

Tsumetai Hana

Von abgemeldet

Kapitel 1: Cold Flower (© Akauzu)

"I'm freezing to death", said Shinya irritably as he pulled his arms tighter around himself.

"Well, if you would eat something...", muttered Die after he swallowed his last mouthful of instant ramen. Shinya pouted and returned to staring out the window. There wasn't much to look at - everything was blanketed in a thick layer of white snow, untouched save for the spot where Kyo had decided to flop around wearing nothing but his hotel bathrobe. When Kaoru had dragged him in ten seconds later, the small man was beginning to turn blue.

It was a vacation, at least. After a string of Hokkaido lives, the band had decided to spend a weekend at a northern ski lodge before heading back to Tokyo - after Toshiya had whined and whined about how much fun it would be. Shinya scowled. Fun for Toshiya, maybe, as the bassist was a Nagano native and used to the cold.

"Are you looking for a Yeti?", teased Die, poking Shinya in the back. Shinya shook himself to alertness. He hadn't really been watching the window at all; he had been too lost in his own thoughts.

"Yeti?" asked Shinya.

"Yeah, it's a big monster that lives in the mountains and eats people. Gaaah!" Die made a "monster" face and clobbered Shinya, who struggled from his grasp.

"Get off, Die!" The guitarist pouted for a moment, but quickly replaced it with a grin.

"You're too skinny to eat, anyway. Maybe you could be an after-dinner-snack." Shinya rolled his eyes dramatically and reminded himself to kill Toshiya for ever suggesting such a stupid idea. Not only was he trapped in the mountains for a whole weekend, where it was freezing cold and the TV didn't get any music stations and the air made his skin dry, he was stuck there with Die. The man who infuriated him to no end, who teased him mercilessly and was never serious about anything. The man that he had harbored a secret crush on for years. Where had that one come from? Shinya frowned to himself. His feelings for Die were imagined, born out of spending too much time together. It was nothing. Shinya mentally repeated these words to himself.

There had only been three rooms available at the lodge - Toshiya had made the reservations. The bassist had quickly claimed the largest room all for himself, stating that he had the most luggage, while Kaoru and Kyo had exchanged little grins and snatched the room with the biggest bed. Shinya was mortified to learn that the room he was to share with Die had only one bed, so Die slept on the floor. Worst of all, there were long red hairs in the shower drain.

"Are you going to go outside, or are you just going to mope around the hotel all day?", asked Die, pulling on a pair of boots. For someone who had spent the night on the floor, Die was too cheerful.

"If I have to. Where did everybody else go?"

"After Kyo finished turning himself into the human ice sculpture, Toshiya forced him and Kaoru to go skiing. They're probably at the beginner slopes, if Kyo hasn't managed to hurt himself yet."

"Oh."

"Come on, we should join them! It will be fun." Famous last words, thought Shinya. Die's idea of "fun" was to tease Shinya. Undoubtedly the drummer would be pushed into the snow, or left alone on the ski lift, or otherwise humiliated by a certain red-haired guitarist. Still, Die's brown eyes were pleading... Shinya sighed.

"Fine. But just for a little while, okay?"

"Yatta!"

Shinya had complained about the thick clothing that he had been made to wear until he felt the first biting cold wind. It tore at his hair until he jammed a knitted cap over his head. Die wore an oversized pair of snow goggles that looked like they had been stolen from the costume department. Knowing Die, they probably had.

He walked awkwardly with the skis strapped to his feet, like a duck sinking into the snow. What part of this was fun? Die seemed much more at ease, but he always had been athletic. Shinya trudged unhappily through the snow until he caught up with Die, who had been waiting patiently some distance ahead.

"Don't worry, you'll get the hang of it!"

"Have you ever been skiing before?"

"No, I must be naturally talented." Shinya wondered why he never got any of the natural talents. He wasn't as athletic as Die or as beautiful as Toshiya, and didn't have Kaoru's skill for leadership or Kyo's confidence. Why Die even bothered with such a hopeless cause was beyond him.

"Wait up!", called Shinya. "I'm getting stuck!" Die laughed and skied back towards Shinya.

"You have to keep moving until you get to a place where the snow is more packed." Die took the poles from Shinya's hands and balanced them along with his own poles under his neck. He grabbed Shinya's wrists and began to drag the younger man forward, walking backward so that he was facing Shinya. Shinya thought his hands were warm, even through the gloves. Maybe this wasn't so bad, after all.

"Hey, Die, I thought you two were never going to show up!", called Kyo's voice. Die stopped suddenly and Shinya went crashing into him. He landed in a pile of limbs and skis on the packed snow. Kyo was laughing, but Shinya just looked down at the snow. Just as he predicted, he had fallen right in front of Die. Die would probably get a big laugh from that, and call Shinya "Bigfoot" or worse for weeks.

Unexpected, a large hand appeared in front of Shinya's face. He took it, only to realize that it belonged to Die. The guitarist wore an expression of concern.

"Shinya! I'm so sorry! Are you okay?" He wasn't laughing at all.

"Mmm, I think so", replied Shinya as Die pulled him back upright. Without thinking, he put his arms around the older man's neck to steady himself. Their bodies were together as if in an embrace of two lovers, alone in the snow. Kyo's snickering brought Shinya back to reality. When he realised just what he was doing, he jumped backwards with a furious blush on his face. "I'm fine now."

"Well, if you two aren't too busy...", laughed Kyo, "Me and Kaoru and are over there." He pointed towards the beginner slopes. "Toshiya's the only one who has any idea what he's doing, so we all look pretty stupid. I expect to see a photo of Kaoru falling into a snowdrift on the cover of next month's Vicious." Everyone giggled at that idea, even the normally stoic Shinya.

"So where's the ski lift?", asked Die.

"Next to the coffee vendor", answered Kyo. "The beginner slopes are the first stop. There's another set of lifts to the more difficult hills, or at least that's what Toshiya's says. He's up there showing off. Probably thinks he can meet cute ski instructors, right?" Kyo skied awkwardly back to where Kaoru was nursing a cup of coffee, happily sitting down out of the snow. Die pointed to the lift.

"So, what do you say, we give it a try? If Kyo can do it, it can't be that hard." Shinya nodded, hoping that Die would mistake his blush for a reaction to the cold air. They sat beside each other on the lift, peering eagerly at the other skiers.

"Hey, is that Kaoru?" asked Shinya.

"The one that just fell on his face?"

"Yeah. Nobody else has purple hair, I guess. Poor Kaoru."

"I'm sure Kyo will take care of him." Die laughed. "Who ever would have thought those two would get together?"

"Why not?"

"Huh?"

"Why is it so strange for two bandmates to like each other?" Shinya once again hoped that Die would mistake his blush for the cold.

"Nothing, I guess. It's just that Kaoru is my best friend, and Kyo is like something from another planet. I'm just surprised that the fans don't notice anything - Kyo stuck his tongue halfway down Kaoru's ear at the last show? Did you see that?" Shinya hadn't, he had been too engrossed in keeping the beat. The other members always flirted with each other - fans loved that kind of stuff. He was happier to be left alone.

"Oh, it was hilarious! Kaoru screwed up three bars and I had to cover for him. You should have seen his face!" Die laughed loudly. "Next time, we're all going to gang up on you! How dramatic - Shin-chan's first kiss!" Die could barely constrain his giggles. Shinya's eyes widened, but before he could respond, Die lifted the release bar for the lift seat. They had reached the first slope.

"Come on, I'll race you to the bottom!"

Skiing actually was fun, once Shinya had learned how to keep his balance. He enjoyed the feeling of wind rushing across his face and snow crunching under his skis. It even began to feel a little warmer.

"Having fun?" It was Die again, skiing backwards to talk to Shinya. The drummer nodded.

"But I am exhausted! Who knew it was so much work to walk in these things?", said Shinya, pointing to his skis.

"Me too", confessed Die. "Kyo said that Totchi is up on the third slope - showing off. I think there's an observation deck somewhere, so we can go watch him make an ass of himself."

"Aw, you're just jealous because he's better than you!", laughed Shinya. It felt good to be joking with Die, skiing alongside him. They traded mild insults all the way to the lift. Once they were barred into the lift chair, however, Die became silent.

"Shinya", he finally began. "You don't have anybody, do you? Like Kaoru and Kyo, I mean."

"Umm."

"You're so secretive that you could have five little kids and we would never know!" Die seemed much more comfortable when he was teasing.

"I don't have five kids!", defended Shinya, slightly indignant. "I have Miyu, and she's enough for me."

"Miyu?", asked Die, a little too quickly.

"My dog's name is Miyu! I have two dogs, Puppy and Miyu!"

"Oh!" Die looked a little pinker than normal. Shinya wondered exactly what he was trying to say.

"Umm, you don't have anyone, do you?"

"Nope, not me. I have a potted plant. Maybe I should get a dog?"

"Yeah, I can see you with one of those big dogs that slobbers all over everything. Why do you ask?"

"Dunno. Lonely, I guess. It's funny - we must have a million fans, but we're always alone."

"Kaoru and Kyo certainly aren't alone. I'm happy for them. And Toshiya..."

"Totchi's happy as long as there's a warm body next to him." Die closed his eyes. "I mean the two of us. Maybe I'm imagining it, but..."

"The lift, Die-kun. We're almost there!" Die opened his eyes and smiled.

"Oh, then I'll help you out." Shinya took the arms that Die offered without hesitation. As Die whisked him out of the car's path, he felt none of the usual urge to pull away. Maybe Die was right. They spent too much time alone. Die's arms were comfortingly warm in the cold mountain air; Shinya could have stayed there quite happily. What was happening to him? Why had he tried to convince himself that he hated Die for all those years? It seemed so pointless, now.

"Um, Shinya, wasn't there supposed to be an observation platform around here somewhere?"

"I thought so. Why don't you ask the next group of skiers?" Die did so; unfortunately, they only spoke Korean.

"I guess we can find it on our own." Shinya buttoned his overcoat, as it was beginning to get uncomfortably cold. "It can't be that far." They began to walk in the opposite direction that the foreign tourists had taken, as they didn't want to be caught at the top of the advanced level hill. It began to snow heavily, making it difficult to see. The ground snow was not packed heavily enough to use the poles on, so they simply used

their skis like large snowshoes. Shinya thought Die looked even more like a Yeti when he was stomping around on his skis. He didn't laugh, though, because the air was too frigid.

"It's a good thing I 'borrowed' these goggles from our prop mistress!", laughed Die, pulling the glasses over his face.

"I can't see a thing."

"Then you can hold onto my hand, ne?" Shinya gladly did so, and they continued to walk for several minutes. After a while, they realised that something was definitely not right.

"I don't see any sign of the platform. With all this snow, I'll bet everyone is heading back to the hotel. The only problem is that I don't know where the lift is."

"Mmm?", asked Shinya. The wind was blowing so strongly that it was difficult to hear Die's voice. He sounded far away. Shinya grasped Die's hand more tightly, feeling its reassuring presence.

"With all the snow we must have taken a wrong turn. I'd call for help, but I don't think my cell phone will work out here." They started to walk in what might have been the opposite direction. The snowfall had whited out the surroundings completely. All that existed were two men desperately clinging to one another, lost in an endless wash of nothingness.

"It's cold", mumbled Shinya, leaning into Die's shoulder. Die put his arm around the slight man.

"I'm sure the storm will be over quickly. Then we'll go and get some hot chocolate, ne, Shin-chan?" Die wiped snow from his goggles, but it didn't improve the visibility at all. The only thing left to do was talk. "I hope Toshiya's okay. Kaoru probably went back to the hotel already - I don't think he liked skiing much. Or maybe he just didn't like falling. But you're not that bad. Still, next vacation we take is to the beach, ne?" Shinya didn't respond.

Shinya slipped from Die's grasp and collapsed to the frozen ground. Die immediately fell to his side. The slim young man's face was almost as pale as the snow, and his eyes were closed tightly.

"Shinya! Shinya, wake up!", cried Die frantically. Shinya groaned softly and opened his eyelids slightly.

"Die?", he whispered. "It's so cold. I'm tired."

"Get up, Shinya!"

"Just let me rest for a minute, please." Tears were frozen on Shinya's pale face. He looked like a porcelain doll asleep on a white bed. Die hugged Shinya tightly to

himself while wrestling off his outer coat. This he wrapped around Shinya's frail body, noticing that the drummer seemed lighter than usual.

"Shinya, you need to stay awake, please! In a few minutes it will be clear again, and we can go back to the hotel."

"Mmm."

"Come on, say something. Tell me about your dog."

"M...Miyu... You... wanted a dog. You... should take care of her." Die shook Shinya roughly, almost in anger.

"I don't want to hear you talk like that! You're going home to Miyu, and we'll both take care of her. Okay?"

"I'm so sorry, Die."

"Shinya!" Tears flowed freely down Die's face as he watched Shinya curl up in his arms. The younger man wasn't even shivering. It almost looked as if he were going to sleep. Die remembered that shivering was the body's way of trying to warm itself - Shinya wasn't even doing that. At this rate, he...

"Shinya, you need to wake up. I need to tell you something. You can't die now!"

"Die... I..."

"I love you, Shinya, alright! I don't want the first time I say that to be the last! So... you need to stay awake. Please, Shinya." He kissed Shinya's bluish lips, feeling how cold the young man was. Die leaned over Shinya's thin body, hoping to shield him from the cold. The only sounds were the roar of the wind and the soft whisper of Shinya's breathing. Lulled by these sounds, Die ignored his own command and fell asleep. The snow piled around them in soft white drifts.

"Someone's over there!", called a strange voice. Die struggled to focus on the sound. Stiffly he was able to raise his head, looking for the source of the sound. The blurry figures of several people rushed towards him as he buried his face in Shinya's hair. Was Shinya still breathing? Die couldn't tell.

Someone pulled him away from Shinya and wrapped him in a heavy blanket. He struggled, whispering in a raw voice:

"No! I need to keep Shinya warm! Please, let me go!" The rescue workers didn't seem to hear him, as they began carrying him back to the lift. It wasn't so far away, after all. He caught a glimpse of someone pulling Shinya from the snow - Shinya's hair was frozen into stiff strands where Die's tears had wet it. He was still wrapped in Die's overcoat, though it was several sizes too large. Die leaned his head into the blanket,

and soon forgot whether he was laughing or crying.

"Shinya!", wailed Toshiya as he threw himself over the thin form. "Wake up!" Shinya didn't move. "I said get up!", screamed Toshiya, shaking the other man roughly. Shinya was asleep back in a bed at the hotel infirmary, as he had been since the rescue workers found him.

"Totchi, stop it!", whispered Kyo. Even the normally nonchalant vocalist looked on the verge of tears now. Kaoru sat on the other bed, absently stroking Die's hair while looking out the window.

"The doctor said she doesn't know how long it will take for Shinya to wake up, if he wakes up," he murmured, half to himself and half to Die, who was still asleep. The doctor had kindly given the guitarist a tranquiliser to help with the shock. "He had hypothermia, but luckily you kept him warm enough to prevent frostbite."

"Damn it, Shinya, get up!", screamed Toshiya. "Die was just starting to not be such a big baka and you went and got yourself killed!"

"He's not dead", whispered Kyo fiercely. "He's not dead." Kyo balled up the edge of Shinya's sheets in his fist. The demonic little vocalist of Dir en grey began to cry for the first time in as long as he could remember. Kaoru left Die's side, gave Kyo a quick hug and went to lean over Shinya.

"Shinya?", he whispered. "Did you ever see those TV specials where someone's in a coma, but they can hear everything? I always thought they were stupid. Can you hear me? It doesn't matter. If you could, then Die would be the right person to talk to. He's my best friend, and he thinks I didn't notice him falling in love with you, but I did. He's asleep now, but I know he has so many things to say to you... Do you have anything to tell him? You always did hide your feelings well, but I think you do." Kaoru paused, looking for any sign of reaction. Toshiya, who was holding Shinya's hand, shook his head sadly.

"Maybe I'm just talking to myself. Die loves you - I hope he got a chance to tell you. All those times he teased you; he was only trying to say 'I love you.' He's an idiot, but you'll have to bear with him. Die can't... none of us can... do this without you." There was still no reaction from Shinya. Kaoru sighed and turned away. Toshiya looked at the floor while Kyo concentrated on burning a hole in the wallpaper simply by staring at it. He ignored the tears that ran down his cheeks.

"Y... your eyeliner is all runny", came a soft whisper. Kyo wiped his face, turning the corner of his mouth in an attempted smile.

"Yeah. Shinya! Shinya, you're awake!"

"Die... What happened to Die?" Shinya's voice was stronger with panic. He pushed the blanket off himself and attempted to run towards Die's bed. Kaoru caught him before

he fell. Toshiya simply stared open-mouthed, at a loss for words.

"Die's okay, he's just asleep", reassured Kaoru as he fought to keep Shinya still. Shinya struggled weakly until he was allowed to throw himself over Die.

"Die... thank you, and... I love you too", he whispered before once again falling into slumber.

"I'm glad to be back in Tokyo. At least we only had to postpone a few lives." Shinya smiled softly before stepping out onto the ice. Die looked more apprehensive. "Don't tell me you've never been ice skating before!" An indoor skating rink was much more to Shinya's tastes than the great outdoors.

"I'm just glad you're okay, Shinya. Why don't we go get that hot chocolate I promised you?" Shinya laughed.

"Now you're stalling. Come on, step onto the ice! Unless you're afraid you'll fall down, of course." Die mock-scowled and bravely put both feet onto the slick surface. He moved one foot backwards, gingerly propelling himself forward.

Within a few seconds, Die had forgotten all the balance he ever had and was flat on the floor. Shinya gracefully skated to his side and offered a hand. Die gratefully took it and began to pull himself up. To keep himself from falling again, he wrapped both arms around Shinya's waist. Shinya leaned into the sudden embrace with a smile.

"I hold your hand if you hold mine, ne Die?" Holding tightly to each other, Shinya managed to pull Die a few meters before he fell heavily into the younger man's arms, laughing. Shinya was able to adjust quickly enough to keep both of them from falling onto the ice.

Ignorant of the other skating rink patrons, Die pulled Shinya into a deep kiss. Despite his shyness, Shinya did not pull away. Instead, he held Die even closer. Die broke the kiss after several moments and whispered into Shinya's ear:

"I won't let you go."

Owari.