

Not good enough

Von Gepo

Kapitel 21: Brotherhood

Tatsuya kissed his boyfriend senseless. They were actually told to get a room by their teammates before coach Araki finally decided to split them up. She announced they would get dinner now and he could only come if he behaved himself. Tatsuya gnawed on his lower lip and finally told her he would eat by himself. She gave him a bit of money and the others left.

Atsushi did not even ask for a parting kiss after seeing the annoyance directed at him. It irked Tatsuya a bit but on the other hand he understood. Their coach could be terrifying. They would see each other after dinner and then they could ... well, enjoy the night.

But this was so much more! Atsushi had fought for him, him alone and that was ... it was so important! Maybe he should have asked his boyfriend to skip dinner too. But maybe that would only have lead to him being left in favor of food – so it was better not to have asked. He was disappointed anyway. He would have fucked Atsushi in the locker room if they weren't looked after by their coach.

Maybe that was the reason why they were supervised. Tatsuya sighed and leaned against the wall. So – what to do with this fine evening after their first loss as a team? Should he go get dinner? Should he join the others? He took out his phone and checked his inbox. Alex still wanted to meet with him. Well, why not now? His day was about as shitty as it was perfect anyway. He would celebrate with Atsushi later tonight and he would mourn their loss tomorrow. Today was a day of important decisions – like mating with Atsushi in his next heat. His teacher should know that he gave up on the career she had imagined for him. He sent a message with a meeting point next to the stadium and Alex replied that she was on her way.

They met up at the door and went up one staircase in silence. Alex seemed to get his somber mood and decided to stay silent. Now, how to say something like that? Thank you for everything but I am throwing away ten years of training? That was a hard lump to swallow. Was there any way to make it less painful? She would still have Taiga after all. Taiga would certainly keep playing.

“Close game, Tatsuya.”

“Yeah.” He relaxed his shoulders. He should simply go with the flow. “But I feel refreshed now.” He had made a decision after all. “Sorry, Alex.” Here it goes. “I was-” “Don't get worried about it.” Huh? What was she- oh, she thought he wanted to apologize for his words before. He should do that too. “Athletes get worked up before a game all the time. Anyway, it was a great game. It was worth the trip to Japan.”

Tatsuya had to smile. Alex was so uncomplicated sometimes. Talking to her felt a lot

like talking to his mother. Or at least how it had been before ... well, before. Before bad stuff happened, before he madly fell in love with a disabled man, before he wanked to the memory of his own brother. A lot had gone wrong, some of it with a good outcome, some bad. His impure thoughts, his Omega urges, his pheromones ... they weren't wrong but they meant he was destined for something different. Maybe something greater. A whole basketball family, maybe their own family team. Who knew? He turned to Alex to tell her but was rudely interrupted.

"Hey, an attractive babe."

Oh no, god spare them. Could those Alpha idiots just vanish altogether? He saw Alex cringe as well.

"A foreigner? A half-blood? Can you speak Japanese?," the creep asked.

"Who the hell are you?" Alex tried to stand her ground but the revulsion was rolling off her.

"So you can speak!" The guy leaned into her space. "Gimme your digits! Let's go play somewhere. Come on!" He threw an arm around her.

Alex dodged and held back from punching him in the face while saying: "Quit joking! Don't touch me like we're friends."

Tatsuya decided to step in. Normally Alphas like that would get more violent when an Omega joined the mix but this one was already going too far. He said: "Stop it. I'll hear what you have to say."

"Huh? You ... weren't you in that game right now? Seeing you up close, you really look like a loser."

Well, good thing he had learned long ago not to listen to shiteheads like that. Yeah, he lost. He did not have to take shit over that from anyone but it was his decision to get angry or not. This guy wasn't worth getting angry over.

"Or more like ... did you just say something?" The creep stopped his slouching and stood straight. Damn, he was tall. Taller than Tatsuya. More muscled as well. He suddenly pulled a punch and threw it at the Omega.

Tatsuya was too surprised to react adequately. He dodged left, only able to pull up his arm on instinct. Shit! Was that guy seriously trying to fight here? Wasn't he a player? They would be thrown out of the tournament if anyone saw. Not that it mattered to Tatsuya, he was out anyway. Had this guy lost as well? Was he trying to let out steam over a loss?

"What is that? Despite your looks, you are pretty used to street fighting." The creep followed him, stumbling as if he was drunken before accelerating suddenly and kicking Tatsuya in the stomach with full force.

Tatsuya gasped and fell to his knees. Holy shit. Ough ... fuck, this hurt. One did not hurt women or Omegas. Especially not by kicking them in the stomach or hitting their face. Everyone knew that. It was plain horrible. Crippling someone of their only value in societies' eyes was a gruesome act.

"Tatsuya!," Alex cried out and ran over.

He wanted to tell her to stay away. To run. To leave him. This Alpha was dangerous, they shouldn't both- he saw it in slow motion. That arm grabbing Alex, the hand on her breast. She leaned away from him, struggled. That creep just pressed his nose against her saying: "You think Alpha bitches get heats too?"

Tatsuya pulled himself together and launched forward. He threw a punch at the guy who dodged by letting go of Alex. The Omega only shouted: "Run! Run and get help!" The fucker hit him again for that. This time Tatsuya wasn't fast enough, he was hit in the face. His lip split, his body was thrown to the ground. No matter. As long as Alex

got away- she gasped. Oh no.

Tatsuya looked up to see his teacher dangling off one hand grasping her throat. She clawed at him, kicked him before trying her best to simply keep a blood-flow in her head. She grasped his arm, trying to get the pressure of her throat.

Tatsuya smelled Taiga before he saw him. Thank god. Taiga was strong. Taiga was an Alpha, he could get them out of this. Taiga just looked as horrified as him and screamed: "What are you doing? Who the hell are you?"

Was that important? He should punch the damn bastard. Alex was choking, she was- oh, well, she was still an Alpha herself. She nearly kicked that creep in the face who had to let her go to dodge.

"Scary!" Who was? "That ain't a girl's kick."

Of course not, Alex was 34. And now Taiga had to flip! Tatsuya held him back and warned: "Don't join in. It won't be just you responsible if they find out players were fighting here."

It was enough that he was there. Taiga was enough of a threat for anyone to stop. And he really shouldn't fight ... he had to win this tournament after all. He owed that to Tatsuya.

"What the hell happened?" Taiga's eyes scanned his face, most likely finding the abrasions and budding hematoma.

"He picked a fight out of nowhere." And trashed him. "He tried to hit on Alex, I tried to stop him and this happened."

Taiga looked as taken out as he felt. The creep sadly felt like continuing this and tried to punch Taiga too. That one dodged left as well and took two steps back. The creep tried to follow but was stopped by a basketball thrown in the direction of his face. Sadly he caught it.

He knew that one ... the model from Atsushi's old team, right? Kise Ryouya? Yeah, he seemed to be.

Thank god that helpful people were coming. Tatsuya turned to Alex who was still on the ground and asked: "How bad is it?"

"You or me?" She smiled weakly and let him help her up.

"You know this guy?," Taiga asked Kise.

"Well, guess so. He's Haizaki Shogo. He was a starter at Teiko before I joined the team."

Really? Tatsuya looked at the creep. Atsushi had not told him about this one. Had he really forgotten him or tried his best to forget him? Anyway, he understood. This guy was trouble.

"He's the one forced to retire from the team by Akashi-cci."

Understandable. No one would want someone like him around. So that horrible split personality-guy had some real power. Had he threatened him? Used violence? Drugs?

"What curious turn of events is this?" Kise went to stand between them and the creep.

"There's no real reason. It ain't revenge either." Haizaki scoffed. "If anything, it's just killing time."

Tatsuya flinched back in repulsion. Gods, this guy was ... urgh. He was really, really disgusting as a human being. He thought of how seeing such a creature must have affected Atsushi. Gentle, child-like Atsushi. His lover who only wanted to be praised for doing well. And then this guy who did not care about others at all.

"Kagami-cci." Kise turned to them. "I really hate to say this ... but can you stand down for now?"

Stand down? Tatsuya would call the police on him. He did not intend to let this slip.

"I kind of get the situation, but I really want you to let me play him in the next game." Right this moment Tatsuya knew he would never like Kise. The guy was too arrogant. Sure, Taiga was a fellow Alpha. But the ones beaten and choked were Alex and him. Who was that asshole to ask Taiga this as if he was able to decide for them?

"I'll take responsibility and kick his ass."

That was the least he could do in Tatsuya's opinion. He would still call the cops. At least that got the creep to finally leave. Tatsuya sighed and told himself to calm down a bit. He was safe. Alex was safe. Taiga and Kise had saved them from the fucker. Anyway, what was Taiga even doing here? By now he was used to Atsushi having a sixth sense for him, but Taiga?

"Why did you come here, Taiga?"

The other man turned and took a deep breath as well. His smile had a charming edge when he said: "Sorry. We'll talk another time. For sure!"

Oh well. Most likely it was about their future. Tatsuya dreaded that talk, so he was happy to leave it at that. Taiga went to talk with Kise and Alex and him decided to look for a place to get some food and warm up again. They both needed a bit of distance right now.

"I hate that creep. I want to go see him lose," Alex admitted over a bowl of ramen.

"I am sure we can be back in time for the last quarter." Tatsuya smiled at her. To be honest, he didn't want to go back. He wanted Atsushi to come and take him away. But his boyfriend was somewhere off munching down plates of food.

"So, anyway, great game back there. I know you are probably feeling down about losing but I don't think you have anything to be ashamed of. One step faster and you guys would have won. Just train that giant boy a bit and have him grow into his body, you'll sweep the tournament. He won't have problems to become a professional player."

"It's what we groom him into." Tatsuya looked up and smiled.

"Oh no." Her eyes widened. "You're in love with him."

"Yes, I am." His smile widened to a grin. Here it goes. "Alex ... I want to mate with him."

"That direly handsome athlete? Go for it." She grinned as well. "You know, I always imagined that one day Taiga and you would have a grimy love story but I always saw that one ending badly. I am happy you came to your senses."

"Why would that have ended badly?" So he wasn't the only one who had imagined they would be an item one day.

"Because your whole life seemed to be about him. Taiga had friends, he was social, but for you it was always him, me, basketball and nothing else. You were so fixated on him. You were nice to everyone but you never let anyone in. One wrong step and you would have been completely alone. So I am happy to hear you fell in love with someone else." Her smile had something of a motherly touch. "You choose your friends very carefully. If you chose him, I am sure he is the right one. I saw you punching him on the court and I thought it would lead to bloody murder. But he simply accepted it as his due and came back loads stronger. Men like that are rare. He must love you deeply to acknowledge you like that. Though you really shouldn't hit your boyfriend, violence is a no-go."

"I'll apologize tonight." He did not really feel sorry though. But he should explain why he did that. "He wanted to throw the game. I couldn't accept that."

"So he played for you?" She blinked. "As ferocious as that?"

"Yeah." He grinned again. Pride, thankfulness, intimacy. It filled him with so many feelings.

"So that tipped the scale? How long have you been with him?"

"Hm ... half a year? Around that? A bit more. I think it was the regional qualifiers where I decided to give it a try." He fondly shook his head. "At that time I still thought I would never mate with him but still had an inkling it might become a possibility. Everyone has their weaknesses and his was glaringly obvious. I still thought about my image and all that crap. I was such a teenager."

"You still are." Alex laughed. "So what is so obvious? His laziness?"

"It's not laziness. He's mentally deficient." Tatsuya sighed. "He had a car crash in his childhood and his brain took a lot of damage. He's a basketball god but he can barely read and write."

"Oh, that's ... I am sorry about that." Alex blinked. "How come his body is working like that?"

"It's not. His fine motor control is bad. His attention span is short, he does never give his all in training. He's just been doing sports all his life because he is bad at everything else."

"And he is still relearning? Because I could not see any motor control problems from upstairs."

"He recently got some incentive to train his hand coordination." Tatsuya grinned dirtily.

"Oh my, you're a handful." She shook her head in exasperation. "That's some special grooming. So you plan on mating a pro-basketball player now?"

"Yeah, I ... I know I always said I wanted to go pro but ... I fear I'll leave that to Taiga." He stared at his ramen. How would she react? She had spent eight years training them on and off. It was a lot of time she had invested in them both. Would she be mad?

"And you'll supply me with some great kids for my training camps? Neat." There was a grin in her voice. "You and that mate of yours combined make for some great genes for future athletes. Do you think you'll live here or in America? You could join me as a trainer if you came back."

He timidly looked up. She was really alright with that? Had she not expected something else from him? No, her smile did not look forced. Not that slightly glad, slightly sad smile people sometimes had. She was happy for him, genuinely happy. He smiled back at her.

"Nah, okay, maybe it's a bit early to ask. First you have to finish school. Don't even think about quitting, school is important. Actually, how is school working out for your mate?" She seemed confused about that.

"He has some special classes. He won't get a high-school diploma but his teacher hopes he'll be able to read and write by the end of it."

"Well, that would be useful. If you want him to grab some groceries on the way home, he should be able to read your shopping list." She pointed at her bowl. "Anyway, let's finish these, I still want to see that bastard lose."