

Split soul

Von Gepo

Kapitel 9: Trust

Akashi blinked in stunned silence. Well. Yes. So he had known that Ayako might not have had the best life, she gave off that vibe. She seemed strong, unconventional, but still easily breakable. She looked like someone who stood again after being hurt deeply. Finding out that your husband had raped and impregnated your daughter might do that to you. So Natsue was actually her granddaughter. Ayako was thirty years old. She had been at a marriageable age when she presented as an Omega, so she must have been sixteen. Natsue was four years old. So her daughter had been ... ten?

"I hope he is in prison for that."

Ayako let out a dry laugh, her voice full of bitterness when she said: "The judge said getting half of his money and alimments was more than I should expect. The fact that he had raped our daughter was only enough to allow me to divorce him at all."

"You're not serious." Akashi could not decide on an emotion to inject his voice with, so he stayed with monotonous.

"He actually challenged me to parental rights over Natsue after our daughter killed herself." Ayako's voice broke at the end of the sentence. "Claiming that it was my fault that Mitsuki jumped from a bridge."

"He did not get any rights, did he?" And here he thought that nothing could shock him anymore. He really was a fool. This was a world where Omega rights were spare.

"No, he did not." Ayako had closed her eyes, breathing deeply in and out to keep her emotions in check. "But he stopped paying alimments. I have been working odd jobs since then. Singing, cleaning, washing dishes, whatever I could get."

"Mitsuki was your only child?" Akashi took her hand, unsure if he was welcome to.

"You really know how to poke a wound." She shook her head, her voice sounding teary. "They removed my womb after having Mitsuki because I was losing too much blood."

Oh. Not good. So she was sterile. That must have been one hell of a blow to an Omega women, no matter how her child came to be. It was cruel. So her only child committed suicide at the age of ten or eleven because her husband raped her. That was ... he could not even imagine. He just knew he wanted to kill the guy.

>I agree. But don't tell her, we would be traceable.<

"I am so sorry." Well, that sounded like a platitude. "I don't even know where to start ... I am happy that you have a stable job now. Are you and Natsue safe or has the guy bothered you in any way?"

"He tried to gain access to our flat a few times but I called the police on him. He hasn't tried for half a year, so maybe it's finally over." A small smile entered her lips.

"It had something good though. I never felt safe inside, so I've always been out with Natsue where there were people. She's unbelievable smart, maybe it had something to do with all that fresh air and the museums we spend hours in."

"Most likely. She is a great girl." He had to smile as well. "And before that question ever comes up, I am not saying that as a pedophile, I really have no interest at all in children that way. I like older women, as you might have guessed already."

"That's actually very reassuring. It's another point where I appreciated you having a date with Chiho, she does not have children after all."

>She's smart as well. I'd never thought about the value of such a move if we were actually a pedophile. She seems to have already checked us out that way. On the other hand, she overlooked her husband raping their daughter; her senses might not be the best.< His alter ego mused.

"Though it saddens me to hear you cannot have any more children."

"Yes." She lowered her head. "I thought that would most likely be the point where you decided that dating me is not worth it, but I wanted to be honest and not string you along."

Of course, fate wasn't always on his side, so they were interrupted by their waitress before he could react. She served their meals and took the white bread with her that none of them had touched. Both their main courses looked delicious but he did not feel like eating.

"Ayako." He could not get her to look up, so he took her hand again. "I can't exactly say that does not bother me at all, but it won't make me run from this restaurant, okay? The people I tend to like do not come unattached or free of burdens, so don't worry about it now, okay?"

She squeezed his hand lightly, forcing herself to smile slightly, still unable to straighten herself. It did not seem to be enough of a reassurance. What could he say?

"It's not like I come free of burdens as well. I am not a prince on a white horse." He suddenly smirked. "Though I do own a white horse if you do want me to do something very cliché."

Thankfully that finally made her smile. She peeked a cautious gaze at him before nodding and finally looking at her plate and saying: "Well, this looks good, doesn't it? I hope you'll like it."

"I hope so too. I do not want you to be disappointed with your little adventure." He cut into his honeyed steak, unsure if he was supposed to eat the plums in which it had been baked and which were laying in a circle around the meat. Maybe he should first try a bite without them. So ... wow. This was good. Better than the last two times he had been here. Better than his father's French cook had been. "I take everything back, this is great."

"It is, isn't it? Yoshi is the only cook this good with meat that I know. It's not like I often go out to dine in restaurants, but when I was still working as a singer, I sometimes got left-overs at the end of the night. His were really tasty." Her face lightened up with a smile. "The only one that beat him was a Kobe steak restaurant."

"Nothing can beat premium Kobe meat." Though this was pretty close. "So how long did you work as a singer?"

"How long?" She paused with the steak in front of her mouth before eating it and looking outside lost in thought for a moment. "A few months, I would say four. It really liked it but no one wanted to look after Natsue that late. The payment for babysitters was so high that I did not have enough money, even though singing makes good money."

"Did you not have friends that could help?" He scrunched his eyebrows. She was a sociable and likable woman after all, she should have had some.

"No ... after that scandal, no one wanted anything to do with me. The one or two that tried were threatened by my ex-husband. He wanted me to come back to him, so he tried his best to make my life hell. And no matter how much we stick together, Omegas can easily get threatened by an Alpha." She sighed, looking tired. "I am so happy he has given up."

>I am not. It would have been fun to hunt him down and scare him into leaving her alone.<

"If he ever bothers you again, please call me. Even if we might not end up as a couple, it's a basic human need to help you out in such a situation. You really need some Alpha friends to help you out."

"An Alpha being friends with an Omega?" She looked at him in silence for a moment.

"You did mention being friends with an Omega before."

"His name is Kuroko Tetsuya. We have been friends since middle school." He could already see her eyebrows raise in doubt. "He met his mate in high school, they have two children. I am godfather to their daughter. I'll show you a picture, she's really cute." He took out his phone and activated it, having Kuroko with Tsuki as his background picture. "She's half a year old right now."

"You look really happy when you talk about her," she mentioned with a smile.

"Doesn't she look just like me?" He grinned. "She's so small and cute. I never thought I would like babies that much."

"You love them when they are yours." A wistful smile spread on her lips.

"Well, she's not mine technically but I love being her godfather. She'll be my little princess. I'd even let her ride my horse and that's an extremely special privilege." He tipped something on his phone. "Look, this is from right after her birth. Doesn't she have a beautiful smile? Just like her mother."

"Say, that other person you were in love with is Kuroko Tetsuya, isn't he?" Her smile had turned playful. She did not seem to be offended.

"Well, yes ... I'm not making a secret out of that. Though his mate is too thick to actually notice it." He realized there was something like a pout on his lips. "I lost fair and square though. I was afraid about my reputation, the repercussions of mating an Omega in a job such as mine, especially a male one." He pocketed his phone again. "His mate never did that. He is a professional basketball player and recently decided to quit the NBA, just because his mate did not like America. Honestly, I don't think I could be that devoted."

"So if you had become a professional basketball player, you would not give up your NBA job?" She seemed to know what she was talking about, maybe she had read up about him a bit.

>She most likely read that gross interview, just like about every other woman in this country.<

He only sighed and took a look at the night skyline before answering after a bit: "I won't quit being a CEO either. I work a damn lot, I can see that becoming an issue in a relationship. I can arrange my schedule to fit vacations, important dates and such, but I am not material for a stay-at-home-dad or such. I am also unable to spend my nights running to and from the convenience store for food cravings. Kuroko's mate really does everything that's asked of him, I find that admirable in its own way. I don't think I could put my career on such a backseat."

"Honestly, I can't even imagine such an Alpha to exist." She dead-panned. "I can only

imagine all of his Alpha friends telling him how whipped he is."

"They do." Akashi grinned. "They are all whipped though, our whole circle of friends only consists of Alpha-Omega or Alpha-Alpha pairs, all of them quite devoted. Except for our oddball Shintarou, but my best friend has always been defying norms, he's always the exception to the rule."

"He is not devoted?" She asked between bites of her steak.

"He is the most devoted of us all, there is no question in that. He came from a family even more traditional and strict than my own and not only did he chose a male partner, he chose a Beta male partner. I still don't know how he did it but not only was he allowed to stay with him, his partner got adopted into the family. They're enjoying married life with their kids."

"Kids? A male Alpha and Beta? Are they natural?" She blinked in shock.

"Oh yes, they are. It's why I say he defies norms. He's pregnant with their second child." He smirked at her facial expression. "I didn't know that was possible but apparently it is."

"I don't think I ever heard about such a couple." She shook her head. "And here I thought being asked out by an Alpha like you was beyond expectations. You have some interesting friends."

"I was taught it was a one in a ten thousand chance. That was more information about my best friend's sex life than I ever wanted." He shook his head. "So do you have any friends after your ex-husband drove them all away?"

"I'd say I am friends with Misses Kuroko. Wait a moment, is she related to your-" She stopped at seeing his nod. "Her oldest son, I guess? So you are godfather to her granddaughter? The world is a small place."

"Not really. Kuroko recommended her when I opened the kindergartens and when he saw how lonely I was, he told me to visit the kindergarten and have a look around." He offered a slight smile. "We are friends, we look out for each other. I have a big company and money, Tetsu has a loving mother. Both are resources that can be more or less helpful depending on the situation. Despite common opinion, money doesn't solve all problems."

"I am still surprised how you are single with all those friends. I am sure you have parties where you can meet nice people."

"Nice Alphas and Betas." He raised an eyebrow. "There aren't many Omega athletes in professional basketball and my friends are all professional or former basketball players. I am surprised that I know two Omegas that way and both are happily mated and have devoted their life to their children."

"Well, yes, in that case you do not meet a lot of Omegas ... why does it have to be an Omega, though?" She leaned forward, her eyes sparkling with interest. "We are seen as unsavory fucktoys by most people, nice for an affair but not worthy as partners. Everyone would expect you to pick a premium Alpha."

"I don't want someone that looks good, is independent and self-confident but unable to love me or our children. Alphas tend to focus on career and status rather than love and family. I want a partner that devotes herself to our children and me. I have seen Omegas form a much more meaning bond than any Alpha ever could. I want to be loved, not valued for my money and image." He wasn't sure if what and how he said this would actually be able to express what he wanted, what he craved. "Those two Omegas I know, they are athletes, they are able to go head-to-head with Alphas. They rejected one Alpha after the next, sometimes leaving them heartbroken in their wake." Kuroko would never know the extent of his feelings for him. "They knew their

worth and had the best of the best court them, only then committing themselves fully to a relationship after testing their chosen's devotion. That's what being an Omega means to me. Not a cheap whore but someone who knows that it's Alphas that should have to fight for them."

Ayako took a deep breath, sinking back into her seat. She opened her mouth but closed it again before suddenly she had tears running down her face.

Akashi blinked in surprise, leaning forward and asking: "I am sorry, have I offended you somehow?"

She shook her head, grabbing her purse to get a Kleenex to dry her tears. Though her efforts were valiant, she seemed to have a crying fit, so it was no use. Akashi put his seat next to her, lowly asking her if there was anything he could do. She shook her head, stood and left him sitting there without another word.

>Well, great social expert, what just happened?< His alter ego leered at him.

>If only I knew.< He shook his head disbelievingly, deciding to right his seat and wait if she decided to come back. >Do you think I insulted her?<

>Well, if she wants to take it that way, she might now define herself as a cheap whore.<

>I wouldn't go out with her if I thought that.<

>You went on a date with Chiho and let's be real, she was a cheap whore.< Well, yes. That was true. >I don't think she can stand up to an Alpha yet.<

>She already did last week.< He reminded his alter ego.

>Do you think she saw that the same way? She said something to defend someone, you corrected her, she caved in. I don't think that is standing up.<

>She has potential.< Akashi argued.

>She needs training before she might reach that point.<

>I can provide her with training. I can show her what I mean. I am sure she can do it.<

>You have a better eye than I when it comes to human resources. What is your plan?<

>I want to introduce her to our friends.<

>Your friends. I find them annoying. But if you must then by all means provide her with training. As soon as she is ready for sexual training I'll gladly take over.<

>I won't let you corrupt another possible relationship. You literally fucked up Tetsu.<

>Well, yes, he was delicious.< His alter ego chuckled. >If you want her to be Akashi Seijuro's partner, kindly remember that you aren't the only one in this head.<

>I know. I will let her know at some point. But not today and not in the near future. I want this to work, I don't want you to destroy this chance for us.<

>You were let out instead of having me go to a business dinner that was planned at the same time, weren't you? Quit bugging me, you got your chance.<

>Yes, what was up with that? Why was I- no, let's discuss that later.< He just saw Ayako coming back his way. >I need my concentration for this, don't disturb me.<

>Sure thing, you self-blown prick.<

He stood, studying her face while she passed by other tables. She thinly smiled at him, not in anger, more in apology, so he stepped up to her seat and held it out for her. She sat with a thankful smile and a nod. He noticed that she must have freshened up her make-up. For some unknown reason, he resented that fact. Internally shaking his head about himself he sat down again.

"I am very sorry about that." She smiled at him sheepishly, an extremely cute sight in his opinion. "I was very touched by your words."

"So I really didn't insult you?" He slightly tilted his head, remembering how he adored it when Tetsu did it.

"Actually, I think you did." She scoffed and smiled though. "But I am not angry."

"Honestly, I don't think I really get that." He admitted.

"Well, you aren't an Omega. I think I would worry if you understood." She smiled thinly, her face saddened by something that seemed to be in her head. "I guess I underestimated you after all."

"Really?" Somehow he felt like a child, amazed by the trick he just did.

"Yes." She seemed to collect herself for a moment. "Would you show me your world? Would you want to see mine?"

"Very much," he admitted.

She nodded before longingly gazing into the room. After a moment she asked: "For today though, would you care to play that piano? I direly want to sing."

He smiled invitingly and teased: "Whatever my diva commands."