

K Powerless

Von Alma

Kapitel 3: Algid Anger

"I'll take you to him. Please, follow me."

An prosaic, unemotional look drilled through him like an arrow and drew an uneasy grin from his lips. These Blues really were quite icy people. He obediently followed the blond woman and the penetrating clacking of her heels. On their way, he unobtrusively led his gaze through the blue headquarters. It felt cold and sterile here, almost like in a hospital. The corridor was dark and narrow and seemed full of hidden secrets. A smile appeared on his lips again, but he was not comfortable at all. This was not what he originally had in mind. It was nothing like what he had imagined.

A slight sigh escaped his throat, but no words followed. Instead, he continually let his gaze circle around the building before the woman in front of him stopped abruptly. She motioned him to wait, knocked on the massive door before her and opened it after a few seconds. A brief conversation broke loose to whose words he paid no real attention. Eventually however, Awashima Seri came back into the hallway and asked him to enter the room with a simple gesture.

Light-footed, he strolled into the small office; a room that mixed the classic Japanese style so elegantly with Baroque furniture and modern architecture. Everything in this room was neat and accurate, properly sorted and put into place. He was convinced he wouldn't even be able to find a single speck of dust here. This time he refrained a sigh as the Blue King got up from his chair and approached him in a few steps. In respectful distance the man in blue stood before him and bowed correctly, before offering him an odd, friendly smile.

"Ahhh, welcome to my office, Silver King. May I offer you some tea?"

With his eyes closed and a gentle smile, Weismann shook his head. He knew that it was only polite to refuse the offer, even though he could no longer stand such formalities. "Thank you, Blue King. But I'm not in the mood for tea."

Once again, the large uniformed man bowed and looked at his young guest with the short white hair and the big innocent eyes. Weismann felt his analytical gaze cut through him like a knife does through butter. It did not help to make him feel more

comfortable. Munakata Reisi gave him a tired smile.

"Too bad, I would have liked to share a cup of tea with you." The empty phrase to the rehearsed answer flowed from his lips like second nature. "What brings you to me?"

Shortly, Weisman took a deep breath and then tried to break through the sterile formality of this conversation with an honest smile. "Nothing special really. I just wanted to see how you are."

Only for a brief moment it looked as if Munakata's brow furrowed. But then he laughed softly and closed his eyes. "Well, I don't think you need to worry about me. I serve the order, the city and you. "

With a silent smile, Weisman looked at the man before him. Just a few weeks ago nothing that had happened on earth had been of any interest to him. Neither who was king and why nor what they were doing with their powers. But the events of recent days had roused him in a brutal manner; brought him back to reality. And since his feet had touched the earth again, he had realized that his work had gone completely out of control. That people suffered; more than he had ever contemplated.

Munakata Reisi watched him closely again and the look in his cold, violet eyes was like the flash of a knife in the dark. Weismann tried to figure this man out; to see behind this mask of his. But the Blue King could no longer deceive Adolf K. Weismann. He was able to see right through him.

This man before him was a man without scruples, reckless and dangerously intelligent. A man who asserted his very own concept of order against all obstacles, including the law. And he did it so cunningly, it would keep his slate perfectly clean. An prosaic calculating man with no respect for the law, authority or privacy. A man who nonetheless learned to function perfectly in this bureaucratic political clockwork; leaving his true motives completely in the dark. A consistently suspicious and analytical person, who seemed to mock everyone with his arrogant manner. A loner who couldn't trust anyone. And a person you couldn't trust either.

The white-haired young man took a deep breath. He felt the urge to let his eyes wander through the room, but he stared into these violet eyes instead; those eyes hidden behind his glasses as in an attempt to conceal a secret. Indeed, Munakata Reisi was a dangerous man; a man who revealed nothing about his true self, who let no one close to himself. For Weismann, the Blue King was far more dangerous than the irascible, uncontrollable Red King. At least the Red King had understood what the true purpose of the Dresden Slates was. This man however, couldn't be more off track. He had created an ice-cold and flawless organization of subordinates. No place for feelings or affection or trust. This place, Scepter 4 was more like a cold stone in the middle of a dark ocean. It was soulless and hard and with no warmth.

"However..." the man in blue broke off the silence after a few moments, his eyes still located on him clinically. "...I have the feeling that you might be here for another reason."

Weismann could almost smell the slight, angry panic which now emanated from Munakata Reisi. He could not blame him, for he himself had been the one who saw Munakata's carefully constructed mask crumble. One week it had been. A week since he had come too late, one week when he had only been able to pick up the pieces of a fight. He remembered exactly how he had seen the two kings. The Red King lying lifelessly on the ground, the Blue King bowing over him, feeling his pulse. The man had not noticed him, had completely blanked him out. And then, at the moment when suddenly their looks had met, he had understood.

It had been just a tiny moment when Munakata Reisi had shown fear, but it had been long enough to be burnt into his memory. A tiny moment of weakness that had betrayed him forever. And Adolf K. Weismann understood very well. There was someone who was important to the Blue King. A secret he had, a secret which at that moment he was no longer able to hide. A secret that now connected both of them involuntarily. Weismann was pretty sure, the Blue King right now wished for nothing but the opportunity to cut that secret out of his memory. Munakata Reisi regarded him as an enemy, warning him with every single gesture, with every glance that this had to remain secret between them. He could see it in his strained facial expressions, his stiffly held back and the dark glint in his eyes.

Weismann briefly wondered whether he would be able to blackmail him with their little secret, but actually had nothing of the sort in mind. He had no desire to poke around in his past or in his wounds. And he didn't need the Blue King to rebel against him either. A sincere smile followed a short sigh when he lowered his head and closed his eyes.

"Not really. But I have to make a decision soon and I wanted to get some things straight first."

"I see..." replied Munakata darkly and more than suspiciously.

Weismann felt the violet eyes cut through him again, trying to violate him, trying to silence him for good. He really wished this conversation wouldn't be so terribly uncomfortable. Unsettled, he let his eyes further circle the room. "I've heard Scepter 4 dedicated itself to the monitoring of the former red clan..."

The man in the blue uniform stiffened noticeably, as if he smelled a ruse. His voice cracked dangerously, but he tried to remain formal. "Scepter 4 is a special unit that deals with unusual phenomena and events. In the ranks of the former red clan is a Strain. In addition, the attack on the clan's bar was made because of reasons afflicting with the past, when the Red King still had his powers. Moreover, we also suspect a Strain in the ranks of the perpetrators. So I do not see why you should be surprised by Scepter 4 simply doing its work."

The white-haired man laughed softly, but avoided direct eye contact. "...I didn't say that you have to justify yourself. It was just an observation on my part." Weismann noticed how these words incredibly angered the man before him, but he didn't wait for a response, but rather just kept talking. "I'm glad you take care of the situation, Blue King. I think the issue is in good hands with you. Unfortunately, I myself can't do anything to affect things anyway."

"I do nothing other than my job." His counterpart replied hard but somehow seemingly soothed. His attitude however remained abrasive and suspicious. "And it's not your job to take care of such things. These are the duties of the police, the government and Scepter 4."

He nodded slowly and sighed with a broken smile. "...No, that's not true. All of this is my fault, it is solely my responsibility. And I should be the one to straighten it again." That was true. He had turned his back to the world long enough now. It was time that he took responsibility and made sure that such a thing would never happen again.

Before Munakata was able to respond, Weismann raised his head and looked at him, a cheeky grin flashing over his lips. "Maybe I should suspend you from service for a while. You really deserve a vacation after you put your life on the line to save the city."

The face of the man in blue darkened. Weismann had it very right. This man considered him as an enemy and he looked as if he were close to erupting like a volcano. But even so, his voice was calm yet. "I do need neither holidays nor other benefits. In addition, we are about to apprehend the perpetrators of the attack on Homra's Bar. The city needs Scepter 4 now more than ever."

Grinning, the man with the white hair waved off and laughed. "Don't worry, Blue King. I would never discourage a dutiful man from his work. I was just teasing you."

Of amusement, however, there was no sign at all in Munakata's face. And although Weismann was not afraid of him, it made him feel uncomfortable nevertheless. He shrugged his shoulders and looked into his eyes openly and apologetically. "I'm sorry if I attacked you. I know that you probably have a lot to do lately. It's just, I need the advice of a man of your status..."

For a brief moment, the Blue King closed his eyes and breathed deeply. Seconds later, he seemed to have taken his stance again. "No, I'm the one who is sorry. Forgive me. Tell me what you have on your mind."

"Well ..." he began uncertainly, scratching the back of his head. "...Should I bring flowers to the Red King in the hospital, or do you think that is inappropriate?"

Wordlessly, Munakata stared at him, wondering if that man wanted to make a fool of him. But instead of taking the bait, he took a deep breath and pushed his glasses into

place, using just his middle finger. "...I don't think I'm the right person to be asked such a question..."

A grin slipped over Weismann's lips, as he began to shrug. "Well, I was asking you because you had a lot to do with the red clan in the past. I am deeply in your and Suoh Mikoto's debt. After all, he's the one who killed the Colourless King – and that even though it was my fault all of this happened to begin with. Without his effort, none of us would be alive now, I guess." For a moment he closed his eyes, but as his counterpart didn't respond in any way, he opened them again. "I am indebted to all of you. ...And I want to offer you all a compensation. ...Do you think the red clan would accept money to rebuild their bar?"

Once again, it took a long incredulous moment before Munakata reacted. His uncomfortableness to answer was highly palpable. "I don't think the red clan would accept any help. But you may try. As for me... I don't need any kind of compensation, as I mentioned earlier."

A loud sigh followed and Weismann finally gave up. However, he got what he came here for in the first place. He wanted to form an image of each of the kings. And as for Munakata Reisi, he had the feeling he captured him pretty well. The white-haired man looked towards him once again, this time with an open-hearted smile. "Well, then. I won't know unless I try, right? Thank you for your valuable time, Blue King. It was an honor. "

"It was an honor for me as well." Formally, Munakata Reisi bowed once more before him to pay him his hypocritical respect. "Come and see me whenever you feel like it. I am your faithful servant."

Weismann couldn't resist an amused grin. A perfect liar, indeed. The Blue King just couldn't resist to put a pinch of hidden mockery in his every word. Cunning and conniving. And a little pitiful.

Weismann took a few steps toward the door before he turned around again. His smile was sad when he looked him in the eyes one last time. "You know, Blue King... Have you ever thought about what I wanted to accomplish with the Dresden Slates?"

As the man in the uniform didn't answer, knowingly that he didn't have to, Adolf K. Weismann's smile broadened a bit. "...My original goal was... to create something beautiful. ...A place of belonging for people who had lost everything. Who don't belong anywhere anymore. A family for those, who are alone. It... was not about sacrifice or duty. Not about supremacy and subordination. I... wanted to create something that makes people feel good, feel loved and safe. Something that could make them happy..."

Munakata looked at him wordlessly, but it seemed as if the Silver King didn't expect an answer anyway. Instead, he winked at him with a sad expression and closed the door behind him, leaving the Blue King alone with himself and his office. Finally, Reisi followed the urge to fold his arms and close his eyes. His mouth bent and he held his

breath. A faint, bitter growl escaped his throat as he tried to breathe again. "Well ... that didn't quite work out, right Silver King?"

A knock forced his head to lift again in surprise. Fortunately, he had regained his self-control, so he gave permission to enter as businesslike as he always was. A green shock of hair appeared as Akiyama entered, saluting to his superior briefly. He looked at him with a serious and uncomfortable expression. He knew, the message he had would not please his Captain. Quickly, he swallowed for courage and tried to keep his voice flat and composed.

"Captain!"

With a liquid hand movement Munakata meant for him to relax. "What is the matter, Akiyama-kun?"

The man stiffened further, and his gaze was fixed and full of worry. "It's about Suoh Mikoto."

With a silent look and big lilac eyes, she looked at the two men before her. Like two giants towering above her. It wasn't the first time she felt as if they would belong to a different world. The big man with the sunglasses didn't look at her; he hadn't for a while now. Since the night her home was burned down, he seemed to have avoided sleep. Thick dark circles shone under his brows and his hair seemed flat and unwashed. Soot still clung to his clothes and his hair was covered by a fine dust of wood chips. He once again had spent the entire day at the bar, working with the others to clear the debris of their home. It was a tedious and tiring job and it tugged violently at him. She could see how broken he was, although he tried to cover it up.

And yet, Izumo tried to be strong for his friends. He assured them repeatedly that this was not the end, that they would rebuild Homra and make it even better. He smiled, but it was not quite the smile she knew. In front of her, he couldn't hide his true feelings. And he knew. That was the reason he avoided looking at her. Even now, he didn't look directly at her; he only yelled a few words in her direction before he disappeared in the next room. Since she had lost her home, she lived here with Izumo. His apartment was quite plain, located in the middle of the city, in a small terraced house with a nice view over the cityscape. It was small, but it was comfy for her. And she liked it very much.

Her eyes rolled back from Izumo to the man standing beside her. Two tired, lackluster eyes met hers and for a seemingly endless moment all they did was look into each other's eyes. She could see how exhausted and worn out he was. Could feel how powerless he felt. And yet here he was, standing next to her, holding her hand. His bright red colour was gone; only the burns that covered his arms, chest and part of his back, glowed like a fire in the ashes. He wasn't feeling well and yet he was here. Her

eyes gave him a smile, although her lips didn't move. Even if she couldn't see his unique red glow, Mikoto remained Mikoto. Nothing had changed. Nothing at all.

"Anna, Mikoto!" it called from the kitchen. "Could you please bring me the bag from the hallway?"

It was the white-haired girl who grabbed the bag next to her, but Mikoto took it from her without a single word and carried it slowly into the kitchen. Anna followed him silently. When he arrived in the kitchen, Izumo smiled and put a knife into his best friend's hand. Mikoto hated to be pitied and chaperoned, so the blond man condemned him to peel the potatoes. Obeying and without protest, the former king sat at the small table and began to do as he was told. Anna heard Izumo talk without really paying attention to what he said. She knew that side of him - he talked and talked and talked, simply to avoid having to endure the silence. And he really tried stubbornly to lighten the mood.

It had been only a few hours since Mikoto had left the hospital and found a shelter at his friend's place. Neither a doctor nor a nurse had given him permission to go. Although his condition was not critical anymore, the pain blockers he had received had some side effects. Side effects such as dizziness, depression, pain and feelings of suffocation. However, Mikoto showed no reaction at all. She felt what he felt, but it didn't bother her. She knew he would smile again. She was sure of it. It couldn't get any worse, right?

The air in the small kitchen became hotter and more humid the more ingredients Izumo threw in the small wok. It hissed and sizzled loudly and gradually filled the room with a pleasant spicy smell. Neither Anna nor Mikoto talked much, but they did their best to help their friend preparing dinner, washing the dishes and setting the table. The girl looked dreamily at the red bubbles of the detergent on their fingers, as a chime broke the silence.

"Uhh... and who could that be?" Izumo sighed and looked toward the door, irritated. Hastily, he dried his hands with a towel, before he gave his friends a brief hint. "You make sure nothing burns, okay?"

The only response that he drew out of them was a silent nod. Mikoto went back doing the dishes for Anna with total disinterest, while she tried to peek around the corner. Anna knew who was at the door. But she still wanted to see.

With a jerk, Izumo opened the door and his face contorted in surprise as he recognized the person in front of him. With the man in blue an icy cold surge of air followed, making him frown involuntarily. His mouth bent dissatisfied, as he pressed his hand on his hip. "Tsk... right now is really a bad time, you know? Can't you come back later?"

The man in the blue uniform was not impressed and straightened his back. With an businesslike look, he cleared his throat. "Kusanagi Izumo of Homra... We know that Suoh Mikoto is with you."

"So...?" Izumo replied unimpressed, leaning against the frame. He looked at the middle-sized man with the green, shaggy hair, but he couldn't remember if they had met before.

Akiyama looked at him fearlessly, and kept his voice businesslike. "The former Red King and his followers are now under custody of Scepter 4. A contravention against the conditions will not-

"Woah woah woah, slow down here." The blond man interrupted him with a heavy frown. "What do you mean by "custody"?"

An objective, unfazed gaze drilled through him. "...The red clan, Homra and all its members are wanted for vandalism, hostage-taking and troublemaking. Because of the special circumstances all of its members are still on probation. If you comply with the instructions of Scepter 4, your punishment may be canceled and the charges withdrawn."

"Huh?" Defensively, his counterpart crossed his arms and cocked his head. "Probation?"

"The restrictions..." warned Akiyama in a dark tone. "...include three conditions. First... all members of the former Red King's clan and the Red King himself... must refrain from further acts of violence, taking of hostages or damaging of property." Just for a moment, the uniformed man gave him time to let it sink before he continued. "Secondly... no member of the former Red King's clan nor the Red King himself are allowed to investigate the incident of the arson attack in Homra's bar. You are forbidden to act in any way, including any attempt to take revenge."

"Give me a break!" Izumo interrupted him with a disgusted face. "Since when do you think can you demand any sort of accountability from us? We do things our way. Scepter 4 is not in charge of us."

"Well, it just so happens that we are." Akiyama replied with a very cold expression. "In case of any resistance, all members of Scepter 4 have authorization to detain the members of the former red clan. These regulations are designed to protect the public as well as the members of the former red clan."

"You want to arrest us?" Izumo hissed angrily and glared at him. "And you really believe that this is a good idea?"

"Times have changed." The man in blue answered unwaveringly. "The red clan is completely without power. You're now ordinary citizens of the city. And Scepter 4 had overlooked your criminal goings-on long enough. Homra has violated several laws and the treatment that you're now experiencing is more than accommodating. You can be glad we haven't arrested you already. You are wanted criminals. From now on you move on very thin ice."

"Grrr..." Izumo growled briefly and for a moment he seemed as if he were about to lose it. But he knew what he had to do. He knew he had no choice. This man before him was right. Maybe they had it coming all along. Basically, he had expected it. They had to account for what they had done. It was foolish to think they could escape this mess without sacrifices.

Finally, he pulled himself together and breathed deeply. Defeated, he closed his eyes and hissed. "...Fine. As long as you Blues do your job properly and find those who torched my bar..."

"Information in this regard are strictly confidential and will not be revealed."

"Yeah, yeah, all right. ...What is the third condition?"

"...Third..." The man with the green hair continued his monotonous speech. "...the former Red King Suoh Mikoto must submit to medical supervision. As long as no medical report confirms the stability of his condition, he has no right to leave the hospital. Should he refuse to fulfill this requirement, we will consider him a risk for his environment and he will be arrested at once."

A roar shook the frame of the door and had Izumo wince. A hand grabbed his shoulder and pulled him back recklessly. When Mikoto stepped between his friend and the man in blue, the air around them turned into poison. The cold fury in his golden eyes was so terrifying that Akiyama began to swallow. He resisted the urge to move back a step just in the last second. The threatening, deep voice that thundered against him now, made him cringe.

"You will fuck off immediately. And you can you tell your captain something. If Munakata has to tell me something, then he should come here by himself and talk with me face to face!"

Trying to regain his composure, the little man in front of him opened his mouth, but Suoh only hissed louder and slammed the door right in his face. Leaving a silenced Izumo behind, he stomped through the corridor and disappeared into the living room.

Only hesitantly, the blond man dared to pursue him, still waiting to be called to the door by their unwanted guest again. But when he arrived at where Anna stood, she took his hand and whispered softly.

"The man in blue is gone."

An uneasy feeling swelled inside his stomach, as Izumo nodded. Only seconds later, Mikoto appeared before him once again. He had his jacket thrown over his shoulder and had put on his shoes. The raging anger was corroding his face, much more than ever before. It made Izumo shiver in fear for a second. He gave him one last wistful look.

"Mikoto... please... don't do anything stupid now."

"Tch!" he hissed and turned his back to him. "I'm coming back, don't worry. But enough is enough. I will settle things - once and for all."