

K Powerless

Von Alma

Kapitel 5: Scorched Lips

Impatiently, he tapped on his bracer again and again and again. His arms were folded, his legs slightly crossed as he leaned against the wall behind him. No one looked at the other, all eyes were silently directed somewhat nervously to the ground. The waiting was what annoyed him the most. If it were up to him, they would have long since stormed the building. They were strong enough to do so, but instead they had to wait for their captain like children for their mother. Annoyed, Fushimi clicked his tongue and was thus awarded with an admonitory glance from his superior Awashima. But that didn't particularly interest him, he just looked in a different direction. They were waiting for quite a while now; it seemed like hours to him. Dark clouds gathered above their heads. It smelled like rain. Once again the man in the blue uniform clicked his tongue and growled softly. This intolerable man should finally get his ass in gear.

The sound his female superior exhaled sounded like a pleased, relieved groan. She always made this sound in only one situation - when she saw her captain or spoke about him. So Fushimi didn't need to turn around to realize that he had finally made it here. But he did it anyway, his annoyed glare sliding back to his superiors dismissively. His captain looked even worse than before, even though he already had looked like shit since the day the red clan died. Even so, there was something in his eyes that caught Fushimi's attention. His glare was unsteady and nervous, almost as if he was hiding something. Annoyed, the young man turned up his nose and looked away again. He had no desire to deal with the problems of others. Especially not now, when he had his own. What did he care about other's problems, anyway?

His name was called in an admonishing and dissatisfied tone, but he just waved it aside and obeyed. After that, everything went past him as if the time had run three times as fast. He was hardly conscious when they finally stormed the building and crashed the mafia meeting. The fights, the shots, the screams glided past him like a movie he was too tired to watch. He was supposed to be excited, thrilled to get vengeance for Homra's bar, but there was nothing. He was feeling completely empty and uninvolved as he knocked some Yakuza down and disarmed them. It felt wrong, completely surreal, nothing like he had dreamed it would. Nothing mattered now, since Homra had ceased to exist. And he just didn't know why. It made no sense at all. Even more so because Homra hadn't meant anything to him, and still didn't.

It probably took only minutes before the building was completely under their control. Most of his subordinates had been left behind to deal with the small fish. Only he, his

captain and Awashima were now in the big, wide and sumptuously designed room that hosted the meeting of the Yakuza bosses. The room was a mess, even though Fushimi didn't remember fighting. Before them, some pretty important men of the Yakuza lay writhing in pain. Most were injured and disarmed. Without a word or emotion, Fushimi stood next to one of the defeated men, looking into nothingness.

It hadn't been very hard to follow the track the arsonists had laid on the day they had burned down Homra's bar. The graffiti had been a pretty stupid idea and he was sure, the henchmen who did it paid dearly for their mistake. But even without this lapse, nothing would have changed. Scepter 4 had been monitoring the activities of the Yakuza for some time - they had only needed a chance to strike. There were no Strains here – their hypothetical existence had only been a false pretense. Fushimi slowly shook his head to regain his senses. He felt as if he was about to lose contact to the real world. But either way, the case was closed now. And Homra could finally calm down again... or maybe not. At least, the greatest danger was averted for now. Or at least, it seemed that way.

Words were heard, a command Fushimi had missed. From the corner of his eye he saw Awashima retreat back. He understood he should probably go as well. But he didn't. Apathetically, he looked back to his captain. The imposing man in blue bent down to one of the Yakuza, pressing his blade against the man's throat. His violet eyes were stinging and full of dark anger. His captain's glance grew colder than ice, and his voice cut through the room like a blizzard. He whispered, but it was loud enough for Saruhiko to hear.

The words made him shiver involuntarily.

He heaved a little, gasped and felt his lungs gradually beginning to burn. His head was buzzing, his thoughts stumbling over each other until his head began to drone. But he only allowed himself to stall when he was sure he was close enough. Only little by little his pace slowed down until he finally stopped. For a long moment, he left his eyes closed and took a very deep breath. He was sweaty and his uniform stuck to him from the cold of the night. It would rain soon, he felt it in the air. But he didn't care in the slightest. All he could think about was what he would do next. Additionally, he surely looked horrible right now. Quickly, he stroked through his hair in a hopeless attempt to make it look good again; he tugged at his uniform until he had the feeling it was sitting properly once more. He waited a few seconds before his pulse and breathing had normalized from the powerful sprint, he had done to come here. He didn't need to know Reisi had been *running* back. It just didn't fit to Munakata's demeanour.

Although his behavior just now hadn't been exactly appropriate either. However, he was sure no one had heard his words so he had nothing to worry about. Slowly, his legs continued to move again and carried him in a leisurely step closer to his home. However, he stuck to his decision. They had arrested the whole gang of Yakuza, with only one exception. Munakata thought it to be more efficient to let one go. A bearer

of warning to the others. He was free to tell everyone what had happened. Including how he had threatened him. The Blue King didn't mind abusing his power, as long as it served his purpose. And if it led to the red clan finally getting their peace and quiet, all means were justified. Even threats of violence, extortion and torture.

He could already see the windows of his apartment. Reisi could dissemble his nervousness very well, though his pulse was beating faster and faster. He didn't even know what to do, what he intended to do. But he knew it was beyond time to talk with him. And he couldn't deny that he longed for him. That the thought of being alone with him was enough to make his heart beat like crazy.

Slightly annoyed by this thought, he closed his eyes and tried to slow down his pace. He didn't want to come off as a teenager who couldn't await meeting his girlfriend. The closer he got however, the faster his legs started moving. Eventually, he stood in front of his apartment door and was struggling for air again. He blushed when he realized how childish and stupid he acted. Shaking his head and swallowing his nervousness, he tried to relax a little. Though it was harder than it looked for his pulse was beating ridiculously fast. Forcing himself to become calm, he unlocked the door and stepped into the twilight of his apartment. With a clack, the door eventually slid back into the frame, leaving him alone with the darkness in which midst he stood. It took him some effort to keep his voice calm and indifferent.

"Suoh?"

He got no response. For a moment he didn't move, before he took off his boots and sword and the jacket of his uniform. Nervously, he slid down the hall, calling his name again. He walked through every room, but in the end he knew he was alone. Alone, just as before, as if time had gone backwards, as if he had just come home and nothing of this had ever happened.

He was alone again. Alone with the darkness and his cold apartment, staring at him with its dead eyes. Alone with his heavy heartbeat and the burning in his chest. Alone with the pain that now came and the breathlessness that followed. Alone with himself and the sole memory of him. He was such an idiot.

Powerless, he leaned against the wall beside him and closed his eyes. Yes, he really was a terrible idiot. Nothing more than that. Just a lonely, incompetent idiot.

The air surrounding him was thick, cold and hard to breathe. The utter darkness around him held him in its claws, making him unable to move. He felt so weak, as if his legs would give way any moment; so cramped and confined that his heart threatened to burst under the pressure. For it was everywhere. His smell. Reisi's smell.

Mikoto got goose bumps and shivered slightly from the cold climbing up from within his limbs, his chest, his heart. It was even more devastating now than ever before. He wanted to stop breathing, wanted to stop experiencing this scent, but he couldn't

help it. And every single gasp let the pain sink even deeper until his entire lungs were filled with this suffocating, strangling, cold memory. He felt nauseated. Reisi had been gone for a while now, but Mikoto could still feel his presence, taste it on his tongue. Violently, he swallowed and clenched his fingers into a fist. It was as if he would stifle just standing here; in this apartment loaded with memories and pain; he just couldn't escape it. He had to get out of here.

Violently, he gasped for air again but ended up pushing even more thick air down his constricted throat. Half blind, he looked around and didn't know what to do. He couldn't stay here, he just couldn't stand it. But his legs still felt so weak; he wasn't even sure if he was able to go a single step. Angrily, he gasped for air and tried to regain his strength. But he didn't find it. He couldn't change the fact that he was no longer strong - that he was now a normal person, powerless and insignificant. And that he had nothing more in common with him. Everything they had together, which had held their fates together, was lost. They were living in completely different worlds, now. And he just couldn't keep up with him. It was over. This time for good...

Mikoto's face contorted in despair as he closed his eyes and held his breath once more. He tried to suppress the trembling of his muscles from the chill, but he didn't do particularly well. It was as if the cold that accompanied him since his awakening had fully spread, dominating him from head to toe, filling him with nothing but endless emptiness. And there was nothing that he could do about it.

A buzz made him pause and purse his lips. Something vibrated in his pocket so much, it worsened his own trembling. Very slowly, hesitantly and afraid to let it slide out of his hands, he reached for his cell phone and held it between his quivering fingers. The name, which shone on the display, didn't contribute to his reassurance in any way. An eternity it seemed, he stared at the vibrating device in his hand before he finally had the courage to answer the call. His voice was terribly quiet and it took a lot of effort to keep it calm.

"Ah...?"

"Mikoto?" Somewhat surprised the voice replied from the other side. Izumo had apparently just intended to hang up. He sounded worried. "Ah, everythin' okay with you? I just wanted to make sure 'cause you've been away for a while, now."

Again, it took a full moment before the former king had the strength to respond. Powerless, he leaned against the wall and closed his eyes. "...No... everything's okay..."

"..." A long pause followed before Izumo started talking again. He didn't probe him and Mikoto did appreciate that. "...Okay then... Are you comin' back? Or..." It seemed like he didn't dare to finish the sentence.

It was the push Mikoto had needed. He took a shaky step forward, not daring to breathe. When he felt the doorknob under his fingers, he found the courage to answer again and to escape this prison. "...Yeah ...I'm on my way..."

His face grimaced at the sight that greeted him. He hated it when he saw his friend like that, for he knew that he couldn't help him. Not in the least. That Mikoto simply didn't let him near him. Especially when it came to that guy. Izumo had to have seen that look on Mikoto's face a hundred times, yet it still hurt and made him furious. Izumo's lips hardened into a thin line as he tried to stay calm and keep a clear head. He knew that just one wrong word would drop his friend into a stubborn, resistant silence. The blond man gulped and took a deep breath before he settled into the chair across from Mikoto.

It hadn't been two minutes since the redhead knocked on the door and had straightway put himself onto his couch. Since then, he kept his head down and looked away in a futile attempt to conceal his horribly hurt face. He didn't want Izumo to see him like this, that was pretty obvious. But it was also just as obvious that he couldn't hide it from him. So he just exposed himself to it, waiting to get his preachment from his friend. But the blond man had nothing of the sort in mind. Everything was pretty clear to him already. And he would most certainly not cause his friends any more troubles apart from the ones he was going through already. After all, Mikoto looked worse with each passing day. Izumo really was worried. But he just didn't know how to tell him without further pushing him offside.

Izumo brought himself to speak after a few silent moments. He leaned back and looked at the ground, not wanting to harass Mikoto with his gaze. "So... what do we do now? ...Concerning the arrest warrants, I mean. "

This seemed to trip up the red-haired man. Obviously, he hadn't even thought about it. A long momentary silence reigned. Mikoto stared into nothingness before he lowered his eyes and inhaled deeply. His voice was so quiet and faint, Izumo got goose bumps.

"...We do nothing. ...We don't have any choice. It won't get us anywhere... if all of us are spending our time in jail..."

The blond man was shaking with coldness at this sight. Whatever had happened, it had broken his friend. Izumo was terribly shaken, but he concealed it quite well. He smiled slightly and nodded. "Ha, yeah, I guess you're right. We really don' have to do this to Anna. In addition, I heard the food in there is horrible. Hahaha."

No answer, no emotion, not even the slightest impulse. But actually, Izumo had expected that. It hurt, but the blond man managed to smirk, granting his friend a comforting smile. "We will follow you Mikoto, no matter what. We are here for you, Homra is here for you, just like you've been always there for us. It... doesn't matter whether we have our fire or not. We are a family. Everything will be fine... I promise. We are strong even without magic tricks. We'll rebuild the bar and it will be even more beautiful than before. No one can get us down, right? We still have the fire in us. And no one will stop us from bein' ourselves. Isn't that so?"

For a long moment, nothing happened; it seemed as if time stood still. Then Mikoto, too, forced a smile, though it still looked terribly hurt and defeated. He couldn't even raise his gaze; he only managed a faint nod. "...Yeah. You're right..."

Smiling likewise Izumo slightly bowed to him and tried to catch his eye. It made him so angry that he just couldn't reach him, that he couldn't help his friend - but he didn't show any of this resentment. He winked at him and chuckled. "Don' make that face. This is not you. We're going to get back on our feet."

"Hm." His friend replied quietly and with forced optimism. He still didn't look at him, still seemed to struggle with himself, still had this awful broken face. And Izumo realized that at this moment, Mikoto was probably not thinking about Homra at all. That it didn't matter what he would say and how much he would try to cheer him up. Something had happened - something that made him blank out everything. Izumo didn't want to know. He didn't want to talk about it either. He had enough of that. It was always the same, even now. No matter what this horrible man did, it always led to Mikoto looking like this – heartbroken and dejected. And then it was up to Izumo to pick up the broken fragments. But, he did so without changing anything - without making Mikoto feel better in any way. Angrily, the blonde man led his eyes to the ground until he finally had swallowed all of that down and took a deep breath. He closed his eyes and tried to be as careful as possible as he attempted to formulate his words.

"...Mikoto... if you want to talk about what happened... you know I am always here for you."

"..." Silence was the only answer. The red-haired man closed his eyes as well and seemed to hold his breath. He could hear it, even without looking at him. And he also knew that Mikoto didn't want to burden others with his problems. That he always thought he ought to solve his problems alone, that he didn't want to show any weakness.

And yet Izumo remained stubborn; he glanced at him from the corner of his eye and kept his voice very calm. "It's okay if you don' want to. But... you're not looking exactly cheerful. Have there been problems?"

Mikoto's brows wrinkled and he lowered his head even more. His friend didn't quite know how to interpret that. For a few seconds, neither man said anything. Izumo sighed and leaned back in his chair.

"Ah yes... stupid question. Sorry." Wherever Munakata was, there were always problems. Constantly, he interfered with things that didn't concern him. He was like a piece of gum you just couldn't get off of your shoe. Subconsciously, the blond man crossed his arms and pouted. Arrogant, malicious and terribly self-important. No consideration for others, always pushing his opinion down everybody's throats. Horribly obnoxious. He really wondered why Mikoto was so attached to-

"...I... just don't know what to do..."

Mikoto's soft voice interrupted his thoughts, letting Izumo stare at him for a speechless moment. But his friend didn't look back, sucked for air and tried to remain calm.

"...I'm tired of this shit... but... I... I just can't..."

As Mikoto's hand clenched into a fist, it was more than clear to him. Actually, it had always been clear to him. A sad but understanding smile flickered across Izumo's lips as he nodded. It made no sense to be angry with Mikoto, to rack his brains about why his best friend felt that way about this man. And he wasn't lying. He was there for him, no matter how difficult the subject was for him.

"...Yeah, I know. ...You don't have to say anything..."

It almost looked as if his friend was grateful for that. He shook his head slightly. "...I don't want any of this shit... But I can't help it... it's just not going away. And... I'm so sick of waiting for him. I can't take it anymore..."

His eyes closed as Izumo inhaled deeply. It was just unbearable how hurt and unsure the otherwise so strong man before him appeared. He didn't know what to say. He didn't know what was the right thing to do in this situation. But he knew that most certainly it didn't matter what he would say in a futile attempt to console his friend. He was not the one who could help Mikoto. It simply wasn't possible for him.

Only quietly, the deep voices from the living room penetrated through the door to her ears. She lay in Izumo's bed, staring at the ceiling with big, blank eyes. Anna didn't need to listen to the words to understand what was going on. She had never needed words in order to know what was going on in Mikoto. And yet his broken, whispering voice made her feel weird. Powerless, she lowered her eyelids and bit her lip. She couldn't bear to see the two of them so sad. She wanted to watch them smile again. She wanted everything to be good again - that none of them had to suffer anymore...

"...I just want it to stop..."