

Shared Identity Chapter 8: Calm

Story by [Draythix](#), art by [Nakase](#)

Edited by [Tayoh](#)



Words couldn't describe how relieved Keagan was that Kazu seemed to be alright. If his friend had been permanently damaged by his ineptitude, he wasn't sure that he would have been able to forgive himself.

A long moment had passed by the time Keagan finally released Kazu from his hug, though it took much longer for him to regain his composure. With an incredible effort, he managed to keep his emotions in check. He had already broken down in front of his housemate, a fact that mortified him, and now he wanted to show at least a little bit of self control while he was wearing Kazu.

Even though the crisis had passed, Keagan's thoughts were still plagued by anxiety. He had no idea how in the world he was going to explain what happened to Kazu. Would his friend be willing to forgive him?

"Being a costume again feels so strange," Kazu said suddenly. The suit shifted positions around Keagan as if testing how far it could move now.

Finding that it was becoming difficult to stand with Kazu twitching around him, Keagan reached for his work table to steady himself. The living suit tensed as he did so, as if it wasn't used to having an occupant anymore.

"Are you alright Kazu?" Keagan asked, finding that he had to work to get the mask's jaws to move properly with him. "Did adapting to the fox body overwrite your old motor skills?"

"I don't know," Kazu replied, and it pulled itself tighter around Keagan as if trying to stop itself from twitching. "I think I just got so used to being mobile, even though it didn't feel quite right. I felt as if I was missing something. Is that why I suddenly shut down?"

"Missing something?" Keagan repeated, feeling a bit perplexed. "Maybe that was because... I wasn't wearing you?"

"Yes! That was it," the living suit's tails suddenly wrapped around Keagan as if it didn't like the idea of being separated again.

"Maybe putting you in that golem wasn't such a good idea..." Keagan let the words trail off, since he really didn't know what he should have done. Giving Kazu a more mobile body had seemed like the right thing to do. Considering everything that had happened however, should he just have left the kitsune suit ignorant of what freedom was like? "I guess I don't have any idea of what I'm doing. I'm just making guesses and you're getting hurt because of it."

The living suit went silent, but Keagan felt a few telltale tingles leading him to suspect the costume was 'looking' at him through their nerve link. Keagan knew that the living suit was still certainly capable of reading his mental state, among other things. Keagan wasn't sure if he felt embarrassed or relieved that he wasn't going to be able to hide his problems from the overly protective kitsune.

"Keagan, you're in pain." Kazu suddenly stated. "In more than one way. What happened?"

Keagan wanted to say that he was alright at the very least, but ended up just sighing as he realized that would be a lie. Now that his adrenaline was fading, he was beginning to feel aches, pains, and the exhaustion that had built up from his hours of anxiety about Kazu.

"I don't handle stress well," Keagan finally replied. Walking carefully, because of his aching legs and Kazu's occasional twitches, he made his way over to a nearby stool and sat down to rest. "I'd feel bad if I made a big deal about that after what I almost did to you though."

"I'm fine now, so just tell me how I can help!" Kazu replied. The kitsune suit used its long tails to support Keagan's back as he sat, and squeezed him softly as if trying to reassure him.

It was at times like this that Keagan couldn't help but be extremely thankful of how helpful Kazu was. The living suit's constant concern for him was heartwarming, though he couldn't help but feel like he didn't deserve such a devoted companion. Not for the first time, he wondered how a creature that was only weeks old could be so helpful and mature. The answer was, of course, magic, but magical accidents rarely worked out so well.

"Thank you, Kazu. You're doing plenty already," Keagan said, feeling his aches fade a little. After a few moments of hesitation, he decided that he needed to be honest with his friend before he had another anxiety attack over keeping secrets. "So... the reason you blacked out was because you ran out of mana. Not your normal mana, though. It turns out that since you're different from most golems, you also have special needs that the power supply in that fox body couldn't deliver. You deactivated when you used up the last bit of energy you carried with you during the transfer."

"Special needs?" Kazu asked hesitantly, but without stopping its efforts to help its wearer. "The energy from that body's power source felt different, but..." The kitsune trailed off, as if it was trying to understand the implications.

"This suit I'm wearing to connect with you has been absorbing my natural mana and feeding it to you without properly processing it, Kazu," Keagan said, trying to keep the explanation as simple as possible because he knew that the living suit's understanding of itself was more instinctual than technical. "Usually, magitechnology uses processed mana because the stuff is easier to control. However, the things you've been doing which are unique, like being sapient and your huge evolutions all require wild mana. I feel like an idiot for taking so long to figure this out, but I was sure you had no way of getting exposed to the stuff."

"Does that mean I can't use the fox golem?" Kazu asked quietly, as if it dreaded the answer.

"Maybe if we figured out how much mana you use and how to manage it," Keagan replied hesitantly. "In the meantime, please be careful. We need to figure out how to manage the stuff. That wild mana is almost certainly what created you, but it is also unpredictable..."

A sudden knock on the workroom's door interrupted Keagan, and he almost jumped to his feet. Panic quickly filled his head as he tried to figure out what he should do.

Kazu sensed Keagan's panic and tightened around him, seemingly confused by his friend's reaction. "What? It is just James..."

"James knows about you now." Keagan was unable to suppress the panicked edge to his voice. The idea of James seeing him wearing Kazu now somehow seemed terrifying.

“That’s good, isn’t it?” Kazu asked with a confused tone. “Tricking him for the past weeks has been fun, but being able to talk to him means less for us to worry about.”

Taking a deep breath, Keagan forced himself to admit that Kazu was right. After all, what was he going to do, hide Kazu just to avoid the inevitable? After a moment's hesitation, Keagan stood up and called for James to come in.

The door opened slowly, and James poked his head in as he spoke. “I just thought I should come check on you... oh!” James stopped when he saw that Keagan was actually wearing the costume, and stared for a moment. “I see that the crystals are glowing again, does that mean you fixed him?”

“Yep, I’m working just fine now!” Kazu said suddenly before Keagan had a chance to speak. Aside from the suit’s voice not sounding like its wearer’s, the only telltale sign that it wasn’t Keagan that was speaking was that the suit’s jaw didn’t move.

“I, ummm,” Keagan added seconds later, finding that he wasn’t sure at all about what he should say in this situation. “Yea, I managed to fix Kazu.”

James stared for a moment, before finally shaking his head in disbelief, “Wow, you weren’t kidding that the suit could talk, but man, hearing two voices coming from you is weird” As he spoke, he stepped all the way into the room.

“Good point,” Keagan said while feeling relieved that James seemed to be taking this well. “I think I might have a way to fix that. I can just take the mask off.”

Slowly, Keagan reached behind his head and pulled the zipper down to his shoulders. As if reluctant to separate from Keagan so soon, Kazu slowly loosened himself so that Keagan could take the mask off. After removing it, Keagan held Kazu’s ‘head’ in front of his chest so that James would be able to speak to both of them.

“I’ve never been able to talk to anyone else before!” The kitsune suit said excitedly, completely oblivious to how strange it looked for its disembodied head to be speaking on its own. “Though we did sort of meet before.”

“Yea, I suppose we have met before,” James replied hesitantly as he tried to adjust to the odd situation. He looked back and forth between Kazu and Keagan, as if trying to process the fact that the costume truly was moving on its own. “You nipped my hand as a fox, if I’m remembering correctly.”

“Well, umm, let’s make it official this time.” Keagan said awkwardly as he tried to gauge how the introduction was going. “James, meet Kazu. Kazu, meet James.”

“Konnichiwa!” Kazu unexpectedly greeted James, right as it nudged Keagan’s gloved right hand out for a handshake. Keagan stared at the living suit in surprise, wondering it suddenly chose to use its other language, before reaching out in response to the suit’s request.

James’ eyes had widened in surprise for a second before he burst out laughing and shook their hand. “Konnichiwa! I shouldn’t be surprised that Keagan taught you Japanese.”

Remembering that James often watched Japanese anime with subtitles, Keagan couldn’t help but smile. Whether it was accidental or not, Kazu had chosen the perfect way to get into James’ good graces.

Somehow, they ended up talking for more than a half hour about all sorts of things that mostly related to Kazu. It didn’t take very long before James had to explain to the kitsune suit that he didn’t actually understand much Japanese, much to Kazu’s disappointment, but they began getting along surprisingly well. Keagan didn’t say much aside from explaining a few aspects about how Kazu functioned. He was more than happy to let Kazu do most of the talking for him. Although, as time went on, it became a struggle to hold up the costume’s mask high enough for the two to speak to each other.

“Are you alright, Keagan?” James suddenly asked, as if suddenly realizing how exhausted his housemate looked.

“He said he just needed to rest, but he’s still hurting,” Kazu chimed in, sounding a bit concerned.

“Yea, the stress from today played havoc with my tension issues,” Keagan admitted with a sigh, while making a mental note that he should ask Kazu to not reveal all his secrets to his housemate.

“Yea, considering how much of a mess you were earlier, you probably need some sleep,” James said, and then he gave Kazu a sly grin before continuing. “Keagan isn’t very good about getting all the sleep he needs. Maybe you should force him to go to bed and stay there.”

“Hey!” Keagan objected indignantly as he sincerely hoped that Kazu wasn’t going to start playing tricks for his housemate.

Kazu, however, remained silent for a few moments before replying sadly, “Keagan’s the one in control when I’m being worn. I couldn’t help him with that even if I tried.”

Taken off guard by the disappearance of Kazu's normally upbeat and playful tone, both of the men stared at the costume in surprise. Keagan couldn't help but wonder if his friend had always felt like this, or if this was a new desire borne from its short span of freedom as a fox.

"I... wasn't being serious," James began explaining awkwardly. "I was just trying to mess with Keagan. People would usually be terrified at the thought of their bodies being hijacked like that."

"I didn't think of it that way," Kazu replied with a quizzical look. "I guess living creatures wouldn't be used to that sort of thing. Oh well, I'll just try to focus on doing what I can!" An energetic twitch of the costume's tails signaled the return of some of the fox's enthusiasm.

With a pang of guilt, Keagan realized that a part of him was happy that Kazu would have to spend most of its time as a costume. If Kazu had decided to permanently stay in that fox body, then Keagan may not have ever been able to 'become' a kitsune again.

If he really considered Kazu a friend, then Keagan knew that he needed to keep trying to give the kitsune some measure of freedom. That had been the entire point of the fox golem, but that had ended in failure. Now he knew Kazu needed wild mana to survive, things had become significantly more complicated. Wild mana wasn't exactly something you could buy from a reputable store. In theory, the best solution would be if Kazu could freely walk around without a wearer in his costumed form, but Keagan wasn't sure how to even begin giving Kazu that ability. It would probably require a whole new chassis made from scratch!

There was one short term solution that came to mind, but the time and devotion it would take made him hesitant...

"Keagan, are you alright?" Kazu suddenly asked. "You're tensing up again."

"I'm fine. I'm just thinking," Keagan said, before taking a deep breath and forcing himself to do the right thing. "Since that fox golem didn't work, I think I have to offer the next best thing I can think of. Maybe for a certain period of time each day, I can act as your arms and legs. I'll do the walking and acting, but you'll tell me what to do."

James gave Keagan a startled look, before understanding seemed to dawn on him. "You mean, you could act like someone pushing Kazu's wheelchair?"

"Yea, that's the idea," Keagan nodded, finding that he liked the comparison.

"You would do that for me?" Kazu's surprise, and pleasure, was obvious. "But, you don't have to..."

"It's the right thing to do," Keagan said, as much to himself as Kazu. A part of him was concerned that spending too much time trying to be responsible for Kazu instead of working might end up with him going bankrupt. However, in a way, Kazu was his child. What kind of parent would he be if he was unwilling to take responsibility for the life he had created?

The costume went silent for a few moments before finally hugging Keagan with its tails. "Thank you so much for this, but is there some way I can help you more as well? Some way to stop you from hurting so much?"

"Hurting?" James suddenly interjected. "If you're in pain because of your anxiety again, you really should see a doctor."

"Doctor?" Kazu repeated in a tone that Keagan had come to understand meant the kitsune was pausing to 'look up' the definition of an unfamiliar word on its language chip. After a short pause, Kazu continued, "Yes, if a doctor would fix you, then you should go!"

"They would just try to put me on drugs," Keagan replied defensively. Even though medical technology had improved by leaps and bounds since the rediscovery of magic, those advancements had done very little to help with mental issues. Magic was more likely to harm the mind than help. Looking down at Kazu, he thought for a moment about how to respond to the living costume's display of concern. "Haven't you been helping me with my issues already? My tension seems to go down a bit when I wear you."

"It has?" Kazu replied in a confused tone. "I've only been supporting your body a little so you can walk on your toes, and letting you become a kitsune. Have those been helping you?"

At first, Keagan was compelled to say he didn't think those things would have made a difference. However, something about Kazu's suggestion that becoming a kitsune was somehow helping him had an odd element of truth to it. Was becoming an anthropomorphic fox helping him with his anxiety somehow? But why?

Unfortunately, now was not the time for Keagan to get lost in thought, so he refocused on the issue at hand. "Well, Kazu, your body is based on medical gear that I've studied in the past. Your neural connections and animated fabrics were originally used to help with pain reduction and muscle support. In theory, if I salvaged some parts from some old gear that I wore out I could give you similar capabilities. However, I'm not sure if it would work very well with your design."

The costume's ears perked up. "That sounds interesting, I'd like to try it!"

"Hah, it sounds like I'm going to see you dressed up like a fur... a fox constantly at this rate," James added with a grin after barely stopping himself from teasing his housemate. "I'm curious, though. Why not get some proper medical gear?"

“Well, in theory, Kazu would be better and more precise at it since he’s intelligent,” Keagan replied, while grimacing at James’ jab. “Plus, I can’t wear that stuff and Kazu at the same time, and Kazu covers a lot more of my body than those old things would.”

“Can you upgrade me now?” Kazu asked while wagging its tails wildly. “Please?”

Keagan couldn’t help but groan. After everything that had happened today, he wanted nothing more than to go to bed early. However, he wasn’t sure if he would be able to get to sleep very easily in his current state. The theory that an upgraded Kazu might be able to help him relax was appealing to Keagan. “Alright, but I’ll have to take you off and deactivate you.”

For the first time, Kazu was quite eager as it helped Keagan slip out of the costume. After laying the costume out on the worktable, Keagan removed its power magicite and watched as its lights slowly faded.

“Wow Keagan,” James said when he seemed sure that Kazu had been deactivated. “Now I see why you were in such a panic earlier. I didn’t quite believe you when you said the suit was literally alive, but I certainly do now. I’ve never seen anything like that.”

“I’m still not sure exactly how it happened,” Keagan replied while he quickly grabbed a nearby shirt and self-consciously slipped it over his skin-tight link-suit. “I only found rumors when I did searches on the internet. I have heard of golems acting strangely when exposed to wild mana, but nothing like this.”

“Are you planning to make more costumes like Kazu?” James asked, with a serious tone. “You had been talking about making a living selling these kinds of golem suits, but what if they all come to life?”

“I’m honestly not sure,” Keagan said with a sigh. “I’m going to see if I can make a version that doesn’t use wild magic, but I’m not actually sure if the suits would even work without it. This one only started working properly when Kazu started waking up. If it turns out I can’t solve that problem, I don’t know what I’m going to do. I don’t like the idea of selling sapient beings.”

“And what if some corporation or government figured out your trick and started making slave golems?” James added with a shudder. “Plus, who knows if the next one would turn out nearly as nice as Kazu.”

“Yea...” Keagan let his words drift off as he tried to keep his imagination from going wild with the possibilities. “Well, for now, I’m going to try and get this done so I can get to bed.”

Using Kazu's own power source to fuel his spells, Keagan whispered a few words that caused the runes and diagrams within the kitsune suit to light up. Swirling patterns spread out from Kazu's golem core and appeared throughout its mask and chest.

"I have no idea how you make any sense of that stuff," James muttered as he stole a peek inside.

"It makes more sense the more you study it," Keagan said absentmindedly as he focused on reading the spell diagrams.

"Wait, I thought you were just going to add some more of those rune chips to him?" James asked. "It looks like you're about to edit his programming."

"Kazu isn't a computer," Keagan corrected. "He doesn't have programming in the normal sense. Kazu is the gem on the mask's forehead, and you can't just edit golem cores. You just change the information you're feeding them to control what they learn, just like a person or animal. Anyway, I'm editing the suit's inner spells so that Kazu will be able to make proper use of the stuff he's about to learn. I put a lot of safety limitations on this suit to make sure it couldn't hurt me, but I need to weaken them a bit so Kazu will be able to have a little bit of control over my muscles and nerves. Not enough to take over or anything ridiculous like that, of course."

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" James' unease could be heard clearly. "This doesn't seem..."

"Safe?" There was a whole list of objections that Keagan could easily imagine. He regarded his housemate for a moment before shaking his head and sighing. "I trust Kazu, and don't worry. I'm not stupid. I'm going to leave in failsafes that should disconnect him if something goes wrong."

James seemed satisfied by this, so Keagan leaned over Kazu and got to work. Within a minute of searching, Keagan found what he was looking for. It was a circular diagram invoking protection. It was one of the most important things that he had worked into the suit, since its purpose was to limit the amount of neural feedback he could receive. It was originally meant to keep the suit from hijacking or damaging his motor nerves if a malfunction happened, but now he needed to make it a bit more of a targeted safeguard.

Keagan retrieved his best silver pen and whispered the simple spells that would allow him to alter the runes. He strategically thinned parts of the diagram to weaken its effects. Then, he drew lines connecting the protection magic to other parts of the suit which were connected to his vitals and mental state.

Setting up the conditions for when the protection should activate were complicated, and Keagan ended up bringing a reference spellbook up on his tablet to check his work. To save

time, he asked James to hunt down his old therapy gear. Once James came back with the gear, Keagan carefully removed the components he needed from them. Then, he added them to the costume after giving them a quick test with his computer. The work took longer than expected, and Keagan did his best to hide his increasing pain and discomfort as the night dragged on.

"Alright, that should do it," Keagan said, after what turned out to be nearly an hour of work. "Kazu should be able to do what he needs to do now."

"Are you still sure this is a good idea?" James asked, still seeming concerned. "If the suit can control your muscles, what if a malfunction suffocates you, or stops your heart?"

"The linking suit I use doesn't connect to the autonomic nervous system," Keagan stated. "Plus, my safeguards would still stop that even if it were possible."

James' eyes glazed over a bit from Keagan's sudden use of medical terminology. "If you say so. Will you be waking him up now?"

"Yep, everything is ready." After a moment of self-conscious hesitation, Keagan stripped back down to his neural suit and powered Kazu back on. In order to speed things up and lower the amount of time he had to spend standing on his aching legs, Keagan began putting the living costume on even before it woke up.

"That felt longer than I expected," Kazu stated with a hint of curiosity as it finished its power up cycle and began to help pull itself onto its maker. "Oooo, I feel the knowledge from those new runes you mentioned! My body feels different as well..."

Keagan blinked in surprise, and wondered just how conscious the kitsune was when its core didn't have an external power source. This was yet another thing he needed to study in order to really understand how Kazu worked. "Yea, I had to make a few changes so that you can actually make use of those new chips. I've weakened some of your safety limitations, so be careful. Please don't do anything until we're both ready."

Wagging tails betrayed the kitsune's excitement as Keagan finished putting the suit on. As soon as he closed the zipper, a familiar ripple went through his body and he found himself 'transformed' into an anthropomorphic fox once again. He couldn't help but smile at the pleasant sensation of having fur and tails, and wiggled happily for a moment before suddenly stopping himself as he remembered that James was in the room as well.

"I, um, I'll go to my room with Kazu so I can test out the modifications a bit before going to bed," Keagan said awkwardly to his housemate. He still wasn't completely comfortable with anyone else seeing him like this.

“Going to have some private time together, huh?” James teased, and then laughed when Keagan’s ears and tails went rigid as he began to try to protest. “I’m just kidding, Keagan! You’re too easy to tease sometimes. Go get some rest, alright?”

“Uuuugh! If I was a real kitsune, I’d curse you!” Keagan raised his tails threateningly, but couldn’t help but laugh. “Hah, goodnight James. Thanks again for the help today.”

“No worries. Rest well, alright?” James replied as he began heading to his room.

I didn’t understand James’ joke. What did he mean? Kazu mentally asked.

“Uhhh, I’ll tell you when you’re older,” Keagan said quickly before heading to his upstairs room. It was at times like this that he was glad Kazu’s knowledge, which seemed to be cobbled together from the dictionary in its knowledge chips and bits of Keagan’s own memories, was incomplete.

The magitech controlled lights turned on automatically as they entered Keagan’s bedroom. The mid-sized room was messy but well decorated, with pictures and figurines of various foxes and kitsune covering every corner. Two prototype masks were mounted to the walls as well, and the soft glow of magitech crystals emanating from various devices lit the walls in light blues and greens.

So many kitsune! Kazu exclaimed, for this was his first time seeing the room.

“Umm, yea, I can’t help but collect fox stuff,” Keagan replied awkwardly as he became acutely aware that his obsession was in plain view of the closest thing to a kitsune he would probably ever meet, even if those rumors of magical creature sightings were actually true.

After closing the door, Keagan lay down on his bed with their tails carefully laid out between his legs. “Alright Kazu, have you been able to make sense of those upgrades?”

Well, not quite, Kazu sounded apologetic and distant, like he was focusing on something else. The things those chips are telling me to do don’t make sense. *They’re complicated and don’t feel like they fit me well.*

“That is probably because they were made for different hardware,” Keagan explained. “For example, there’s probably a set of instructions for relaxing a specific leg muscle in a certain way. The device that was meant for was a leg sleeve, not a full body costume.”

Oh. Oh! The kitsune immediately became excited as it began to grasp what it needed to do. *So, I have to match these to the right areas...*

"Just be careful, there are safeguards in place but you could hurt me if you aren't careful," Keagan cautioned. "Anyway, after you experiment for a bit I'll have to get undressed and get some sleep."

Why not wear me while you sleep? Kazu suggested.

"Ummm, I don't think that's a good idea, since you might absorb too much wild mana," Keagan said awkwardly.

Keagan... I'm familiar enough with your body that I can tell when you aren't being honest. Kazu's hurt feelings could be clearly felt through their mental connection.

"Dang it. I'm sorry," Keagan said with a groan as he realized just how stupid he had been. Worrying that he had damaged their friendship, he immediately tried to apologize. "That excuse was technically true, but you're right that there is something else I was worrying about. I was afraid of hurting your feelings by saying it though."

I understand. Kazu softly squeezed Keagan to reassure him. *The thing is, we're practically a single being when we're linked, so it doesn't feel good when you try to mislead me. It splits us apart.*

The odd wording that Kazu was using intrigued Keagan, but he was so tired that he didn't feel like asking about the details. Instead, he forced himself to be honest with his friend. "I guess I am worried about privacy. If I fall asleep, you'll be active all night while I'm unconscious. The idea of it feels weird."

The living suit went silent for a few moments, and Keagan couldn't help but feel anxious as he waited for its response. *I'm not sure if I understand,* Kazu finally replied. *Isn't that the same as when you modify me or wear me when my body is powered off?*

"Huh, I didn't think of it that way," Keagan admitted, taken off guard by the unexpected comparison. "I would never have thought of that. I guess being a costume gives you a unique perspective."

Tell you what, Kazu said in a suddenly playful tone. *Let's see if I can convince you to leave me on.*

Before Keagan could ask the kitsune about its intentions, he felt one of his legs suddenly begin to relax. It felt as if his tension was melting away, and within seconds the same thing began happening to his other leg. Keagan couldn't help but sigh in relief. "Ooh, those modifications are working perfectly. That actually feels really nice."

A giggling sensation emanated from Kazu's mental link. *You took care of me today, so let me take care of you tonight.*

"But Kazu, if you absorb too much wild mana from me, there is no telling what might happen," Keagan half heartedly protested.

I live off of your mana, so I don't see the danger, Kazu pointed out. As the kitsune spoke, more tension began leaving Keagan's body as it forced more of his tight muscles to relax. *Just relax for a while. You had a rough day, but you're safe with me. I promise that if I feel odd because of the wild mana, I'll disconnect to stop the flow.*

Even though Keagan wanted to protest more, something about Kazu's unexpected protectiveness struck a chord with him. It was as if he was being watched over by a guardian kitsune. Ever since he had been a child, he had daydreamed both about becoming a kitsune and having one as a protective companion. Somehow, Kazu was able to fulfill both of those fantasies.

"You sly fox," Keagan muttered with a smile. "Are you pressing my buttons on purpose?"

Maybe I am, Kazu replied smugly as it began working its magic on Keagan's back muscles so that they began relaxing as well. *Or, maybe since I was created by your mana, I'm just exactly what you happened to need.*

At this point, Keagan was feeling too overwhelmed by how much better he was feeling to put much thought into Kazu's question. The costume was doing an amazing job of forcing his overwrought body to relax. When was the last time he had felt this good? Sighing pleasantly, he couldn't help but sink contently into his bed.

"Alright, you win," Keagan said sleepily, before rolling onto his side to get as comfortable as possible. "Just promise that you'll wake me if there are any problems, alright?"

I promise, the kitsune suit whispered softly. *Goodnight, Keagan.*

"Goodnight Kazu," Keagan murmured. As he drifted to sleep, he lifted their tails up to his chest and hugged them tightly.

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