akashi guided him back downstairs, where Katsuo was sitting on the couch, bouncing in his seat.

He immediately reached out for Furihata, pulling him over to sit next to him. The bright grin on his face was so much better than the heartbroken expression from yesterday. Furihata couldn’t help but smile back, his cheeks hurting from the force of it.

“I’ll see you later,” Akashi told him, leaning down and pressing a kiss to the top of Katsuo’s head. “Behave for Furihata-san.”

“I will,” Katsuo promised.

Akashi smiled, and his gaze flickered up to Furihata. “I’ll see you later as well,” he said. He straightened his tie, clearing his throat. “For dinner, perhaps?”

Katsuo twisted next to Furihata. “You’ll stay for dinner, right Furi?” he asked excitedly. “Please?”

And Furihata had to laugh. With both Akashi’s looking at him like that, he couldn’t say no even if he wanted too.

He didn’t.

For the second time that morning, Furihata accepted an invite he never thought he’d get. As he nodded yes, with tears threatening to spill, he couldn’t but wonder how he’d gotten so lucky.

And maybe, as impossible as it seemed, Akashi and Katsuo felt the same way. It certainly looked that way, from the matching smiles of their faces.

As Akashi waved goodbye, and Katsuo snuggled into Furihata’s side, the word family came to mind again.

Only this time, it didn’t seem that far off from the truth.
Ahhhh, that's it! I'm actually pretty sad, lol. I've spent a lot of time on this fic, and I actually got strangely attached to Katsuo? (I do have a prompt on tumblr for this AU, so I can finally write that! I need more of this adorable family, lol)

I'll get right on the epilogue, and then we can wrap this up! (Also, most of you seemed to like the idea of a smutty oneshot, so... stay on the lookout for that.)

Thank you guys again for everything! <333
Epilogue

Chapter Summary

Snapshots of a future that Furihata never thought he'd have.

Chapter Notes

*knocks on door of akafuri fandom* Hello? Anyone there?

First of all, I'd like to say I'm sorry for taking to long to update. 2018 was one of the roughest years of my life. I fell into a very dark place for most of the year, and I found myself uninterested in everything that I use to enjoy. I don't think I even opened a word document in all of 2018, and it ate me up every day.

But! So far this year, I've been doing much better. I started writing again a little here and there, but the last week I've really fallen back in love with it, writing every chance I wrote 2/3 of his chapter in the last few days alone!

Excuses aside, I also really just want to say thank you to each and every one of you. I still saw all the emails of comments and kudos, and many of you sent me messages on tumblr to check up on me. I can't even express how much that all means to me, but I hope you guys get some idea. <33

So here it is! The final chapter and epilogue of my longest fic ever! Thank you guys again, so, so much <3 I'll see you in the next one!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

*Three weeks later*

Akashi stood in the kitchen, his arms folded sternly across his chest. In front of him was Katsuo, his posture straight and rigid like a soldier about to head into battle.

The sight of it all was pretty funny, Furihata couldn’t help but think. Even if the theatrics of it were a little unnecessary.

“Do you have your lunch?” Akashi asked.

Katsuo patted his backpack. “Yup!”

“Your crayons?”

Katsuo nodded. “My markers, too.”

“What about your—”

Akashi turned to look at him, and Furihata couldn’t help but laugh. “He’s all packed,” he told him. “If there’s anything specific he needs, the teacher will let you know after class. He should be all good, though.” He shrugged. “It’s only kindergarten.”

Akashi still looked unconvinced. “Are you sure? I can send someone out if we’ve forgotten anything…”

“I promise,” Furihata assured him. He squeezed Akashi’s shoulder, trying to offer comfort. “He’s gonna be just fine.”

Akashi sighed loudly, raking his fingers through his hair. He relaxed into Furihata’s touch. “I know. You’re right.” He gave Furihata a sheepish grin. “I suppose I’m just nervous.”

Furihata laughed. “Totally normal,” he told him. “I remember watching Kuroko go through the same thing on the first day of school. He had to shove half of the parents out the door.”

“I can imagine,” Akashi agreed with a smile, his expression softening. “I’ll try not to cause a scene, but I’m afraid I can’t make an guarantees.”

Furihata laughed. He felt the urge to slide his arm around Akashi’s shoulders, but he couldn’t quite justify it with Katsuo watching. Sure, Katsuo probably wouldn’t think anything of it, but Furihata was still nervous about the whole thing...

Although after today, he hoped he wouldn’t have to be.

The thought made his stomach flip. He knew, realistically speaking, that he had nothing to worry about. They would take it slow, and with any luck things would work out just fine.

But regardless, he was still worried. The entire situation still felt to good to be true, and Furihata couldn’t help but wait for it to be snatched away.

Almost as if he could read his thoughts, Akashi reached out and straightened Furihata’s tie. While it probably looked innocent from the outside, Furihata was hyper-aware of Akashi’s fingers gently brushing against his neck, lingering on his skin. It was supposed to be a reassurance, and one that Furihata definitely needed right now.

It might also be something else.

He met Akashi’s eyes for moment before his gaze flickered to his mouth. His throat felt oddly dry, suddenly. He swallowed thickly, his heart racing in his chest. He wanted nothing more than to lean in, to let Akashi’s fingers slide up and tangle in his hair…

“Dad?” Katsuo asked curiously. Akashi jumped slightly, jerking his hands away from Furihata. “Can we go now? Please?”

Akashi cleared his throat, his cheeks tinged pink. “Yes, of course.” He glanced at Furihata. “Are you ready to go?”

Furihata wondered if his face was as red as it felt. He nodded, adjusting the strap for his bag and checking for his wallet. “Y-Yeah, I’ve got everything I need.”

“Then let’s go!” Katsuo cheered. He bounded between them, his school bag bouncing against his
back. His golden mop of hair disappeared around the corner towards the front hall.

Akashi and Furihata exchanged a look. “He’s certainly changed his mind about school, hasn’t he?” Akashi asked with a chuckle.

Watching the excitement on Katsuo’s face, seeing how at ease Akashi was… it felt like the final weight had fallen from Furihata’s shoulders.

Everything was really going to be okay.

He met Akashi’s gaze with a smile. “I’m glad,” he finally managed. “Worrying about school should be the last thing on his mind.”

He turned to look fondly in the direction Katsuo had gone. He jumped when an arm suddenly slipped around his waist.

“I don’t believe he was ever worried about school,” Akashi breathed against his neck. A shiver ran down his spine. “He was only ever worried about you leaving. Just like I was.”

Furihata’s heart hammered in his chest. He turned his head slightly, his face inches away from Akashi’s. “You were worried?” His voice was practically a whisper.

“Hmm,” Akashi hummed. “That’s inconsequential, at the moment.” His arms tightened around Furihata, his lips barely brushing against his. “You’re mine now, and you’re not going anywhere.”

His eyes fluttered shut. Furihata twisted in Akashi’s arms, turning to face him and wrapping his arms around Akashi’s neck.

“Good thing I’m not trying to leave,” Furihata murmured, rubbing Akashi’s collar between his fingers. He tilted his chin, and pressed his lips against Akashi’s.

Even after three weeks of stolen kisses, Furihata’s heart still pounded just as hard as the first time. He was pretty sure he’d never get used to it.

Akashi pulled back after a few seconds, his pupils slightly dilated. Furihata tried to keep the pout off his face.

“We should get going.” Akashi sounded breathless. “I’d hate to set a bad precedent on Katsuo’s first day.”

Furihata shook his head a little to clear it. “Yeah.” He checked the time on his phone. “I shouldn’t be late either.”

“Very true,” Akashi smiled. He hesitated a moment before looking up from under his hair. “Will you stay the night tonight?”

Furihata’s breath caught in his throat. He hadn’t expected Akashi would ask him so soon…

After that first night, Akashi and him had reached an agreement later that afternoon, after Akashi got home from work. The plan they came up with was simple — keep things as normal as possible. Which meant no public affections, no lingering touches, no difference in honorifics.

And no spending the night.

Furihata had been surprised to discover that the last part ended up being the hardest. He was confident he’d be patient, and be able to wait until everything was settled.
That was the last time Furihata underestimated Akashi.

Despite agreeing to the plan, Akashi attempted to break the agreement after barely a week.

He started by convincing Furihata to stay for dinner one night. It seemed harmless at the time, and Katsuo had been thrilled with the idea, so Furihata figured it couldn’t hurt.

It was after dinner, when they were cleaning up, that Akashi made his true intentions loud and clear in the form of trapping Furihata against the counter.

He protested weakly, trying to stick to the plan, but in between several kisses, Akashi’s sultry voice, and the fact that he had somehow managed to wedge a knee between Furihata’s legs...

Furihata liked to think he had some level of self control. But when it came to Akashi, it was like all rationality flew out the window. Sure, it had been a while since his last physical relationship with someone, but Furihata hadn’t expected Akashi would render him so powerless.

It had happened several more times over the past few weeks. Akashi would talk Furihata into staying for a movie, or for dinner, or to help him go over interview questions. And as much as Furihata wished he could say he was being ‘tricked’, he was more than aware of the hidden meaning behind Akashi’s words.

Even now, anticipation drummed in his veins at Akashi’s offer. He could stay the night without any lingering guilt in the morning. He wouldn’t have to rush to leave before Katsuo woke up, only to return freshly showered and changed an hour later. He’d be able to stay for breakfast and help get Katsuo ready for school, and maybe give Akashi a kiss goodbye before he left…

Furihata ducked in to quickly press his lips against Akashi’s, his cheeks blazing. “Yeah, I’ll stay.” He glanced back towards the front of the house. “You don’t think Katsuo will…?”

“He’ll be fine,” Akashi assured him. “If he has any questions, we’ll tell him the truth.” His mouth quirked up in a smile. “The censored version, that is.”

Furihata’s blush darkened, but laughter burst from his lips. It was all so ridiculous.

“Dad! Furi!” Katsuo’s voice echoed down the hall. “Come on!”

They both shared a look. “I believe we are being summoned,” Akashi said, one eyebrow raised. Furihata couldn’t fight back another chuckle.

Akashi slid his arms from around him and took a step away, jerking his chin for Furihata to follow.

“We’d better not keep him waiting.

Furihata pulled his car up in front of the school.
Akashi’s sleek black car pulled into a spot next to him. Katsuo knocked on the window from the backseat, grinning and waving at Furihata from behind tinted glass.

Furihata laughed and waved back before unbuckling his seatbelt. He stepped out, and a moment later Akashi emerged from the passenger seat of his car.

Furihata lingered on the sidewalk while Akashi got Katsuo out of the backseat. He helped adjust the straps of his bag before taking his hand and joining Furihata.

Parents and their kids wove around them. The grassy lawn and paved entrance were crowded with people. A few teachers stood at the doors, shaking hands and directing kids.

Katsuo’s stared up at the building, a tiny crease forming between his brows. Despite his eagerness at home, he suddenly looked nervous.

Furihata knelt down next to him and placed a gentle hand on his shoulder. “You okay?”

Wide, golden eyes met his for a moment before turning back to the school. He shuffled his feet a little. “...there’s a lot of people,” he murmured quietly.

“I know,” Furihata assured him. “But all these kids won’t be in your class. It just seems a lot more crowded because it’s the first day. It won’t be as bad in a couple of weeks.”

Akashi dropped down on Katsuo’s other side. “I know it must be overwhelming,” Akashi began softly. He brushed his fingers through Katsu’s hair, fixing it from the wind. “But Furihata-san is correct. Everything will be just fine.” Akashi shot him a grin. “He is the expert, after all.”

Katsuo nodded, some of the tension easing off his face. He let go of Akashi’s hand and turned, flinging his arms around Furihata’s neck.

Furihata caught him in surprise, barely managing to avoid falling backwards. He looked to Akashi, only to see him watching the two of them with a smile, his eyes full of warmth.

Furihata wrapped his arms around Katsuo and squeezed, patting him comfortably on the back. “You’re gonna do great, Katsu-kun. After a couple of days you’ll be loving it.”

Katsuo pulled back with a smile. He looked much more relaxed. “I’ll try.”

Furihata ruffled his hair and pushed to his feet. He stepped back a little while Akashi pulled Katsuo in for a hug, kissing his forehead and straightening his shirt.

Akashi stood, taking Katsuo’s hand. “I guess we should head in,” he said. “We’ll see you for dinner?”

Furihata didn’t miss the way Katsuo’s face lit up. “Yeah, I’ll be there,” he agreed. “Is six okay?”

“Perfect,” he smiled. He glanced down at Katsuo and jerked his chin towards the school. “Are you ready?”

Katsuo nodded. “Bye Furi!” he called, turning and waving as Akashi guided him up the sidewalk.

Furihata waved back, unable to keep the soft smile off his face. He heart felt like it might burst from how full it was.

After dreading this day for months, Furihata couldn’t be happier that he was able to be here to see Katsuo off to school.
And speaking of school... Furihata checked his phone. Today was his first day of school too, but in a different way. He’d been accepted at the high school as a teaching assistant, and he didn’t want to be late.

With one more glance toward the school, Furihata watched Akashi and Katsuo disappear into the building. He felt sad for a moment before remembering what would be waiting for him later.

A new job. Hearing about Katsuo’s first day. Dinner with Akashi. And whatever awaited him after dinner…

Excitement drummed in his veins. He couldn’t quite place it, but today felt like the beginning of a new chapter in his life.

He couldn’t wait to see what the future held.

*Three months later*

Akashi opened the back door of the car, sweeping his arm in a grand gesture for Furihata to climb inside.

Furihata bit his lip, fighting back a grin. He couldn’t quite keep from rolling his eyes, though. “You’re being ridiculous, you know that?” he teased.

Akashi chuckled as he slid in beside him. “What do you mean? I’m simply expressing my appreciation for you agreeing to join me tonight.”

“I might believe that… except this is, like, the twentieth time we’ve been out,” he noted with a laugh.

Akashi leaned in and pressed a kiss to Furihata’s cheek. “Darn,” he laughed against his skin. “You’ve seen right through me, Kouki.”

“Yeah, well, I guess I’ve gotten pretty good at it.” He turned his head to the side, so he could return the kiss properly.

Furihata vaguely felt the soft rumble of the engine as the car started. A month ago, he would have waited until they were out sight of the driver before he was comfortable with this kind of public affection. Now he barely paid any attention to it. After all, some of the house staff had accidently glimpsed far worse than a few kisses over the course of their relationship.

They pulled apart, both breathing a little heavier than usual. Akashi’s eyes sparkled in the dim lighting of the backseat. He reached for Furihata’s hand, lacing his fingers between his.

“I am glad we were able to go out tonight,” he said. “It’s been quite a while, hasn’t it?”

Furihata nodded. “Yeah, but it’s not like we could help it. You had that trip a few weeks ago, and I’ve been staying late getting ready for the next semester.” He squeezed Akashi hand, giving him a smile. “It’s not like we don’t eat dinner together almost every night anyway.
“True,” Akashi said, returning his smile. He tilted his head slightly. “Is it safe to assume you’ll be staying the night again tonight?” Even after all this time, his tone still sounded hopeful, like he wasn’t sure what the answer would be.

“Definitely,” he laughed. It was sort of an inside joke at this point—Furihata stayed nearly every night. “As long as you’ll have me.” He paused for a moment, remembering something. “I’ll have to get up early, though. I’ve gotta stop by my place and pay the rent. I promised her I’d have it first thing in the morning, before she goes out of town.”

He expected Akashi to agree easily, or to offer to go with him. But instead he was oddly quiet, staring at Furihata with an expression he couldn’t read.

Furihata’s stomach flipped a little. He told himself he had nothing to worry about… it couldn’t be that bad, if Akashi had still offered for him to spend the night.

Right?

The silence dragged on for another long moment. It was probably only a few seconds, but it felt like an eternity. Finally Akashi cleared his throat, and spoke.

“There’s… something I’ve been meaning to speak with you about.” He paused, looking suddenly unsure. “Concerning your rent.”

Furihata blinked in confusion, his brows furrowing. He didn’t understand Akashi’s train of thought at all. Except, well, maybe he had one idea…

“Listen, Sei, it’s not that I don’t appreciate the thought, because I really do,” he began. “But if you’re gonna offer to help pay my rent again, or to help me get a new place —”

“No,” Akashi interrupted him. “While I’d be more than willing to assist with either of those, I know you’d never allow it.” He hesitated again. “It’s… related to that, however.”

“O..kay?” He waited for Akashi to go on, but he didn’t. “So, what is it?” he finally prompted.

Akashi seemed to take a deep breath. He sat up straight, squared his shoulders, and looked Furihata dead in the eye.

“Move in with me.”

Furihata’s jaw fell open, as he gaped openly at Akashi. “You— you w-want me… to... what?” he stuttered incomprehensibly.

Akash’s expression looked strained, but his gaze didn’t waver. He raised his chin, and repeated himself.

“I’m asking you to move in with me.” Furihata let out a squeak, but Akashi continued before he could say anything. “You spend the majority of your time here anyway. A large portion of your clothing is already in my closet.” His speech quickened, suddenly. Almost like he was nervous. “You eat most of your meals here. You sleep here far more often than at your apartment.” He lowered his gaze, looking at their joined hands. “It—it simply seems like the most reasonable option,” he finished softly. “Why pay rent for an apartment you hardly use?”

Furihata’s mind raced. It was true, that he spent most of his time when he wasn’t at work at Akashi’s place. And there was definitely a section of Akash’s closet that was for him… and most of his night clothes were shoved into a drawer that Akashi had cleared out for him. He had his own pair of house
slippers. Akashi had groceries stocked in the house that were specifically for him. And the last time he had stayed at his own place was…? How long ago now? Furihata couldn’t remember.

He couldn’t remember anything right now.

Akashi coughed, low in his throat. Furihata’s attention snapped back to him. He stared, wide-eyed, his thoughts still in a frenzy.

Akashi looked uncomfortable, to put it mildly. His head was turned away, gazing at the back of the seat in front of him. His lips were pressed into a tight line.

“Forgive me,” he said, and even his tone sounded all wrong. “I don’t wish to pressure you. The last thing I wanted was to put you in an awkward situation. What you do with your money is no business of mine.”

Furihata swallowed thickly. He squeezed Akashi’s fingers in what he hoped was a reassuring gesture. “That’s not—I m-mean, that is…” He took a deep breath, trying to steady his nerves. “The money’s not it. I just, um…” he trailed off uncertainty.

Akashi’s gaze flickered back to him. “It’s just what?”

“It’s just— well, you don’t think it’s maybe… too soon? For that sort of thing?” he choked out. He stared at their hands, unwilling to look at Akashi’s expression.

There was a beat of silence. And then another. Finally, Akashi raised head, looking right at Furihata. “No, I don’t think it’s too soon. Not in the slightest.” He paused, running his fingers through his hair. He turned his gaze to the window, his voice soft. “I suppose some people might look at things that way. But Kouki…”

Akashi looked at him, his eyes full of gentle warmth. “While we’ve only been dating a few months, you’ve been an incredibly important part of my life for nearly a year now.” He lifted Furihata’s hand, kissing his knuckles. “I’m not sure if any aspect of our relationship can be considered normal, by most standards.” Akashi’s lips tilted in a half smile. “Why start now?”

Furihata couldn’t hold back his laughter at that. The tension faded, both of them relaxing back into the seat. Akashe kept a hold of this hand, brushing his thumb against his skin.

“I apologize for bringing it up so abruptly,” Akashi said softly. “I didn’t mean to spoil the evening.”

“You didn’t.” Furihata hurried to say. “I’m sorry for overreacting the way I did. It just… caught me off guard, is all.” He gave a nervous laugh, lowering his gaze.

Fingers caught his chin, lifting his face back up. Before his eyes could even focus, Akashi was kissing him, his lips soft against his own.

Furihata kissed him back, tilting his head a little and parting his lips. Akashi didn’t hesitate to take advantage, swiping his tongue through Furihata’s mouth. He shuddered a little, his free hand fumbling to touch Akashi’s chest. His fingers danced up to his neck, weaving themselves into his hair, holding him in place.

Akashi made a noise, low in his throat. He let go of Furihata’s hand, wrapping an arm around his waist and pulling him flush against chest. He pressed forward, nearly pinning Furihata to the car door. Furihata shifted a leg so Akashi could slide between them.

He forgot where he was. All he could think about was Akashi, and how close they were, and how it
still wasn’t close enough…

Something changed. Furihata couldn’t quite place what it was. A sound changed, or something. He wasn’t sure he even cared, until—

“We’ve stopped,” Akashi said. He sounded breathless, his voice low and husky. It sent heat pooling in Furihata’s stomach.

His head was spinning. “O-Oh…” He tried to steady his breathing. Akashi’s face was still right there, in easy kissing range. He struggled to remember where they were. “Dinner. Right.”

“I know, it’s such a shame,” Akashi said. He squinted out the window before turning his eyes back to Furihata. His mouth lifted into a smirk. “I’d much rather finish my dessert first.”

Furihata’s jaw dropped. “Sei!” he sputtered, flinging his hands over his face. He could feel the blush burning it’s way up to his hairline.

Months later, Akashi was still surprising him. Furihata didn’t know how he was able to say things like that so easily. He tried to copy him a few times in the past, but he always ended up stumbling over the words. And Akashi would laugh, kissing his red face and telling him how adorable he was…

Long fingers pulled his hands away. Akashi kissed his forehead, his devilish grin melting into something softer. “Ready to go? We’re nearly late for our reservations. Not that I would mind continuing this.” He chuckled a bit.

Furihata swallowed thickly. “Yeah, we can go.” Akashi leaned back and helped him sit up. He ran his fingers through Furihata’s a little, fixing a few misplaced strands. He wondered if Akashi could feel how fast his heart was beating.

“But u-um,” Furihata continued, his face heating up all over again. “I’ll definitely have room left for dessert. You know… later.” *Gosh I’m such an idiot.*

Fingers lifted his chin, and then Akashi was kissing him again. He pulled back after a few seconds, his smile blinding. But there was a spark in his eyes that Furihata didn’t miss.

“I look forward to taking you up on that,” Akashi said. His gaze flickered a little, his expression softening. “And Kouki?” he added. He seemed to hesitate for a moment. “I meant what I said. Before, when we first got in the car. It would mean a great deal to me if you thought about it.” He took Furihata’s hand, squeezing his fingers. “I’ll support whichever you choose. There’s no pressure for you to agree.”

Furihata nodded, clasping other hand over Akashi’s and squeezing back. “Thank you, Sei. I definitely will.”

Akashi smiled. “I’m glad to hear you say that.” He glanced behind him, reaching towards the door handle. “Now then… shall we?"
Furihata stumbled into the back of the car, plopping down heavily against the seat. Akashi slid in right next to him, his hands catching at his elbow and pulling him back towards him.

Akashi’s lips found his easily in the dim lighting. Furihata parted his lips, immediately tasting the wine still lingering on Akashi’s tongue.

They parted after a moment, both of them panting into the air. Furihata’s head was spinning a little, and he wasn’t sure if it was because of the alcohol, lack of oxygen, or some combination of the two.

“Kouki,” Akashi purred. His voice was low and throaty, and it sent a shiver straight down Furihata’s spine. Akashi pressed closer, wedging himself between his legs, and Furihata bit back a moan.

The car ride back to the house seemed to go by quicker than Furihata expected. He was pretty distracted, though, so maybe that had something to do with it. He did know the driver was was probably thrilled to have them both out of the car.

Akashi kept an arm around his waist as they made their way through the front door. Katsuo was asleep, given how late it was, but Furihata was still a little surprised when Akashi led them to the living room instead of the bedroom.

Not that it mattered. Akashi pressed him into the couch, untucking Furihata’s shirt and sneaking a hand underneath.

Furihata pulled away from Akashi’s lips to focus on his hands, which were busy fumbling with the buttons of Akashi’s shirt. He got the first few undone, exposing the perfect, pale skin of Akash’s throat. He craned his neck, pressing his lips against his collarbones, nipping a little with his teeth.

Akashi groaned above him, his hips twitching a little between Furihata’s knees. He pulled back, looking at Furihata beneath him. His eyes were practically glowing, full of warmth and heat.

Furihata looked at the man above him and wondered, not for the first time, how he got so lucky.

And it seemed like he kept getting luckier. He was lucky enough to meet Akashi and Katsuo, gaining the opportunity to work for him. He was lucky enough to spend time with him, to learn things about him that most people didn’t get to see. He was lucky enough to kiss him, and to be kissed back.

Lucky enough to love him, and to be loved by him.

Lucky enough… that Akashi wanted to live with him.

“I’ll do it,” Furihata blurted.

Akashi blinked above him. “You’ll… what?” His brows knitted in confusion.

“Move in.” Furihata took a breath to steady himself. “I’ll move in. With you.”

Akashi stared at him for a long moment. Furihata’s heart hammered, wondering what Akashi was thinking. Maybe he shouldn’t have said it like. Or maybe he should have waited until tomorrow. Did Akashi think it was weird…?

After what felt like forever, Akashi broke into an ear-splitting grin. Furihata only got to see it for a second before Akashi bent down, crushing their lips together with a renewed eagerness.

He pulled back just as quickly. “Are you sure?” Akashi asked. He couldn’t quite mask the
excitement in his voice.

Furihata nodded. “I’m sure,” he said. “I want to be here more than anything. With you and Katsuo.”

Akashi’s soft gaze melted, a hint of that smirk from the car pulling back at his mouth. His eyes were bright, full of heat that sent Furihata’s blood running south.

“In that case,” Akashi purred, crouching over Furihata like a predator stalking its prey. “Would you allow me to show you to your new room?”

They both stood, fumbling to hang on to each other as they made their way up to Akashi’s bed.

No, Furihata thought, as they stumbled up the stairs. *Not Akashi’s bed. Their bed.*

*Three years later*

Furihata paced outside the door of the gymnasium. He held his phone in one hand, nervously checking the time every ten seconds.

Tryouts should have ended roughly five minutes ago. He’d seen a few kids leave, but so far, there’d been no sign of Katsuo.

He checked his phone again.

Furihata got more nervous as the seconds ticked by. He knew he didn’t really have anything to worry about. Even if Katsuo didn’t make the team for some reason, it wasn’t like it was the end of the world. He could always try again next year.

But Katsuo was determined to make it, despite the fact that he was at the youngest eligible age to join. Most of the kids were nearing ten, with Katsuo being amongst the few who were only eight.

Katsuo was incredibly skilled for his age. Not to mention his crazy-talented father and his entourage of equally talented friends.

Furihata had finally met the Miracles nearly a year into their relationship. That had been… intimidating, to say the least. At first, anyway. It turns out they were all really nice, for the most part. There were a few comments, like *“Really Akashi? You fell in love with your nanny? Sheesh, could you be any more shojo?”*

Furihata was worried Akashi’s friends might not approve of him, but instead, they all seemed relieved seeing how happy Akashi was. Even if Furihata was his nanny-turned-lover.

That had been the first time Furihata *really* saw Katsu light up playing basketball. They couldn’t keep him off the court while they tried to play. After everyone left, Katsuo had begged to stay out longer. The three of them had played until the sun went down.
Akashi had worried a little a first. Katsuo kept asking to go out to the court after dinner each day, babbling on about how cool all the Miracles were, and how he wanted to play just like his dad and his friends someday.

“You don’t think he feels pressured, do you?” Akashi had asked one night, when they were alone in their room. “I’ve been very careful to not force him into any interests, but I wonder if his knowledge of my past and seeing the others makes him feel obligated.”

Furihata couldn’t help but chuckle a little, even as he reached for Akashi’s hand. “I get where you’re coming from Sei, I really do.” He squeezed Akashi’s fingers. “But I think you’re worried about nothing. Katsuo’s five. Of course he sees how amazing you all are and wants to play like you.” Furihata laughed again, ducking his head a little. “Hell, I’m twenty seven and I’m still amazed.” He gave a shrug. “The Miracles are like superheroes to him.”

Akashi rolled his eyes at the superhero thing, but his shoulders relaxed. “I suppose that’s true,” he smiled sheepishly. “I’m overreacting again, aren’t I?”

“Maybe just a little,” Furihata grinned. “But it’s only because you care.” He curled up closer to Akashi, pressing against him. “Really though, I think he’ll be fine. If he decides he doesn’t like it later on, he can always quit.”

So they started working with him, making sure the whole thing was on Katsuo’s terms. He was free to stop any time he wanted, but as the months turned to years, he only wanted to play more.

And he had the skill for it. He was quick and decisive, just like his father. He was very methodical in his practice on the basics like shooting and dribbling, and always listened attentively when Akashi or Furihata showed him something new.

Most importantly, when they started taking him to the park to play with other children his age, they found that he was also an incredible team player. He meshed with the other kids easily, falling into the leadership role without seeming to realize it. While some were better at making shots or passes, Katsuo was able to effectively use those abilities to the teams advantage.

His skills, confidence, and generally good-natured personality drew the other kids to him like a magnet. And from the excited way he had reenacted the whole thing on the way home, Katsuo had enjoyed the experience.

The grade school community teams took kids ages eight through ten, with another group taking the eleven and twelve year olds. They broke down into three strings, with each level playing against other schools from the same string. That way everyone got a chance to play regardless of skill level.

At a minimum, they figured Katsuo would make third string, but they were all hoping for a second string placement. First string was mostly the older kids, who had already been playing for a year or two.

Ten minutes had passed now, and Furihata was growing more worried. He stared at the gym doors, anxiously chewing on his lip when his phone buzzed in his hands. He nearly dropped it trying to swipe it open.

It was a text from Akashi. [Is he out yet? How did it go?]

[Not out yet] Furihata keyed back. [Where are you?]

His phone buzzed again. [I’ll be there soon. Keep me updated.]
The gym doors opened, and Furihata’s head snapped up. A few more kids came out, running off into the parking lot to walk home with friends or to meet with their parents.

Still no Katsuo.

Furihata started pacing again. He wondered if something could have gone wrong…? But it was a basketball tryout, what could possibly be that bad? And if it was, surely someone would have called him or Akashi by now.

Nearly fifteen minutes now…

Just as Furihata was working up the nerve to barge in there and demand some answers, the door cracked open, and Katsuo stepped out onto the pavement.

There was a beat of silence as they looked at each other. Furihata was frantically trying to read his expression, to see if he looked happy or disappointed…

Katsuo walked up to him, his face giving nothing away. He stopped in front of Furihata, his arms folded behind his back. Almost like he was waiting for something.

Furihata held his breath. “Well?” he finally asked. He cleared his throat. “How, uh… how’d it go?”

“Good,” Katsuo said. He blinked his big golden eyes up at Furihata.

He waited, but apparently that was all Katsuo was going to say.

“That’s… good.” Furihata paused, waiting again, only to be met with more silence. “Anything else you feel like sharing?”

Katsuo broke into a grin.

Furihata felt his own mouth twitch. “You made it?” he blurted with excitement.

Katsuo nodded once, and Furihata couldn’t hold back anymore from sweeping him up in his arms and hugging him right there in the parking lot. He didn’t care where Katsuo placed, or what position they thought he should play.

All that mattered in that moment was that Katsuo looked really, really happy.

Furihata set him down, keeping his hands on Katsuo’s shoulders. Katsuo was bright with laughter, all smiles. Furihata couldn’t stop the questions from spilling out rapid-fire. “How did it go? Was it fun? What happened in there? What took so long?”

Katsuo opened his mouth, but then his eyes flickered behind Furihata’s shoulder, and he paused. Furihata turned his head, and caught sight of a bright red flash of hair.

Akashi was racing through the parking lot, his tie whipping in the wind behind him. Furihata bit his lip, fighting back a grin. Katsuo chuckled a little next to him.

Akashi came to a stop in front of them. “I’m sorry I’m late,” he panted. “Traffic was terrible, and the cab driver in front of us had clearly never driven a vehicle before…” He paused, his sharp gaze flickering between the two of them. “How did everything go?”

Katsuo stepped away from Furihata, moving to stand directly in front of Akashi. From this angle he
could see a folded sheet of paper clutched in Katsuo’s hands behind his back.

Furihata watched as Katsuo held the paper out to Akashi. He blinked, looking a little confused, but he accepted it. He eyes moved back and forth swiftly, scanning the page.

His eyes widened suddenly, his eyebrows lifting in surprise.

“You— you made first string.”

Katsuo beamed up at Akashi. “Sure did,” he grinned. He turned back to look at Furihata. “That’s what took so long — the coaches said they would place me in second string, but if I was up for the challenge they’d be happy to have me on the first. But that I didn’t have to if I didn’t want to.”

Furihata was pretty sure his jaw was on the floor. And from the looks of it, Akashi felt much the same way.

“Katsuo, I…” Akashi started, his voice tight with emotion.

Without another word, Akashi reached forward and pulled Katsuo into a hug, burying his face in his golden hair. Katsuo’s arms flung around his waist, clinging to him.

“T’m so proud of you,” Akashi murmured into his hair. “Incredibly proud. You worked so hard for this.” He pushed Katsuo back, brushing his hair back from his face. “How do you feel about it? Of course the first string is wonderful, but I agree with the coaches. There’s no shame in joining the second string instead. You know that, right?”

Katsuo nodded. “Yeah, I know.” And then in the most Akashi-like move Furihata had ever seen him do, Katsuo furrowed his little brows and lifted his chin, looking Akashi in the eye with pure determination written on his face. “I want to play on the first string. If they think I’m good enough for it, then I want to prove them right.”

Akashi laughed, pulling Katsuo back into his arms. After a second, Katsuo turned, pulling an arm off of Akashi to reach for Furihata.

He wrapped one arm around Katsuo, ruffling his hair, and slid the other around Akashi’s waist. Katsuo smiled at him with pride, burrowing his face in Furihata’s neck.

“I knew you could do it,” Furihata told him. A part of him wondered if he was going to start crying. He laughed a little. “I swear there’s nothing you can’t do.”

Katsuo looked like he was about to fly away. His smile was almost painful to look at, it was so bright.

The three of them eventually straightened, but Akashi and Furihata both kept a hand on Katsuo as they walked back to the car. Katsuo was gushing about every detail of the tryouts, talking so fast they could barely keep up.

And in the moment, Furihata thought back to a years-old memory. Of the three of them at the zoo, on that day when Furihata was so sure he was going to lose both of them. And he remembers seeing the other couples, the families with their children, and thinking that he would never have that. Not with Akashi and Katsuo.

He blinked back to the present, looking at Katsuo’s hand still wrapped in his, and thought about all the times he got to tuck Katsuo in to bed, or help him with his homework, or hold him when he cried on a bad day.
And he thought about Akashi, and getting to fall asleep and wake up next to him every day. He thought about all the dinner dates and deep conversation late at night. All the laughter over the last three years.

He looked at the gold ring on his left hand, flashing bright in the afternoon sun. He listened to the excitement in Katsuo’s voice, and watched the proud and soft smile lingering on Akashi’s lips. And in that moment, he realized, more than he ever had before…

…it was wrong, all those years ago at the zoo. Anyone looking at the three of them now would be thinking the same exact thing. It was so obvious, Furihata was sure it could be seen all the way from space.

They were a family.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed! I worried endlessly about how to end this thing, but I think it came out okay! I'm definitely gonna miss Katsuo as a character... I've grown attached to the little guy.

And also... I haven't forgotten about that "missing" scene from chapter 6 *winks*. Keep an eye out for that!

End Notes

Fun fact about the name of Akashi’s son, Katsuo: It literally means "victory", and I get a kick out of it, lol.
Thanks for reading!

You can find me on Tumblr here if you want to send something in!

And here is my twitter for more news on writing updates! I've been posting sneak peeks on future works here!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!