

Split soul

Von Gepo

Kapitel 20: A sordid tale

Akashi had underestimated Kazunari. Not even slightly but by leagues. The man was more intelligent, more stable and even more compassionate and sensitive than he had ever imagined. Honestly, he might be someone Akashi would consider as his own partner if he hadn't been male and already married. And a top – they would definitely not be compatible in bed. But he began to understand why a proud man like Shintaro would agree to being this man's bottom.

Kazunari helped him to tell Ayako. More than that, he was like the perfect mediator, serving tea, introducing him, explaining when he didn't know what to say, smoothing his words to give them less of a sting. It was nearly midnight when they had explained everything to Ayako. She had stayed silent for all of it. Before she could even formulate her questions, Kazunari knew what she would ask and answered. He might even be more of a genius than Seijuro when it came to diplomacy.

She still looked devastated and whispered: "Thank you for telling me all of this."

"Seijuro would have wanted me to." It sounded like his alter ego was dead. "I don't know if ... when he'll be back. It might be days. It might be years. It might never happen." He might not even exist anymore but he knew it would be wrong to say that. "You will sign those documents tonight?" She looked him in the eyes. "So even you might be gone afterwards?"

He simply nodded.

"Am I allowed to visit if you or Seijuro are present again?" Her voice nearly broke.

"Of course. I am sure he would love that." He wasn't sure what he himself thought. She would only look for Seijuro in him, wouldn't she?

She just nodded and finally broke down in tears. He simply watched as Kazunari hugged her and let her cry on his shoulder. As always it moved nothing in him. He simply felt a slight annoyance at having to wait until she finished her crying fit. He looked at Shintaro who had been standing in the back of the room for about half an hour. He had the papers with him.

The green-haired man came over and sat next to him. Akashi took the documents from him and began to read them over. As expected they were worded perfectly, a lawyer couldn't have written them better. They included the exact legal texts under which what kind of rights would be extracted from him, why and for how long. In essence it said that until he was aware of all of his personalities and could make decisions for all of them, he would only have the rights Shintaro saw fit to give him. It would make Shintaro his legal guardian in all aspects. It would give the man the right to lock him up, sedate him with medication and take all of his possessions from him. He got out his stamp and signed it both ways. Shintaro did the same. Kazunari agreed

to be their witness. Shintaro had already brought his husband's stamp, trusting them both to work this out. Ayako kept crying while she watched them do this.

"I'll keep this in the safe until we give this to our lawyer. Your lawyer, you and us will get a copy of this," Shintaro said before he left.

Akashi just buried his head in his hands. He knew that was neither manly nor his normal behavior but for once he was just tired of everything. He would go to sleep soon and he knew he might never wake up again. In a sense it was like dying. Ayako knew that, he knew that. Shintaro and Kazunari were aware of this. Shintaro returned and sat with them. He served himself a cup of tea. Ayako cried silently while Kazunari gave her tissues.

"Is there a room you can lock me up in? I don't know who I'll be when I wake," Akashi asked them.

"As you know we have prison rooms. They would not stop you but if Sei is not violent they might stop her." Shintaro drank his cup in one go and stood. "Please follow me."

Kazunari stood as well and said: "I'll get you a futon."

Ayako just stared at him looking defeated and worn out. He felt a twinge of pain seeing her like that. Could he just leave like that? Seijuro would cling to her, would kiss her senseless and beg her to stay with him. Even if it took years, he would want her to wait for him. Akashi wouldn't ask that of her.

He turned and left.

He awoke in the same room he had gone to sleep in. His phone was lying in the same place he had put it down in. He took it and checked the date and time.

It was the morning after, exactly six o'clock. He relaxed and closed his eyes for a moment. So Sei had not decided to come out yet. Maybe she really thought he was no danger to the child. Or maybe she knew he had signed those papers and coming out would not get her where she desired to be.

Or maybe she only had more power as long as their father was still alive. Maybe he could try to abort the child. Should he? He might wake her but what if he didn't? He did not want this child. It would inconvenience ... well, it would not make him take two weeks off. On the other hand, he might hate their father but he did see the merit in having a blood-child. Seijuro might not care about inheritance but this was a company owned by the emperor's nephew. Even if Seijuro did not care about blood, others would. Having this child might prove useful. The fact that he didn't want to be pregnant might be more insignificant than the merit this child held.

It was Seijuro that wanted to spare someone his fate. Akashi did not care about that much. They had survived, this child would survive. He didn't plan on raping it, so it might even be more stable than them. It had been his initial urge to purge himself but was this actually rational? A child would solve some problems even born out of wedlock. No matter how cruel their father was – he was a premium Alpha. Their child would have quite a good set of genes if the incest didn't leave too much damage. If it was some ugly, mangled thing he could kill it afterwards just as well.

>The more you look out for it, the stronger it will be,< a female voice whispered. Urgh. So this was where his thoughts were coming from. Seemed like she was able to talk to him all along.

>Are you injecting me with your will to have this child?<

>You want the company to survive, I want this child healthy and strong. We don't have to battle.<

>Did you put Seijuro to sleep to persuade me?< His voice was full of loathing.

>He is an emotional wimp. You are still weak but a lot more bearable. You know this deal makes sense.< She chuckled. >We are a failure. How about raising a child without this pathetic side we have to endure?<

Well, yes, Seijuro was a wimp. He had always thought so. Their alter ego spent too much time on dallying with unimportant characters, precious time they could use for more important things. Why had he been on Seijuro's side? There was nothing they needed emotions for.

>I knew you would understand. Let's raise a child in our image. You'll be a splendid father figure.<

>I have no interest in a child.< He stood and called Shintaro with his phone. He might not be able to run from his head but he could get help. >I don't want to be a father.<

>Would you not like to give something of yourself before you die?< Her voice turned sharp. >Do you think anyone will remember you? You're a pathetic alter ego of a personality that will never be remembered. You're nothing.<

>Shame to you. I have no emotions, I don't need recognition. You're barking at the wrong tree. I don't care about my worth.< He heard the other side pick up. "Shintaro? This is Akashi. Sei is trying to take over, could you come over and help? It's hard to keep her at bay." It was hard to speak over her hysterical laughter.

>You sad creature. What are you even living for? I thought you might be a role model but you are nothing. You are just as pathetic as Seijuro. None of you is worthy of this body, this title and lineage. You are playing with things you can't appreciate. Go to sleep.<

His legs shook, his hands trembled. His vision was getting hazy.

No, this wouldn't happen. There was no need for her. Their father was dead. She wasn't needed anymore. He was their master now. He ran the company, he was the one in control.

His vision turned white. He could hear his blood run in his ears, feel his heart furiously pumping.

No! He didn't want this!

>Stop this, I agree!<

>Oh?< She made a humming sound. >You'll do your very best to bear this child to full term?<

>As long as possible. I promise. Just let me stay in control and run the company.< His vision slowly returned. >I won't train, I'll stick to the rules. If the company is ruined, what should that child inherit?<

>You are beginning to see my point.< Her voice was turning to that of a young, mannered woman. >It is so nice to strike a deal with you.< It turned dark again. >I am watching you. Don't underestimate me.< He recognized this chuckle. It was his own, just with her voice. >Don't disappoint me.<

For the first time in his life he felt terror.

Shintaro had found him lying on the ground waking from unconsciousness. He had been told to take deep breaths, to calm, to stop shaking. It hadn't stopped the panic attack he evidently had. His friend had called for his husband who had gotten a trash sack to hold in front of his face. Only then was he able to calm down. Kazunari cautiously lowered the sack after a few more breaths.

Akashi coughed and took two deep lungfuls of air.

"So ... she lost?," Shintaro asked.

The redhead just shook his head and slowly got up. His legs shook, his hands were

trembling. This was bad, so bad. He had never been afraid. Anxiety was Seijuro's part, wasn't it? He leaned on his best friend and answered: "She's stronger."

"That's bad news." Kazunari took a step back. "So why are you still here?"

"I ... I promised ... I would keep the child." He closed his eyes. Shit. He had been in panic. He would have done anything. Why did he make such a promise? "She nearly had me."

"But if you keep the child, she doesn't have enough leverage?" Shintaro steadied him.

"I thought about abortion ... it woke her. She's really strong. She can mess with my mind, she can put me to sleep. I never felt so-" Helpless. He couldn't say it. Why did he have feelings? Where did they come from? Were they Seijuro's? Wasn't he completely asleep? Was their bond enough to triumph over her? It had been hard for her to put him down. Seijuro and him had merged slightly. If they did more than that, maybe they might get stronger than her?

That must be why she immediately put Seijuro down like a unwanted animal. It wasn't for his own good, he was a danger to her. Every one on their own made her the strongest but if they worked together, they might get more powerful than her. So he needed to find a way to wake Seijuro. If he was able to feel a bit, that might be their link. If he explored those feelings he might get his alter ego back.

"For now I seem to be in control of this body." He righted himself. "I'd like to take a shower and go to work. I will return to my mansion tonight."

"Is that advisable? She is stronger there," Shintaro argued.

"I couldn't possibly inconvenience you like this any longer-"

"Stop spouting nonsense, you're a family friend." Kazunari smiled at him. "We are honor-bound to help you."

"You are easier to check on if you stay," the green-haired man added.

"As you wish." He inclined his head. "I'll have my driver bring some clothes." A text would suffice, so he typed one. "I hope I haven't rudely awakened you."

"We were prepared for a rough night." Kazunari nodded to his husband. "Would you give our guest some towels and spare clothes? I'll prepare breakfast."

"I was looking into renting an apartment before. I'll take up my search again." Why was he so keen on getting away? There was some feeling in him. What was that? It felt strange, something like a slow burn in his chest that spread over his body. It was definitely unsettling.

"It is alright to accept help, Akashi." Shintaro nodded to him. "No one will think less of you for that."

"I don't care about other people's opini-"

"You don't have to feel like a lesser man for that." The other man walked in front.

"Asking for help shows true strength of character."

"It shows weakness."

"Those are the words of someone who never had to ask." Shintaro handed him a towel, a yukata and an obi. "Asking is easy as long as you could do without help. Asking when you are in a pinch needs bravery. It took me years to learn." He led him to bathroom. "I am proud of you that you came to us yesterday. Don't back away from it now."

Akashi snorted in disdain. That was only one way to look at it. He closed the door in Shintaro's face and locked it. So this was ... annoyance. He didn't like to be lectured. He sighed in defeat.

Life had been so much easier without emotions.

