

Not good enough

Von Gepo

Kapitel 22: Reward

Tatsuya and Alex came back to see the end of the third and the forth quarter. They both came to the conclusion that Atsushi's old teammates were simply insane. All of them. But Kise was definitely the worst of them. Tatsuya had not seen the two geniuses yet but he could not imagine anyone better than Kise. Not even his boyfriend if he was honest. The guy was off the charts. Aomine had been magnificent but this one was even better. It did give him chills about how Akashi and Midorima would play. Did Taiga really stand a chance? Tatsuya wanted him to win but after seeing Kise ... oh well. So that was who they would play tomorrow. He certainly wished his ex-brother good luck.

He found Atsushi in their hotel's lobby watching the people going in and out. Had he waited for him? Oh no, Tatsuya owned their key card because his boyfriend would only lose his. So he had had to wait for him. He went over and kissed the young man before saying: "Sorry for the wait. Have you been here long?"

"Hours." Of course, Atsushi had no real concept of time. "I missed you."

"I missed you too." He gave him another kiss. "But I needed some time for myself. I told my basketball teacher about us."

"Oh?" Atsushi tilted his head.

"Here name is Alex, she trained me back in America. She came to watch our game."

"Was she disappointed?" His boyfriend looked down.

"Not at all. She said it was a great game. We were extremely close to winning thanks to you. Next time we'll definitely make it." He kissed his boyfriend's jaw. "Would you like to go up to our room and be rewarded for the great game you played?"

"Even though we lost?" Atsushi seemed to be suspicious.

"It's sad, yes. But watching you give your all is all I ever wanted. You did well." He hugged the bigger man while still looking at him. "I am really proud of you."

"Yes?" His boyfriend smiled.

"I promise." He gave him another kiss. "So I really want us to have a great night together."

"With sex?" The smile turned into a grin.

"Yes, with sex," he whispered back.

"Okay." Atsushi picked him up and brought him to the elevator.

Atsushi was lying above him, kissing his face while they cooled down again. He was always so caring and loving and gentle and ... Tatsuya giddily laughed into their kiss. Atsushi just smiled and kissed him again.

"You're getting heavy," Tatsuya reminded him and was rolled to the side by his

boyfriend.

"I like to be rewarded for playing," the other mumbled into his ear.

"For playing seriously in an important game." He lay his head on his boyfriend's shoulder. "You were magnificent."

"Magnificent," Atsushi echoed. "That's something good, right?"

"It's something very good."

"I really like you, Muro-chin."

"I love you too." He kissed the skin of the shoulder he was lying on. "Do you want to stay with me forever?"

"Can I?" Atsushi grinned at him. "I'd like that."

"I'd like that too." He crawled up and kissed the other on the lips. "If you want us to be together forever, we can mate in my next heat. Do you know what mating is?"

"I bite you and you'll be mine forever."

"I'll be yours and you'll be mine. Forever."

Atsushi nodded like an excited child.

"Thank you." They shared a tender kiss.

His boyfriend seemed to vibrate with energy though. He asked immediately after the kiss: "Can we have a baby too?"

"Once you have finished school and got a job, yes."

"What kind of job?" Atsushi looked up at him.

"You'll train seriously and then you can become a basketball player. That's a good job." He petted his boyfriend's face with a finger tip. "You just continue to train and play and next year, we'll win a tournament. Then the year after, we'll win one again and you'll get a job and then we can have a baby."

"I want one now." Atsushi pouted at him.

"One has to work for the things one wants in life. You worked hard to get into a nice school and to have a boyfriend and you are really good to me, so you'll get me as a mate. Now you'll continue to be a great basketball player and then we can have a baby." He kissed the pout turned frown. "But know what? Once I am your mate, we can have a dorm room for ourselves. No more sneaking into your dorm and out again. We'll be legally allowed to have sex in our dorm room."

"We can have more sex?" His boyfriend grinned.

"Yes, that too." Tatsuya snuggled against him. "You'll do your plans and care for me and then we can have loads of sex."

"I love you, Muro-chin."

"I love you too." And most of all, he loved how uncomplicated his boyfriend was.

Now who should he tell? Coach Araki and Atsushi's teacher of course. His parents and Atsushi's mother. He would tell Taiga once he came to talk about their future. Was there anyone else that was important? Did they have to register with any supervisors or something? He could pose that question to their coach.

They went down to breakfast and were informed that they were allowed to stay another night and watch the finals. Cool! Atsushi shoved loads of food inside himself while Tatsuya asked their coach if they could meet up tonight for something important. She nodded before continuing to look after the other boys who often messed up their table manners. Tatsuya did the same for Atsushi.

The first game was Shutoku against Rakuzan. As he had feared, those two miracles were simply nuts. Midorima was bad. Really bad with that high projectile three pointer. But Akashi was worse. Way worse. He got how everyone feared and admired

him at the same time. His personality seemed shit but his leadership skills were superb. Somehow Tatsuya was a bit relieved they did not have to play him now. But he really needed to wish Taiga good luck.

But first Seirin had to play Kaijo. Honestly, Tatsuya did not know how they were supposed to beat Kise. The team was good but Kise ruled. Not exactly like Akashi, that one might still be better, but he was bad news for Seirin anyway. The first minute showed that without fault. Kise would have to tone it down but if he had more stamina – no one would stop that man. When he saw him starting to limp, it felt like the world would break. No. How could ... why had Akashi let that come to pass? Why hadn't he ordered Kise off? Because he didn't pay him? Did he only look after Atsushi? It was so unfair, no one should waste a genius like Kise like that.

His team knew as well. They called him off and threw the game. Well, they still played bravely but this was over for them and they knew. It was sad and also uplifting to see. This happened. They would go on anyway. Next year, next chance, just like with them. Next year Atsushi would have filled out more, would be able to not only defend but attack from start to finish.

For now, it was how it was. He texted Taiga to meet up with him tomorrow morning. But today, he had a talk with coach in the evening. Should he go alone or take Atsushi with him? How would she react? Would she cheer him on? She had been the one to sternly tell him he should only be with Atsushi if he gave mating a chance. As she had allowed their relationship, she most likely supported them, right? Hopefully she would see him as good enough. Honestly, he feared her more than Atsushi's mother. He expected that one to be happy that someone took the boy off her hands.

"Would you accompany me for drinks again?" Coach Araki smiled at him.

"Sure." Maybe this time he could talk some alcohol out of her.

"Where is Murasakibara?" They began to walk to another area where they would find some bars.

"I left him in the hotel room. He was playing with his toys and still had some chips left from his evening plan." Lately, Atsushi did his plans perfectly. He would have to talk to teacher Tsueda about making them a bit harder.

"It's hard to imagine such a giant playing with cars."

"It's mostly Lego right now. I also got him some puzzles, they are pretty hard for him. He hasn't been able to do the 100 pieces one yet but he's trying." He had been quite proud when Atsushi got the 48 pieces puzzle right. Before they met, 16 pieces had been his maximum before he lost interest due to difficulty.

"I really admire you, you know?," she said in a voice no louder than a whisper.

"Huh?" He stopped in his tracks. They were standing next to a road full of shops behind which the dining and bar district would follow.

"How you do that. Being with him. Seeing both the man and the child and loving both of them. If I had to care for him, I don't know if I could still see him as desirable. If I loved him, I don't know if I could be his caregiver. It's not easy to fill both roles and I admire you for being able to do that."

Oh. Well. Hm ... somehow it was nice to hear but it also filled him with something dark, a sinking feeling of ... dread? He was only himself after all. He wasn't someone special. He did what he did and he liked it. It made no sense to spend idle thoughts on "What if Atsushi wasn't mentally deficient" because that would never happen. He liked Atsushi the way he was, even with all the work it included. He didn't know if he was good though. He didn't know if he was able to fill all those roles and he didn't

know if he could continue to do so. He didn't feel like someone that could be admired. It was more like he waited for the hammer to fall – to have someone tell him he wasn't good enough.

"You don't look happy though. Did you want to tell me it's too much?" She took his arm and lead him on.

"I don't look happy?" He bit his lip. He had felt happy but maybe she saw something else?

"Right this moment. Normally you do, so I was surprised."

"I am happy." His shoulders sacked. "Just insecure, I guess."

"What about?" She looped her arm around his as if they were going out. They had entered the bar district and he saw quite an amount of Alphas turn their heads for him.

"Can we sit down first?" He felt threatened by the glances. They entered a bar and went down into a partly lit cellar with a bar. There were some free tables and she took one of them.

"I'll get some drinks. What do you want?"

"Alcohol?" He knew she would shake her head and wasn't surprised that she did.

"Coconut milk."

She raised an eyebrow but went to order at the bar. It seemed like they actually had coconut milk, she came back with a beer and his drink. They toasted and drank before she asked: "So spill. What is this about?"

"Atsushi." He took a deep breath to gather his courage. "I'd like to mate with him."

She looked at him for a moment before leaning in and asking: "Seriously?"

He quickly nodded and took another swallow of coconut milk.

They shared a few seconds of silence. It seemed like an eternity. What would her reaction be? Why wasn't she answering? Was it really so far-fetched a concept? She had been the one to tell him this relationship was to be a serious one. Had she still expected him to get tired and run? He was a teenager but he ... he had known what being with Atsushi meant. It hadn't been an easy decision. There had been hormones, pheromones, sure, but still ... he had known what he got himself into.

"Somehow I never expected this." She sipped her beer and seemed deep in thought. It took a bit until she continued to speak. "You know that he won't get better? There won't be any miracles making him better."

"I take him as he is."

"You will have to control his plans, his food, his training for the rest of your life. You'll be his partner, his manager and his caretaker." Her gaze was saddening. "You'll never have someone other than him in your life." She seemed like she was remembering something mournful. "You're very young still and this is a life-changing decision."

"So you don't fear I could be the wrong one for him?" He asked timidly.

"You?" She blinked. "How did you come up with that idea? Who was the one to motivate him yesterday? He would have done that for no one but you." Her gaze lingered on him for some seconds before returning to her beer. "That's it, right? It's what tipped the scale."

He just nodded and smiled.

"No one can doubt that he is devoted to you. He cherishes you and will surely continue to do so. But if you become his main caretaker, this could turn to resentment. Atsushi is like a child. He loves the one caring for him unconditionally but whenever he is angry he'll be like a petulant child. And there is always the knowledge that you won't ever be equals. Who tells you when you are doing well? Who warns you

when you misuse the power you have over him?"

"For the next two and half years, I trust you and teacher Tsueda to do that." And then? Who would be there afterwards? "I hope Atsushi will be able to build some friendships, so that his friends will look out for him."

She nodded slowly, the shock and sadness still fresh in her eyes. They spent another moment in silence before she said: "You know, on one hand I am immensely proud of you. On the other hand I am scared as hell. If I were your mother, I don't think I could let you be mated at so young an age. At the same time, I know that most others would already be mated at your age. Some already have kids. Whenever I see you, I can't wrap my head around the fact that Omegas tend to mate at thirteen or fourteen years old. That should be forbidden."

"At least I was able to make my own choices." He smiled at her but his smile was tinted with sadness. She was right. This was not how life was supposed to be.

"I don't know what I should say as your teacher, but as a human I think you chose correctly. In terms of love, I don't think anyone could be more devoted than Murasakibara. As your teacher, I guess I should think of your career and your life choices and opportunities and warn you off but ... it feels right. You two are good for one another. I just hopes it stays that way." She sighed deeply. "I hope you won't grow to resent him. Being tied to someone can be very upsetting. He will be tied to you, you to him. That's a very secure bond but also very constricting."

"I want to be tied to him." He may feel insecure if this was the right way, the right choice, but it was the direction his heart pointed into.

"Once upon a time, I was in love too ... but she wanted freedom. She did not want to be tied down. So I was left alone." Araki's beer was almost gone. "I can see the appeal to have someone that wants to live a family life. Even if that someone is ill and unreliable in some aspects."

"Are you still waiting for her?," Tatsuya dared to ask.

"Guess so." His coach shrugged her shoulders. "I don't wish that fate on anyone."

"Thank you." His smile was void of any sadness.