

Split soul

Von Gepo

Kapitel 13: Absolute

"With a 10 to 9 basket count, Akashi wins the game!" Momoi proclaimed.

He supported himself on his knees, breathing heavily. Damn, this had been hard. But it had been damn good. He smiled at Kazunari who came to shake his hand, similarly out of breath. He really should train more, his body was getting soft.

"That was one hell of a game." They shook and Kazunari grinned. "You still rule the court."

"Thank you for the game." He righted himself. "I feel a lot better now."

"I'm glad to hear." Kazunari opened the court's door for him. "For my part, I really need a break."

"I don't guess there is a shower around?" He hadn't planned on playing this rigorously.

"Aomine's flat is the next one from here." Kazunari looked at Momoi. "Do you think we could use his shower?"

"Sure." She turned to the court. "Daiki! Can the guys take a shower at your place?"

"Yeah, sure." The man just waived them off. "Hey, Kagami, wanna go another round?"

"Aren't you tired, man?" The redhead who must have come back without Akashi noticing stood leaning against the fence. "That game was brutal."

"I'm warmed up now," Aomine just answered.

"Basketball-junkie." It didn't stop Kagami from joining him on the court.

Kasamatsu and Kise had left with them, taking their bags to join them for a shower. Murasakibara hadn't exactly exhausted himself, so he just toweled off. Akashi looked for Kuroko who should be back if Kagami was. He found the blue-haired boy sitting next to Himuro with Tsuki in his arms. Both men seemed to be talking about their babies. Akashi checked on Ayako but she seemed to be talking to Shintaro. He took his bag and told her: "We'll be back in a few minutes."

"Sure." She looked up. "That was a great game!"

"Thank you." He smiled proudly. Showing off hadn't been the purpose but he was glad anyway.

"Can you get some drinks on the way back? Natsue direly wants peach juice."

"Sure thing." He looked for the whirlwind. By now she was climbing trees.

While they talked Kazunari had bent down to kiss Shintaro's green hair who only waived him off, telling him he smelled. Kise chuckled about that. They were good to go after that. Momoi tagged along with her key, letting them in and giving them towels and other things they might need. She seemed completely at home here, though she still had her own flat. One look into the bathroom told them she basically lived here though. Everyone let Akashi go first, after which he sat with Momoi

drinking tea. Kazunari came out in a yukata, looking just as natural as Shintaro in one by now. His job had taught him to move with grace and though he did not interest Akashi at all, he could appreciate the beauty of Kazunari's movements. Kise followed Kasamatsu into the shower after a warning from Akashi that they would not wait if both decided to make out with each other. Whatever they did they were quick about it, so they left half an hour later in their normal clothes. No more basketball for today. They bought drinks for everyone at the conbini before returning to the park. Now that he looked at it, Ayako and him spent their time pretty similarly. When they had free time, they went to the park or museums. That wasn't so different. When they came back, the children cheered and ran to them asking for drinks. Natsue got her peach juice and tried some of his pear juice which she liked even more. Good thing he had bought two of them. Ayako took sour cherry and Kazunari handed Shintaro his red bean soup. Akashi held out some Pocari Sweat to Kuroko who took it with evident surprise before lowly thanking him. So he was feeling sorry. Good to know.

"So what did you talk about?" he asked Ayako who still sat next to Shintaro.

"Midorima told me about your childhood adventures. The story about how you two decided to go to a public middle-school really had me laugh." She smiled at him.

"I don't know why though," Midorima admitted.

"We were a bit peculiar as children. Both of us." Akashi toasted with Shintaro. "We still are, I guess. It's not as bad as back then though."

"He also told me you were only allowed to join the basketball team if you made captain and won the national championship ... that sounded pretty harsh." Her eyebrows were drawn together.

"Excellence in all." He took a sip from his juice. "It's the Akashi family motto. Nothing less than perfection is to be expected. If I decided to do something, I would only be allowed to if I practiced it to perfection."

"So you really won five out of six national championships?" She leaned nearer. "Well, I can believe it after I just saw you play, but ... that is completely off the charts."

"Losing that one time was a deep blow to my ego. A good one thankfully." He glanced at Kuroko. "I had lost control over my alter ego and that loss brought me back. I had been asleep in my own head for two and half years, so losing was a helpful experience." Losing Kuroko had hurt more though. "It was a bit confusing to suddenly find myself in a body more than fifteen centimeters taller. My limbs weren't exactly reacting as I was used to."

"So everyone is cautious around you because they are afraid of what your alter ego is capable of?" She looked at Midorima for confirmation. "Because he did some bad things in those two and a half years?"

"That's it in a nutshell." Akashi nodded. She was taking this rather calmly. "I wasn't nice, I played people against each other, I got violent when I was displeased. I used my skills to humiliate people that got on my nerves."

"So ... did you get therapy?" She glanced at Aomine still on the court.

"Not as in seeing a psychologist. My father would never have allowed that. Now that he is dead, I thought about it but by now my alter ego and I work well together, so I don't see the necessity. I read a lot of books about it. Some people try to reintegrate their personalities but often it is impossible anyway, so the best way is to strive to have all personalities work together."

"So if your alter ego decided to get too violent now, you would be able to intervene?" She looked at Momoi for a moment who sat next to Akashi but a bit behind.

"Mostly, yes. It still needs some fine-tuning. I don't attack people weaker than me but

I am not holding back in settings where others can defend themselves. I have no problem to trash Alphas on the court. I can still use cutting words if others don't behave appropriately. I just don't go around making people kneel before me anymore if I find them too cocky."

"Momoi, Kuroko or me don't fear him at all. He would never go against a women, an Omega or a pregnant person," Shintaro explained with a calm voice. "It's different for Alpha men. We don't call him the emperor without reason."

"That doesn't sound too bad. So your alter ego is not dangerous to me?" She asked that rather seriously. So behind the naive cheer, her sharp mind was still mulling over everything she heard.

"Not as you long as you say what you want. If you say yes but mean no, don't expect him to notice. If you don't want something, tell him. He won't stop otherwise." He pointed at his left eye. "If this one is golden, I stop being able to understand implications. I come up with things that are morally questionable and need a direct no to not go through with them. Others call that cruel, I call that practical. It's what I often need as head of my company."

"So your alter ego is the cold-blooded company boss version of yourself?"

"Pretty much." He nodded. "Successful business often means stepping on other's dreams and hopes. I don't enjoy that at all. He does. What should not have been was that he was the one to deal with my friends. That I am sorry about. I am happy they forgave me."

"That's a given." Momoi smiled at him. "Everyone does things in their youth they aren't proud of. What's important is that we learn from them."

"Your alter ego learned to listen to others, that was the most important thing." Shintaro added.

"I am sorry I tried to badmouth you," Kuroko added from the other blanket. It seemed like Himuro and him had stopped talking to listen in for a bit.

They all turned to him. Akashi debated asking him what his behavior had been about but Kuroko continued by himself: "I was angry about how you made Taiga look bad. To me, he is my most important person, so ... I got really angry."

"He treated Ayako disrespectfully. I couldn't let it stand like that." He scanned the memories provided by his alter ego. "I might have gone a bit too far though."

Kuroko just nodded and accepted his apology as well.

"I didn't feel like being treated disrespectfully," Ayako added cautiously.

"He didn't bow to you." Akashi inclined his head to her. "Those were bad manners."

"Well ... you are nineteen-year-olds playing basketball in a park. I don't expect such manners in such a situation."

"I do," Akashi simply told her. "All of my friends know I do."

"It is only proper," Shintaro supported him. "Bad behavior begins in your daily bearing."

"Those two are old blood and drilled Shin behavior into us. I think everyone is used to being scolded once or twice by one of them." Kazunari added who had stood with their back to them watching the playing children. "Shin-chan and Akashi are all about discipline."

"As a team captain I can only support such an attitude," Kasamatsu added with an angry glare at his partner who was obliviously typing on his phone. "I spent every day with those two hot-heads at work and that one after work." He first pointed at the two on the court and then at Kise.

"Yeah, you really got it worst." Kazunari grinned at him.

"Try getting Atsushi to even attend work every day." Himuro added with a roll of his eyes.

"You only need to get him there, I need to get him to actually work out," Kasamatsu replied.

"And that is why I did not want your job." Akashi smiled at the raven-haired man. "I had it for three years after all. Training miracles is like keeping a sack of fleas."

"What are your jobs?" Ayako asked the group.

"Akashi didn't tell you?" Kasamatsu began pointing at the people he mentioned. "I am captain of our national basketball team. Aomine is our small forward, Kagami our power forward. Atsushi is center, all of us are starters."

"Wait, you are professional players?" She looked at Akashi. "Did you really just beat five of them at the same time?"

"I was their captain for three years, that was long enough." He opened his hand in Kasamatsu's direction. "This one is fit for the job."

"Most days I don't think I am." The man shook his head. "Ryouta decided to retire due to his bad foot, so now he is working as a model, actor and singer."

"I got it right that he is Kise Ryouta, right? The one who got second place as the most wanted bachelor in Japan after you?" She asked Akashi.

"He is not a bachelor though – but for the public he is." He nodded at Shintaro. "My best friend here retired from basketball as well, even though he is well-missed."

"I study medicine." Shintaro told her but the hand on his lower belly spoke of the real reason. The smile he exchanged with Kazunari was also telling. "And my husband keeps the house and works as a tea master. It's our family trade."

"We are the typical stay-at-home-Omegas," Himuro continued with a look at Kuroko.

"I'd like to become a kindergarten teacher one day," the other man added.

"Really?" Himuro blinked in surprise. "I'd like to open a small cafe one day. Atsushi is a great baker and I am a great cook. I think we would make a good team when he gets too old to play basketball."

"That's some long-term plans." Momoi smiled at him. "I study sports medicine to get better at being the national team's manager and assistant coach."

"Secretly it's not me or Shintaro bossing everyone around, it is her," Akashi fake-whispered to Ayako.

"That's true." Kasamatsu smiled at her. "We really need you back, coach has trouble keeping both Aomine and Kagami under control at the same time."

"I fear, even with therapy, Daiki can never completely be kept under control." She smiled at her fiancée. "You can keep the animal out of the wild, but not the wild out of the animal."

"Both of them are similar in that regard," Kuroko agreed with her while looking at the court.

"They do give off the vibe of two animals fighting," Ayako said as well. "Their stamina is impressive as well. I would not have thought it possible they could stay play this long and intensive after Akashi beat both of them."

"Yes, we should stop them soon. Otherwise both will play until they lose consciousness and have to be carried home." Momoi nodded to herself and got out her whistle.

"Both of them are heavy," Kuroko added.

The Alpha woman stood, whistled and began to shout at both of them. Half a minute later both of them trotted off the court with a pout. They got drinks from their respective partners and an order to go shower and come back in street clothes. They

kicked rocks on their way with a sullen look on their faces.

"I can't believe it's the same every day." Momoi shook her head. "Those two never stop."

"It's like having three children." Kuroko nodded. "It's cute and annoying at the same time. At least they make money by bickering like small kids every day."

"It's nice to be paid for that," Murasakibara said before sitting on the grass next to the blanket. "Tatsu, my snacks are empty~."

"Should we get something to eat when those two are back?" The beautiful Omega looked into the round.

"I'll look for a restaurant that can fit all of us," Akashi offered and got out his phone.

"I'd like ramen." - "Okonomiyaki!" - "Some people here are pregnant, remember that."

- "Okonomiyaki fits everyone." - "Ramen does as well." - "I want some salad." - "Why would you need salad? You are leaner than everyone else." - "Everyone else plays basketball!" - "Yeah, we need to think about monsters like Kagami who eat ten times our portions." - "How about Sukiya?" - "I am not going to such a low class establishment." - "You're a snob, Midorimacchi!" - "Can we get cake?" - "Only after dinner, Atsushi."

"I reserved a private table at a Chinese restaurant," Akashi told them without listening to their argument. Ayako was lightly snickering at his side. "Remember that we have children and babies with us. That level of noise some of them produce is not allowed in most places."

"I have to tell you that Kikyo is well-behaved," Midorima started in the mode of an affronted parent.

"I wasn't talking about our actual children," Akashi reassured him. "They are better behaved than some others who call themselves their parents."

"Is this a jab against Taiga again?" Kuroko narrowed his eyes at him.

"Would you mind if it was?" He raised a red eye-brow.

The Omega was silent for a moment before he said: "While you are right, only I feel entitled to say such things about him."

"As you wish." Akashi nodded. "So are all babies and actual kids accounted for?" He looked for Natsue. He panicked for a second when he could not immediately find them.

"Kazu accompanied them to the playing ground." Shintaro pointed to the right. "He wanted to power them out as well, so they'll be able to play quietly in the restaurant."

"Good thinking." Akashi smiled at his best friend. He liked how everyone knew their place here.