

Split soul

Von Gepo

Kapitel 23: A voice from far beyond

Akashi did not believe in waiting. So he rented an apartment next to his company and had his butler move some of his stuff there. He also hired his cook to come by every evening to make him a meal in his new ... basis. He was loath to call it home but for now it would do. He made a deal with Shintaro to call every morning and evening for report and to make a visit once a week. Some of those would be doctor appointments, so for now that was alright. His lawyer had called him in shock if he had really signed everything off to his best friend which he just confirmed without further comment. For now all of this was rather normal. He did wake with food cravings sometimes, but as he had a conbini just an elevator ride away those weren't too much of a hassle. Ayako sent him a text after her heat ended where she thanked him again. By now she was sure it had been some kind of weird pheromone reaction because while she found him attractive she also wanted to hear Seijuro's opinion first. They decided to write texts instead of meeting up, so he sometimes got photos of Natsue or the kindergarten or Ayako in different places. One of them was pretty cute: she and Natsue were waving into the camera. He installed it as his screen saver.

He was in the middle of a pretty boring meeting two weeks later when all of a sudden he was able to feel a presence in the back of his mind. He asked: >Who's there?<

>It's me.< It sounded male, so it was most likely Seijuro.

>I am so glad to hear from you.< And wouldn't that be a surprise to his alter ego?

>Have you been able to talk with Sei?<

>Yeah, I ... had to look at some more of her memories. It's bad, Akashi. It's really bad.<

>Tell me that after watching my memories with our father.< He scoffed. >I wasn't the first split but I do remember the exact moment I awoke.<

>He raped her so often, so violently, so ... I wish I could forget again.< Seijuro sounded like he was in pain.

>Don't. You know as well as I that if we ever want all our personalities to work together, we need to at least know about our life. So tell me what you saw.< He wanted to know, even if he did not want to see.

>It began when our mother was pregnant with our brother. She seemed to have been traveling a lot before. Now she was at home and began to question father's methods of raising us. At that time it was about the amount of schoolwork and violin lessons. They fought a lot and our father let it out on us. I don't know why I know that because those weren't Sei's memories. Someone else supplied them, I don't know who. There is someone older than all three of us. At first it was physical violence. It seemed to arouse him, so he raped us when we were four years old. That made Sei and she has

been the one to live through every rape this body ever went through. There were so many, so ... I can't even describe it. I wouldn't have survived that. She survived because she told herself that she is an object, nothing but a vessel for our father's lust.<

>Have you been able to explain that to her?<

>No, she completely shut me out when I tried. Right now she doesn't want to talk to me any more and her memories are closed off.<

>I think I told you about our possible third alter ego seven times. It takes patience.< And he was so glad he didn't have to be the one to look at all that.

>You aren't surprised at all,< Seijuro stated with a bit of suspicion.

>I was very sure we were raped before I was created. I never told you about that, did I?< He gave an answer about possible market values and his input on their PR strategy for their new product, rattling down a speech he had already prepared this morning.

>I awoke to being drowned. I was drawn from a bath tube and pushed in again over and over while being told I had failed. I lost consciousness and gained it again to coughing my lungs out and blood running down my thighs. Father told me not to make a mistake ever again.<

>Sei had a memory of being raised out of the water and fucked over the edge of a bath tube before losing consciousness. Father told her she was such a good body if only she weren't so dumb.<

>Yeah, I guess she and me share a few more.< He gave a rather cutting comment to one of his employees making a stupid proposal. >Most likely I will have to talk to her and give some of her memories a bit of context. I am not looking forward to that.<

>How did you ever ... why hasn't one of you tried to kill us?< Seijuro sounded like he was crying again.

>Because she was an object and I was a robot. You can't hurt things that do not feel.< Which reminded him: >Did you give me a part of your emotions? I am suddenly able to feel, that is very inconvenient.<

>You can?< There was a moment of silence. >If I did that wasn't consciously.<

>Well, at least it made Ayako like me a bit. Are you back for good or are you going to go away again?< Please let him stay, he did not want to do this alone. Feeling was a scary thing and he had no one who could relate to the situation he found himself in.

>I want to try talking with Sei again. I can't do that from up here. How are you holding up?<

>Not so well since I have emotions. I signed away all of our rights to Shintaro, I live in a new apartment and I do nothing but work. I can't stand myself. This is damn lonely but I don't dare to meet anyone, I'll hurt them with how I am now.<

>Wow ... you sound completely different. Before, you would have jumped at the opportunity.<

>Now I would not, I hate it. When will you be back?< His mood soured which made the other members at the meeting twitch in their seats. Maybe it would make this drag move along faster.

>How long have I been gone?<

>Two weeks.<

>So long? Oh ... well, I need a few more I think.<

Great. Splendid. How fortunate. Akashi tried not to shout in his own head: >I am in my fourth month pregnant, trying to manage this company and preparing it for my absence by training a management team in just one month time, all while I am trying not to fuck up your relationship. I am handling both Sei's and your mess you left me

with. You are our main personality, be responsible for once!<

>You're cranky.<

>Oh really?,< he spat at his alter ego. >I am sick of this job.<

>You really do have emotions now.< Great deduction, Sherlock.<

>Whoever saddled me with them can go to hell in my opinion.<

>I could take over and you deal with Sei instead of me,< Seijuro offered.

>No, thank you. I want neither.<

>You were kind enough to remind me that one of us has to.<

>Go fuck an egg.<

His alter ego dared to chuckle at that.

>Hurry back.< He sighed in his head. >Also Ayako and I were unsure if we were allowed to date while you are away. Would you see it as a betrayal if me and her did romantic stuff?<

>Mine or your definition of romantic?< Seijuro did sound as positive as before, that was a good sign, right?

>Romantic as in sleeping with her when she agrees to it versus fucking her brains out.<

>If you dare to hurt her-<

>I told her what I did to Kuroko and how I got him to do as I say and warned her to only make decisions regarding me out of reach and after talking it over with someone. I am really trying my best not to hurt her, I promise.< What else could he say? >I also have empathy since I have emotions, it makes hurting people a lot harder than before.<

There was a moment of silence. Seijuro answered after nearly half a minute: >I'll look at your memories when I come back. Don't make me apologize to her for your behavior.<

>So if she agrees without me pressuring her, it's okay to sleep with her?<

>Lovingly. No bondage, no toys, no sadism, no slave-plays, not even humiliating her. If you make her feel like anything less than the great person that she is, we'll have a problem with each other. I was confused about Kuroko, I listened to and even believed some of your rationalism. I am not as naive as I was back then. I learned a hell lot about rape those last two weeks.<

>Yeah ... I am sorry about that.< Looking back at his memories with the emotions he had now, he felt nothing but shame. >I thought about apologizing to Kuroko but I first want all of this settled and my emotions to stabilize. If I apologize to him without your conversation skills and your much finer eye for social detail it will go horribly wrong and I owe him more than that.<

>You do.< There was another silence filled with anger. >Let Ayako choose a safe-word, even if you do things you deem normal.<

He sighed – aloud this time as the meeting was adjourned and everyone was shuffling out – and promised Seijuro to do that.

>For what it's worth, I like the person I am talking to now. You are a lot more approachable now. I don't mind sharing with you if you are like this.< Seijuro told him.

>Tell Ayako that I love her, will you?<

>I will.< He slowly gathered up his papers, not intent on talking to anyone right now.

>Take care and come back the same as before.<

>I can't really promise that.< His voice was dark. >Knowing and seeing it for myself are two diametrically different things.<

>I know.< His own voice was no more than a whisper. He knew so well. He

remembered all those moments he frantically told himself his father must have whipped him to have his backside hurt that much. He still hadn't told Seijuro about that operation he had when they were fifteen to take out a part of their spine tail that had been deformed due to the repeated rapes they had to suffer. He had always had a hunch of what was really going on with them since he knew why his memories were so fragmentary most of the time. By the gods, he knew so well.

He put a hand on his stomach. He would never allow that to happen to anyone else. Seijuro's presence had long faded again.

A week later he had four most peculiar persons standing in front of him. Or at least two of them were a bit unexpected. The two normal ones were male students, one a business student, the other a law student. The first unexpected one was a young, sloppily dressed man who had apparently been unemployed before and told him he was intrigued by mysteries. The other was a young girl of sixteen who said her reason for taking his tests had been boredom.

"Well, I bid you welcome. You must have been guessing about the job you are employing for and I will begin this with lifting the mystery: It's my own job."

There was a moment of silence before the law student asked: "You mean to say you are looking for someone to work as the CEO of the whole Akashi group?"

"One or a group, yes. None of my employees is capable of doing my job, not even a team of them. You are the only ones who were able to fulfill the requirements of being seen by me. The next part will be to undergo training by accompanying me if you feel up to it. If I have the impression that one or more of you might be able to do my job, I'll ask you if you'd like to have it. Until then you should have an impression what this will mean for you."

"Cool." The girl grinned. "What do you think how long that will take? My parents will go berserk if I miss too much school. They won't understand how much better this is."

"I'll call your school and make them give you time off for this. They can count it as job orientation or internship time or something like that. I can be quite persuasive."

"Thanks, Mister Akashi." She just nodded and waited for more to come.

"So I guess everyone is still in? This will be an unpaid internship which might end somewhere between today and in about two to three months for you."

"Do we get a reference for the internship?," the business student asked.

"Sure, why not?" He could care less, he only needed minutes to write one and it might mean the world for everyone of them.

"I don't know how to phrase my question." The unemployed man scratched his head which did not look like he had showered in the last few days. "How legal is your job?" Akashi smiled cruelly. Having emotions did not hinder him in putting them off sometimes.

"Can we go to jail for the things we see?," the girl asked after a moment.

"Not at all, this business is absolutely legal." Or at least the illegal parts were not so obvious that he or others might get in trouble for it. Informed stock sales, stolen inventions, framing heads of other companies – none of that was more than underhanded, so he never got in trouble with the police.

"May we ask what your reason for stepping down is?," the law student wanted to know.

"I'd like to go on vacation. I won't step down, I just don't want to work myself into an early grave. But my workload is high and my current staff is not able to handle it, so I'd like to train a team of experts."

"So is this a long-term job if we are hired or not?" His eyebrows were drawn together. "That depends on you." He leaned back and smirked. "Until today, I have only known one person able to take work off my hands and he is not interested. Maybe one of you is capable, maybe none of you is. We will see." He regarded them for a moment. "If there are no more questions, you will now have to sign this internship contract. It basically says that you are not allowed to talk, write or whatever else about the things you see here, so other companies can't use your information. If you decide to sell information, you can be sure you will find yourself in prison for that. And you can then be happy you'll be safe in there." He looked at the formerly unemployed man. He did give off the vibe of a criminal. His aura was similar to Haizaki.

"Do we have a specific work time or do we begin and end work with you?", the girl asked.

"I start at eight and stop at eight due to my doctor's orders. That seems not too much of a burden to me. I might give you work that will keep you longer but I guess that depends on you."

"My curfew is ten o'clock", the girl said and smiled, "so I guess I'll just work hard."

He had to admit that he liked her. She was obviously sixteen but she had a sharp mind. She was a highly intelligent, bubble-gum chewing make-up doll who checked her glaringly painted nails every few minutes. Her name was Seika.

He answered some questions regarding the contracts before taking the four to his meeting room and explaining the company's structure to them. The law and business students seemed to be the only ones who had informed themselves about the company before they applied and could ask some specific questions. He told them about various projects he was working on before giving them a tour of one of his experimental labs which was located in their main building. This division was mainly working with robotics, so he could show them some pretty cool gadgets he was thinking about mass-producing. The formerly unemployed man seemed to have a lot of experience with programming. He was constantly asking questions and Akashi was not able to answer all of them. One of his technicians was more than glad to, so they started an animated discussion and were soon analyzing programming codes. In the meantime, Akashi was talking with the business student about marketing, sellers and prices. All three got wide eyes upon hearing how much it cost to invent and produce just one of these things. Seika enthusiastically asked about other robotic fields like medical uses, starships and children's toys. She was pleased to hear that he had been the one to invent robotic cats and immediately asked to see one.

He shouted for LinLin which prompted his sleek, completely metal Bengal cat to come running to rub her head against his shin. He smiled at Seika and said: "Isn't she cute?"

"Yeah ... but she does not have fur."

"She's anti-allergic."

"But then it's no fun to cuddle her." She sat down anyway and offered her hand for sniffing. LinLin immediately came forward and begin to rub herself against the hand.

"She does behave very typically."

"We sold her with different fur options but the one for the lab was kept without fur. We can't have real pets in here and giving her fur would defeat the purpose. LinLin is allowed in here because we programmed her not to do some things like jump onto the control panel."

"That's intelligent." LinLin was lying on the ground in front of Seika, paws drawn heavenwards and rolling around. Seika was stroking her smooth metal stomach. LinLin was purring happily. "Doesn't she keep some people from working?"

"It's called taking constructive working pauses. I don't work my employees to the bone. We have a spa, training rooms and a kindergarten. The roof has a big garden for relaxation installed on it. People gladly work overtime here."

"Oh, do we have a lunch break?" She smiled at him.

"Most of the time it's lunch with clients or meetings with food but yes, you won't starve here."

"Do I need to ask my mom for lunch money?"

Cute. He imagined her running this company in two months, making millions of yen per month. It was an amusing thought. He said: "If we need to pay, I'll do that. It's the least for having you work for free."

"It's not for free if I get food. Free lunch sounds great. So if we go to meetings, do I need to wear a suit every day?" LinLin had climbed into her arms and seemed content snuggled on her arm and below her breasts.

"You need formal wear, yes. Do you have that or do you need clothing money?"

"I need to go shopping." She did not look unhappy about that. "Is it okay to ask for clothing money?"

"Remind me before you go."

"Cool." She got out her phone and texted a friend. "Shopping tour tonight", she singsang, "Say, what does such a cat with fur cost?"

"Seven-hundred thousand yen."

"How long does she live?"

"You have to load her batteries every week and replace them every three years. Until now we only had defects from mishandling. LinLin is seven years old."

"Then it's completely alright as a price. I'll ask for one for my birthday. Am I allowed to take a photo of LinLin?" Who had by now climbed her shoulder and lay like a scarf around her neck.

"As long as you can't see anything in the background."

She held up her phone and turned a bit. She showed him the picture and he nodded it off. This one had an okay behavior for a sixteen-year-old. He just felt like giving a classroom a tour. Mister law student looked bored out of his skull while the business student listened to the two men discussing programming. He went over and asked: "We will continue on, please finish the discussion."

"Oh, sorry, Mister Akashi", his researcher had flinched and turned. "Mister Nakatani had some great ideas regarding the balancing of our magnetic bicycle."

So number four was good at physics and programming. Good to know. He nodded and waited for the second that the man was typing out code and saying: "This should do it. You just need to test what happens with larger obstacles like stairs."

"Why should anyone drive a bike down some stairs?", the researcher asked in surprise. Nakatani drew up his shoulders. Akashi remembered Aomine doing such stunts. He made a note that he needed more men with practical experience as product testers. He continued to tour the building.