

Split soul

Von Gepo

Kapitel 25: Lone warrior

Akashi put all his energy into work. After all that's what he did best. He threatened Law into working with the others by telling him that teamwork was one of the elements he was evaluated on. He shipped off Economy into his PR team for a short internship. He wrote some contracts with Seika and Jobless, making Seika the one to write them and Jobless the one to correct them.

Seika asked in one of those small gatherings: "Mister Akashi? Do you already know when you plan your vacation? And will we continue to work after you are back?"

"I think another three months of training should be suitable. I will also have to decide if I keep all of you as a management team. But even if I don't, I know some good positions for every one of you. So whoever likes to work can stay. I just have to decide on which contract to hire you. Obviously it will be high-class positions for all of you."

"Cool!" She smiled. "So I don't have to go back to school?"

"Well, a high-school diploma still makes a lot of sense. Do you think you can handle this work and learn for your tests beside it? That way you can finish school and work full-time."

"So much work." She sighed. "Yeah, sure. It's just another two years after all. Maybe I can go to school two days a week and come to work three days a week? Then I have time on the weekends to learn what I missed."

"Seiko, part-time manager of Akashi Corporate. As long as you come everyday when I am not here, we can certainly talk about it."

"Any plans on how long your vacation will be?"

"I don't have a clue. Knowing me I won't be able to stay away from work even for a week. But a few weeks would be nice. I've never had a vacation in my whole life."

"Never?" She spat it out in shock. "What did you do in elementary school?"

"I worked here." He gently petted the printed out contract. "This is my life. But I don't want an early death like my father had. I don't plan on working myself into the grave. So I know I have to start learning to let go and ... trust in others." It all came down to it, didn't it?

"Huh." She curled a strand of her hair around her finger. "I'm not good in that trusting business either. But Kei is doing a rather fine job, isn't he? I never saw anyone so adept in paperwork. And Hatani is pretty good meeting with those important people. I think I would piss them off if I was on my own."

"Yeah, you are still a bit young. But you are a good coordinator. Knowing what work to give to whom is an important skill," he praised her.

"Looks like I am pretty useless," Jobless said with a sigh.

"No way!" Seika looked at him. "You're just ... hard to motivate. When you do stuff,

you really do it well. I think you are best suited for this job in terms of brains. But you are lazy as fuck and can't concentrate for more than a few minutes. If you could overcome that, you'd make a great support."

Akashi just smiled. It seemed like he had nothing much to do here. Seika had an eye for people that rivaled Seijuro's.

"And here I thought I would not need to return to my medication." Jobless leaned back in his stool. "Damn, I hate that I only function with psychotropics."

"Well, it depends on the job you want to do. Free-lance artist is doable with how you are."

"It's what I did before. That didn't work out well, I could never keep my deadlines." He shook his head sadly.

"Then yes, you might want to go back on medication," Akashi advised. "One of my friends needed ten years to get off his and could only do it because he found a partner that supported him everyday and spent three years on explaining how this world and people worked."

"Sounds like an Asperger."

"He is one." He nodded. "Another one has been depressed for five years now. He just recently went into therapy and is making great progress. Taking medication and going to therapy is not a weakness in my eyes." Way to talk. How about some for himself?

"I'm rather impressed by people that openly face their demons."

"I would never have expected that." Jobless looked at him for a long moment. "So you're friends with a few nutcases?"

"My friends are either Alphas raised by Alphas or Omegas who had to live through all the discrimination heaped upon them. I found that both are damaged in some way. Only the Betas I know seem rather normal." It didn't help that those two beside him were both Alphas. Or it did. They most likely knew what he was talking about. "I mean, you not only found but replied to some kind of mystery position advert that required a shitload of mental tests. Not everyone would do that."

The two looked at each other before nodding. Seika asked: "So you expected some ... strange individuals?"

"Takes one to know one." Akashi smiled at her. "I mean, seriously, what kind of people would like to do this job? I guess one has to be a bit nuts to do this."

Both others just grinned and nodded again, this time a bit more vigorously. Jobless pulled out his phone and said: "I'll write myself a reminder to take my medication again."

"And I want food. We are still growing after all." She winked at Akashi. So that was their explanation why they ate three times a day on the job. Fair enough, he was nineteen after all. He might even grow a bit more, who knew. Him and that damn leech.

Akashi had looked at his phone for at least thirty minutes now. It was getting kind of ridiculous. He had a woman wanting to have sex with him that only waited for his call and he chickened out? Just because she was able to move him? That was really pathetic. He could just invite her over, treat her to a nice (ordered) dinner and spent a glorious night with her.

If only he wasn't scared of what that might do to him. Maybe he would open up to feelings, ripping up his personalities' concept and completely destroying his inner equilibrium. Or maybe he would just make himself a bit vulnerable and enjoy a bout of sex. Fear wasn't a good companion. Since when did he fear stuff? He had never feared

anything, no pain, no abuse, no ... joy? Living as an automaton had his up-sides. It also meant to be unable to have any positive feelings. He had never enjoyed winning, he had simply done it. Like breathing.

Sex would be nice. Sex would also mean to open up a bit and either be crushed with disappointment or elated with pride or both at the same time. All those possibilities sounded scary. How did one deal with disappointment? For that matter, how did one deal with joy? It was such a foreign concept. He was able to fusion cross-country industrial empires and cut their costs, making them thrice as effective as before and was still unable to have sex with someone that actually meant something to him.

Boo him.

He might go on another date with Ayako. Maybe it would be less aggravating after talking to her ... no, actually, it would only make it worse. The more he liked her, the more intimidating it got. Was that how other people had sex? Had some of his partners felt this way about him? He hoped not. If Ayako were to be as callous to him as he had been- oh. So that was what she had talked about. That he was rational and disregarded the other person's feelings. He had ... he hadn't even known that humans could feel like this. Just why would anyone want all these annoying hormone reactions?

He shook his head and rolled his eyes. Time to call. Now or never. Every other minute would only make it worse.

Tut.

Tut.

Tut.

Why wasn't she picking up her phone? Had she got tired of waiting for his call? Was she angry with him? Maybe she-

"Hi, this is Ayako." Oh, thank everyone. "Please leave your message after the beep." No!

"Err, well, this is Akashi. I wanted to ... invite you over to dinner." Smooth, very smooth. Maybe he should take lessons from Natsue, even she was a better conversationalist than him right now. "Err ... could you please call back once you get the message? Bye." He immediately ended the call.

He was such a coward. Really, this was pitiful. He was a nineteen-year-old multimillionaire, he did not have to cower before one woman. Or maybe he could ... how about an Ayako domina version? She was right, he liked tears and cries and pain. Maybe they should start with her doling out punishments. Maybe he could overwrite some of his memories that way. It made all of this less likely to go to hell because he would not be in a position able to hurt her.

She did not seem the type to like that though. She was gentle and caring. Maybe she had a hidden side? What seemed peaceful on the outside did not have to be on the inside. She had been abused, so he would be surprised if she liked S/M-plays with her as the target. On the other hand if he could not trust her with his feelings, could he trust her with his feelings, body and freedom on the line? Somehow it sounded easier. S/M followed patterns. He knew those. Free romantic cuddly sex on the other hand ... he would leave that to Seijuro. It wasn't his thing. He was like an animal, dominating or being dominated but never to be tamed.

He did not want feelings. Not as much as Seijuro would give her. A bit maybe, but no more than what he was comfortable with. He would never trust anyone with his heart.

Ayako sent a text on the next day that stated "Heat time. I'll call next week."

He groaned at having forgotten her cycle. On evening of prowling the apartment like a tiger and all for naught. She had not taken his call because she had been delirious due to her heat. How exhausting. Relationships were too much of an emotional turmoil.

He gave in to being moody at work, screaming at all team members – except for Seika – for being slow, making mistakes and annoying him in general. He only reigned himself in after finding Seika's phone (which she always left lying around somewhere) with an open chat where she told a friend that her boss was on his period. It reminded him that later that day he had another appointment for his pregnancy check-up.

Oh joy.

Another meeting where Shintaro would stare at him for hours to see if he had gone round the bend and enduring a stick in his ass. Though he had been promised that they would use an abdominal scan this time. It only made the disaster he had to endure minimally less disastrous. He was showing. Showing! Okay, he was nearing the end of his fifth month, any non-Alpha would already have quite the round belly – but still. He had to wear polo shirts under his suit because his belt wasn't straight anymore. People could see when he removed his jacket.

He told Shintaro his dilemma who proposed to have his team begin to handle meetings and not wear a suit to work. Akashi just growled in annoyance. It seemed the best idea though. Just how should he explain wearing wide shirts? It was summer. He wouldn't get away with wearing a pullover like Shintaro had done. It was when he heard the most ridiculous idea ever: "What about traditional male Japanese clothing? You could allow kimonos and hakamas as equal to suits to promote national values. Everyone would expect you to act as a role model and come to work in a kimono every morning."

"You can't be serious." What a meaningless thing to say. His friend was one of the most traditional people still alive. He always wore Japanese clothing at home and to every kind of event where he wasn't required to move fast. He had worn kimonos in the last month of his own pregnancy whenever he wasn't going to school. He was wearing one now, seeing as he was one month ahead of him. "Sei is the only one of us owning kimonos. Female kimonos. I know what she used them for."

"I admit that it's a rather bad association." His best friend looked at him for a long moment. "I remember running around with Seijuro in the gardens, both of us wearing boys' yukatas. Whenever you came to visit us, my mother would dress us up and we would play lords or samurai. Seijuro loved wearing those clothes."

"Then he can bring this damn pregnancy to an end and give birth to his hell spawn." He shut up only because the door opened and their doctor stepped in. They had been allowed to wait in a separate room since Akashi had offered them money to not be made to sit in a waiting room with Omegas.

The usual smile which always fell sooner rather than later was already gone from his doctor's face upon hearing his words. For some reason he was always appalled whenever he heard how much Akashi hated his pregnancy. Why would that man even bother to always work up hope that something might have changed in the meantime? He said: "Good evening, Mister Akashi and Mister Midorima. How are you both?"

"I am fine and happy, thank you," his friend answered. That genuine smile annoyed him to no end.

"I have not taken an axe to my stomach," Akashi said in a fit of grumpiness.

"Have you already made plans who will take your child? It might be no more than another month," the doctor asked him.

True enough. He would have to ask Ayako. No, no, he would ask Tetsu. Ayako was nice but they were at the point where they thought about sleeping with on another, not where you shoved unwanted kids onto the other. So he answered: "I decided on asking one of our friends who has two children of his own and has already offered to take mine."

"Kuroko?" Shintaro just looked at him with one of those gazes that offered no information about what he was feeling.

Akashi just nodded.

"Kuroko Tetsuya?" The doctor slowly nodded. "I know him. He's a good man. I'll hope he can raise your child with love."

"He raises any child with love. It's what kids deserve." Akashi looked away, suddenly gripped by an unwanted bout of sadness. He had only known hate, anger and vicious cruelty from his own father. Whatever this child meant to him, he did not want to be the same kind of monster. "I wouldn't be able to do that."

The doctor just nodded and said: "Good. Have you faced any complications?"

"I have been feeling kicks. It's annoying. I want to rub the places but I can't. It distracts me from work." Actually, he was able to rub them now, right? He placed his hand on his own stomach. "He's kicking now."

"He?" Shintaro raised an eyebrow at him. "You were the one who did not want to know your child's gender."

"Fate has been kicking me in the face for longer than I can remember. Of course it's a boy. It's what my rapist wanted after all: To get me pregnant with his heir before being put six feet under. Anything else might actually good be good news for once and my life has been devoid of good news for longer than I care to remember."

The doctor just looked at him for a long moment before closing his eyes with a sigh. It's how he knew. It was a boy. Of course he was carrying his heir.

"I'll get this done with and then I'll start building a life I might actually want for myself. One without being raped, beaten and forced into pregnancy. Excuse me all for kicking out that leech that is nothing but a reminder of my worst nightmares."

Shintaro nodded and replied: "It's for the best. Kuroko is a great parent and his husband will support all of his decisions. I can't see him making differences between his own and other kids. He plays with Hana as if she was one of his."

"I might hate him but even I know that he is a father every child should have." Akashi continued to rub his stomach. "I also hate being pregnant but I only want the best for this baby. None of my issues should have any influence on him."

"That might be the most positive thing I ever heard of you." The doctor looked at him with a strange kind of scrutiny. "So have you looked after yourself?"

"Lots of good food, avoiding stress, soothing baths and no poisons of any kind. Except for ignoring him most of the time I've been a model baby hotel." He opened his shirt a bit and stood. "I've begun to show. That should be the best indicator I've been taking this serious."

"That's very good to see!" The doctor actually smiled again. That had never happened before.

"May I feel his kicks?" Shintaro asked him. After a bland look from Akashi he slowly raised his hand and placed it on the now nude stomach. "Hello there."

"He seems to like kicking your hand," Akashi noted.

"Babies like getting a response. He's bored inside of you. You could talk to him or pet him once in a while. Play him some music or have Ayako sing. He can hear you, you know?" Shintaro looked up at him. "It's not an inanimate object inside of you, it's a

fully functioning human being.”

Objectively he knew that. Subjectively it made him want to puke it out. It was a baby, it deserved love and attention. For him it was a parasite crawling through his abdomen and making itself known with kicking and scratching him. It felt like having a massive bug inside of you that just wouldn't die.

“Just be happy I never spared a thought for suicide because I want to throw myself out of the window when you say that.” Akashi took a step back. “Can we please get this over with?”

Both looked at him for a moment before they nodded. He even got his abdominal scan instead of a rectal one. The doctor showed them all kinds of angles, explained the current development, even showed them the gender. Of course it was a boy. It gave Akashi the morbid thought if it was possible to feel raped by an unborn baby.

The most disconcerting thing was Seijuro's voice that answered: >Well, you just made Sei run away again.<

It made him aware that the strange feeling which he had those last few minutes might have been both Seijuro's and Sei's presence in the back of his mind. Now they were gone again.