

Comfort

Twin-story to "Hurt"

Von Gepo

Kapitel 18: The root of all evil

Kagami went to meet his mother for dinner by himself. He did not really want to as he was still angry but Kuroko told him that family was important, even if his mother did not seem to grasp that concept. So the redhead went.

He used the time to call Akashi. Really, he had procrastinated long enough. It was high time to get this over with, it was long due.

"Good evening, Tetsuya. How are you?" The other greeted politely.

"Good evening, Akashi. Not so well right now. And you?" He decided on honesty as the best course of action.

"I'm fine but I am sad to hear you are unwell. What happened?" Was that actual concern? It sounded genuine but one never knew with Akashi.

"I just met Kagami's mother, a beautiful Alpha woman full of Alpha pride."

"That must have been an unsavory meeting." The other was still calm but it seemed like his concern was real. "Did it come to blows? Do you need my help?" It was good to know that Akashi was actually inclined to come to his aid if needed.

"No, thankfully not. It simply gave me an impression how you must have grown up and what led to your actions." He said monotonously.

There was silence on the other end for a few seconds. He knew the other was still there because he could hear him breathing. After a few more moments Akashi said:

"May I offer an invitation to my house? It may give you more insight if that is what you seek."

"Thank you." Go to Akashi's house ... was that safe? He wasn't sure. This Akashi would not hurt him but what about the other? On the other hand, the worst he had ever done was ask for a blowjob. Ask. It was actually an order but even the cruel Akashi had been nice about it. Did he feel powerful enough to say no? Yes he was. "I'd like to take you up on that offer. What day would be convenient? It is in Kyoto, right?"

"No, it is on the outskirts of Tokio. About one and a half hours into the countryside. If you come to the nearest train station, I could pick you up there." Akashi changed to free speaker to browse his calendar. "I am at home for the holidays right now. I am scheduled to go for a ride tomorrow afternoon but I am free in the morning."

"I have time tomorrow morning." He wanted to have some plans in case Misses Kagami wanted to do anything. He had seen enough of her for a bit, even if visiting the Akashi household might be just as "unsavory" as Akashi had titled it.

"I'll send you the train dates. You are living with Kagami Taiga now, right? Second chome three-hundred-and-two in Nakamachi near Kodaira station of the Seibu-

Shinjuku-line?" Well, that was Akashi for you. How and why he knew something like that was one good question, the other would be why he knew the address by heart. Creepy.

"That is correct" Kuroko said though.

"See you tomorrow then." The other sounded pleased.

The Omega shuddered. Hopefully this wouldn't turn out to be a pretty bad idea.

Kagami had simply sighed when Kuroko told him his plans and asked him to look after himself. And if anything happened, Kuroko was to come home immediately. The way he said "home" left no doubts what Kagami really meant – even if Kuroko got raped, he wanted his mate back no matter what. It wiped every doubt the blue-haired ever had out of the door.

Well, his mate only knew Akashi as a psychopath. Attacking him with scissors just for disobeying had left an unfortunate impression on him. But even though Kuroko had watched that, he had never feared for himself. Akashi had not exactly been nice but except for accidentally choking him for only a second once, he had never hurt him physically. Sure, those blowjobs were rather questionable and the whole hunting idea disastrous but all in all, Akashi had always asked Kuroko first. The problem had been that saying no had sometimes been hard.

The danger of Akashi was not his physical strength – which was extraordinary for his small body – but his persuasion. His old captain could get him to do about anything and Kuroko only had himself to blame in the aftermath. Even knowing that, he obediently followed the instructions on his phone. The train took him out into the countryside, driving past fields of rice, wheat and even a tea plantage. The scenery was surprisingly peaceful.

He arrived at the train station a bit after ten a.m. and was the only one getting off here. An older pair stepped in which left one young man in a brown trench-coat standing on the platform.

"Good morning, Akashi. Thank you for meeting me here."

"Thank you for coming all the way out here. It is a bit out of the way." The other waited until Kuroko walked next to him before leading them out of the station.

"The scenery is beautiful though. It must be nice to grow up in this peaceful atmosphere."

"Rather out of everyone's eyes." Akashi headed straight for a black limousine and stopped next to a fine looking chauffeur who held open a door. "Please get in. It is still a bit farther off."

Well ... Kagami knew where he was. They had installed a tracking app, so that he always knew where Kuroko's phone was at least. It had been the Omega's idea because no matter how big his bravado was, Akashi was fear-instilling. He got in the car after mustering the other for a second, seeing no ill intent. Not that he would. Akashi was perfectly able to hide his murderous intents.

"So how are you? How is your mate?" The other asked after they were seated.

"I am fine. Kagami is a bit unhappy that I came here alone. He does not have a favorable impression of you." Which was taking it lightly.

"I can imagine." The redhead nodded. "I had no doubts you would persuade him but I am sure it was not easy. That Alpha is very protective of you. Not that I blame him with the state you are in." State? How did Akashi know he was pregnant?

"The gossip mill is running fast again." Was it good or bad? What did it mean to Akashi?

"I was slightly unhappy to hear after Daiki, Satsuki and Ryouta. Aren't those big news? I had expected you would inform all of us." It was a given that Aomine would tell Momoi but who told Kise? Aomine? Had Kise given in to him again?

"As soon as I was sure, I would have. Pregnancies can easily end in the first three months." Which was why you did not announce them beforehand, it brought bad luck. The traditionalist in front of him should know.

"Yours seem not to, they all would have survived as far as I could tell. A lot of people would be envious of that." Akashi still seemed friendly but the topic made Kuroko uneasy. "I was unable to ascertain how far along you are. Would you care to enlighten me?"

"Seven weeks." Another five to go until he was in his second trimester and his baby would most likely be safe.

"That is a precarious time." Akashi nodded. "How does your mate feel about your pregnancy?"

"He takes it with a large grin, enjoying every challenge thrown his way, just like always." Kuroko smiled. This time he had a much better answer than when Aomine asked him. "He pampers me like a good mate should, running to the combini at least twice every night to cater to my cravings."

A red eyebrow rose, lifting one corner of the other's mouth with it. So that was what real amusement looked on Akashi's face, not that condescending expression he used to wear. It was followed by an unusual statement for someone as polite as Akashi: "Please excuse my plebeian reaction but your mate is so whipped."

"His mother said the same." Though not as nice as that, it didn't sound insulting when Akashi said it. "I just think that such behavior is a minimum requirement when you get your mate pregnant. Alphas have such strong bodies for a reason. Seeing as Omegas these days do not need physical protection, they can use their powers for childcare. Or pregnancy-care if they don't have children yet."

"The image that was taught as the norm to me was that Alphas earn the income." The other did not seem offended by Kuroko's words. The nice thing about Akashi was that he never felt insulted because he was completely sure of himself as a person.

"Taiga is underage, so his parents pay our bills. His occupation is to go to school but so do I. So he can take a role in supporting me with this."

"It seems to me that you simply love to be spoiled." The other necked him.

"That might factor into it as well." Kuroko gave a sideways look. "It is nice to spoil your mate."

"And rather inexpensive when it comes to you." Akashi sighed. "My fiancée wants a diamond collier for her birthday. Getting up twice a night for a few months sounds easier than trying to come up with that much money." Why was he not surprised that he had a fiancée? Most likely one chosen at birth or something equally traditional.

"How about you tell her no and ask her to come up with something that might actually show affection instead of wealth? Are you sure she has any interest in you? How old is she anyway?"

"Sixteen. She is a spoiled little princess." The redhead shook his head. "I should not talk about her like that but she exasperates me. I really don't know how to get out of this situation. My best plan is to set her up with a nice young man with which she elopes. That way I save my family honor but am finally free of her. I should enact the plan before her birthday." He looked out of the window. "Do you think Ryouta would be interested in helping me? My supply of flirty male teenage idols is rather short."

"If they do more than flirt, it would hurt his image. If you plan to make a scene about

her betraying you and it gets out to the public, it could screw his career. Your best shot would be a professional but it has the risk of exposure as well as a high price when the target is an underage girl. Maybe buying that diamond collier or finding a more legal way would be a better idea. How about telling her that you don't like her?" Kuroko was a bit annoyed at how Akashi was thinking but on the other hand it immensely pleased him to be asked.

"We aren't marrying because we want to. The question is how to keep up the expected behavior while guiding her to the point where she breaks up with me."

"Buy her a collier of a stone she doesn't like." The other looked up at Kuroko's words. "It's extravagant, expensive, very Akashi-style and will annoy her direly. Give it to her in front of everyone, so that she can't make a scene. Even better if she makes one, then you can break up with her on account of immaturity."

"Costly but effective." Akashi nodded. "Thank you for your input. I normally ask Shintarou but social situations aren't his forte."

"Not exactly." Kuroko had to smile. The other's roundabout, polite way of phrasing was similar to his own, just that the other often used it to deliver insults without the other party noticing. "It is nice to see you asking for someone else's opinion instead of just doing whatever you think is best. Kise would have done that for you but he would have been unhappy in the aftermath."

"You taught me that I am not perfect. I still need to learn. Conferring with trusted individuals seems a good way to do so." The other smiled back at him. "I count you as someone I can trust."

"You can. Not that an Omega like me could do any damage to you anyway, especially now that I am mated." The car seemed to come to a halt. "Have we arrived?"

"Yes, we have." He opened the door himself, got out and held it open for Kuroko. "Welcome to Akashi manor."

Yeah ... manor. Visit his house he had said. Just that the house was a manor. Not any manor. Kuroko ended up in front of a three-story-building with a main house, two wings, a park and ... stables? Yes, he heard a horse. Hadn't Akashi said he had a ride scheduled for the afternoon?

"Build in 1883, this has been the family's home for over a century. My great-great-great-grandfather was a merchant in the Meiji era, trading weapons with the Westerners. He build this manor. Since 1945 our main income changed to machines, later electronics. By now the Akashi Foundation is a world-leading investor, owning about twenty-seven percent of Japan's industries and some further abroad." Akashi stepped nearer, lowering his voice. "And since the founder times, we were only allowed to marry Alphas for a pure bloodline." He scoffed. "Unsurprisingly, about every third child died in childbirth."

Omeas. This family killed their Omega children. Kuroko shuddered.

"Let me show you around" Akashi offered.

He was shown grand ballrooms, luxurious furniture and exquisite art. All he could think about were those Omega babies who had to die as not to sully the image of perfection. Everything he saw seemed covered in blood in his eyes. It was beautiful and grotesque at the same time.

"This is our music room. I was home-schooled as a kid, learning various languages and instruments at an early age. To further my understanding of social interaction, I visited a debating club from the age of eight to the age of twelve. Afterwards I asked for permission to visit a public school to come in contact with all kinds of people and was allowed to go to Teiko with my friend Shintarou who I had met at the club. He had

learned basketball from me and we decided to join the basketball team together. You know the rest." Akashi sat down on the piano stool and begin to play a light song with a sad undertone. "Our family motto is "excellence in all". Not being the best is unacceptable. Accepting something substandard is unthinkable. The most important is that everyone recognizes an Akashi as a superior being, no matter how that is achieved."

"Losing was unacceptable." Kuroko surmised.

"Losing to you was the first time in my life in which things did not go the Akashi way."

"Akashi way? What about your way?" Kuroko sat down next to him, entranced by the beautiful music.

"My way died with my mother." Akashi stopped playing and looked at him. "You were the one who brought me back. The real me had been sleeping for a decade."

"A decade?" The stool wasn't very big, so Kuroko leaned against the other. "How old were you when she died?"

"Five." Akashi held him with an arm around his waist. "I buried my wishes and dreams and became a machine, able to be the best, to always win."

"That is very sad." He felt the other stiffen against him. One second to the next, Kuroko was left alone sitting on that stool. When he looked up, the other had taken up a book of sheet music.

"Seijuro, what is the meaning of this?" A middle-aged man in a suit demanded who seemed to have come here looking for his son. Judging by his angry steps, whatever made him furious was something he knew before he entered the room.

"Father." The redhead turned and bowed to the man. "What has gotten you so angry?"

"What is this whore doing in my house?" The man pointed at Kuroko without looking at him. Oh. They really hated Omegas here. This was going to turn ugly really fast.