

Not good enough

Von Gepo

Kapitel 18: Trust or doubt

Tatsuya had been quite dissatisfied when they had spent the summer training near their school. Of course the landscape was full of fields and hills and thereby perfect for training but he had wanted to travel. So naturally, he had been looking forward to their fall training camp. Not only would they travel, it would be followed up by the Winter Cup.

After their last outing he had not expected their coach to want to talk about accommodations again but she called him out after training. Of course he would room with Atsushi. Was that a problem now that they were together? It wasn't as if it was a secret that they were sleeping with each other. He pouted a bit but decided to just listen to their coach first.

"So, this next training camp ... have the others already talked to you about it?"

"They told me it would be fun and that we would have some Onsen near us and would make our own food. It sounded like we were short on money but otherwise fine." He raised an eyebrow at her.

"Well, yes, that's ... well, have they told you that we would be camping?"

"Camping?", he exclaimed in shock.

"Yes, camping. This is something like an outdoor-survival trip. We will be camping, roasting meat on sticks and wash in natural hot springs. It's quite the adventure for the boys." She looked at him unsurely.

Camping in the wild. Wash in vulcano-warmed pools of water. Make fire and eat self-grilled meat. His mouth corners had dropped considerably. Of course this was Hokkaido, there was a lot of wild landscape but this ... "Will there be bears?"

"Yes, there will be bears." Her eyes were trained on him, her gaze serious.

"Do you ... bath with the boys? Is there more than one hot spring?" There must be, right?

"I just get up very early. Maybe you can go while the other boys grill meat and I'll supervise them? They normally go after dinner, that could be a compromise. Or you get up even earlier than me. But I would not advise on it, you have to train after all."

Bath out in the wild. Alone. With bears. The shock was slowly waning but he certainly wasn't over it when he asked: "Can Atsushi come to? I'm sure he could wrestle a bear."

She had to smile at that. She nearly laughed before saying: "Bears don't attack humans if they aren't provoked. It's more often that monkeys steal your clothes."

Monkeys! Holy fuck, what had he gotten himself into?

"You know ... if you don't want to go, that is okay, you know? I won't hold it against you. I had my worries when I myself became coach but I have been doing this for some

years now. I am not worried about the boys, but I am worried about you."

Monkeys. Bears. Alphas in the wild, grilling meat, returning to their roots. And he was the only Omega around for miles. Even the coach was an Alpha. If she wanted to push him down, she could. He was completely defenseless against all of them. This could go sooo wrong.

"Think about it, okay? Talk it through with your mother. I don't expect anything bad to happen but where we are going ... there's no police, no ambulance, only a lot of wilderness. It's no place for an unbound Omega."

Hikers. Wanderers. Tourists. He would be running around and sweating. He would have to bath in the open. There would be no safe dorms, no doors to hide behind. If anyone got crazy, it could become a hunt.

She placed a hand on his shoulder and nodded to him. With another "Think about it", she left him standing there to think about it by himself.

He shuddered. He never, ever wanted to be raped again. He did not even want to chance it. This was not safe. He could not do that. He trusted all those boys but what if ... anything could happen. He would never have thought like that half a year ago but he had learned since then. This was- this-

He heard footsteps to his right and turned. Atsushi. It was Atsushi jogging up to him. His beloved Atsushi, his hero. Long arms wrapped around him and he was able to bury his nose in his boyfriend's sweaty training shirt. It normally turned him off but whenever he felt unsettled, he loved his boyfriend's smell. It must be his Omega instincts.

"What is it, Muro-chin?", the other asked.

"I think I'm having a slight panic attack. Had. Whatever." He breathed in deeply. "I'm better now. Or not. Just hold me." He hugged the other more tightly. "Don't leave."

"I'm here." One big hand began to pet his head.

Big breath in. Out. He had never had a panic attack but he knew the drill. He'd seen this in movies. Control his breathing. He could do this. He wasn't out in the wild with bears and rape-thirsty Alphas. His pheromones were under control. No one was going to attack him. He felt a tear roll down his cheek. He wiped at it angrily. This was no reason to cry. Nothing had happened. He was behaving like a whimpy Omega, this was no way to-

Atsushi picked him up and kissed him. Oh. Good. Nice. His Alpha's scent enveloped him and he began to relax. Was this what Omega pheromones felt like to Alphas? They were either soothing or arousing. He felt soothed right now, but also slightly aroused. Atsushi's pheromones were really nice.

"Let's go shower, yeah?" Atsushi looked him in the eyes.

"Hm-hm", he mumbled and simply melted against his boyfriend. Being carried was nice. Being held by Atsushi was nice. He pressed his nose against his boyfriend's skin. The scent lulled him in.

"Can you still answer?"

He simply hummed.

"Is this like back with your parents?" Atsushi sounded concerned.

He hummed some more.

It wasn't a shock to wake from his high this time. He knew how this worked. When an Omega became distressed, they could be soothed by their mate's scent. It's why they build nests out of clothing that smelled of their Alpha. It was a completely normal process – for someone that had mated.

He was soothed by Atsushi's scent and Atsushi was able to sense his emotions. Both were things that only happened to mated pairs and not even all of them. Happily mated pairs. They weren't even mated. How would they be if they did? Would he feel even closer to Atsushi? Would he be able to sense and sooth Atsushi? Because right now this seemed to be a one-way-street. He remembered how he had been told that boys like Atsushi committed to someone, they did not hold their heart back in relationships. As Alphas weren't marked by their Omegas, maybe Atsushi had already bonded to him? Maybe Atsushi was already his and they would only need the bite to seal this and make him commit as well?

He wanted to. Despite all his doubts and insecurities, he really wanted to belong to Atsushi. It wasn't rational. It really made no sense at all honestly. But his heart said it was the right thing. In love songs they often sang "Listen to your heart". Nobody ever sang "Listen to their coins clink" or "Watch how he behaves around children". It wasn't what love was about. But the question was: Was mating about love?

Most mating partners did not love one another. Some mated because the Alpha happened upon an Omega in heat. Some mated because the Alpha bought his mate. In some cases Omegas were able to choose – they normally chose whoever would earn the most and treat them right at the same time. Omegas mating out of love, that was ... mostly something people thought foolish. Omegas that mated out of "love" mated young, only to learn that their partner did not earn enough, left them for someone else or simply lost interest. Those Omegas mostly ended up as prostitutes. It wasn't what he planned for himself. Having Atsushi devote to him like this – with visible signs of his devotion! – was more than any Omega could ask for to know that this was the right thing. The worst that could happen was that Atsushi would be unable to pay for him and their children. In that case his parents would help out. They could make this work. They really could.

Yes, he would mate with Atsushi.

At some point in the future at least. Right now they had the Winter Cup to win and before that they had this dreaded training camp in the wilderness. If coach had told him beforehand, he might have planned on mating with Atsushi during his last heat period. As it was, he would have his next heat a week after their camp. Did he want to live in the woods as an unmated Omega? Did he trust his team enough that no one would fall prey to his pheromones? Could they make it work?

He didn't know. He didn't even know who he could ask. It wasn't like he knew any cool Omegas that had any other interests than looking for a-

He did. Kuroko Tetsuya. He knew an Omega interested in something far more important than mating who would get the horror of being with a bunch of Alphas, the danger of rape, of hunts ... could he really ask that? He had only met him once. It would be quite a strange talk, asking a near stranger about how dangerous it might be to camp with over ten unmated Alpha teenage boys as a lone unmated Omega.

He could answer his own question even without calling Kuroko. It was suicidal to go on that trip. If he was mated, it might be possible, but unmated ... but Atsushi had devoted himself to him. He would come to his rescue wherever he was. He would be protected, looked after ... was Atsushi strong enough to hold the others off while he ran? Did he trust himself to be able to run from a horde of Alphas? Before, the answer would have been yes. Right now he wasn't so sure.

Was it just his new experience holding himself back from something he would enjoy without question? Or was it life experience teaching him the folly of youth? Had he been overconfident before or was he too anxious now?

Maybe he should call Kuroko. Maybe not. Oh, he didn't know. He really didn't know.

"You smell unhappy," Atsushi informed him later that evening.

"I know." He was lying on Atsushi's bed trying to read something for his homework. He just wasn't able to concentrate.

"Why are you unhappy?" His boyfriend had dutifully filled his homework sheet. His letters were getting better and better. It helped that Tatsuya sat beside him, even if he just watched or did his own work.

"I don't know what to do about our training camp. We'll actually be camping. Have you ever camped before?"

Atsushi shook his head.

"It's out in the wild, no electricity, no running water. You bath in streams and natural onsen, you grill or cook over a fire," Tatsuya explained.

"I saw that on TV. It looked cool." His boyfriend smiled.

"It's supposed to be pretty cool. But it can also be dangerous. There are wild bears and boars and other animals. The bears often come looking for food, so you cannot have any of it lying around. I don't think you'll be able to have snacks that week."

"Oh." Atsushi looked crushed.

It made Tatsuya smile. For some people other things were much more important than others. He continued: "I do not fear the bears. But I am an Omega, so I fear the other Alphas. Except for you, I'll have no protection there. What if anything like what happened at my parent's place happens? There won't be any showers. And even you can't fight off our whole team."

"Hm." Atsushi studied him for a moment and seemed to take this seriously. "Then I need to get you and run to a stream or onsen."

"Yeah ... but would you be able to outrun the whole team?" Tatsuya sighed in defeat. Atsushi seemed to think again and finally answered: "No. But I do not need to. I can hold them off with my pheromones and growl."

"You can hold them off?" The Omega looked up.

"Yeah, like with dogs ... you growl, they run. Humans are the same. I growl, they run."

True. Atsushi was strong. His pheromones told everyone how strong he was. Tatsuya had heard him growl once when Atsushi pulled his mother ... well, off him. His memory was hazy but he remembered the sudden stench of fear. It had not been his. Was it possible that Atsushi might be able to hold the team off by growling if the worst happened?

He was good at triggering animal instincts and the rest of their team were trained in listening to their gut feeling. They would back off if Atsushi got serious. His Alpha was enough to protect him. But if he lost his mind and raped him after all? Or whatever it might be when Tatsuya was too out of it to listen to rational thought? Did he trust Atsushi enough to simply drop him in an onsen and wash him off?

He had done it twice now. Really, why shouldn't he trust Atsushi? His boyfriend had already proofed himself. He nodded to himself and turned to the other boy: "Okay, I'll trust you in this. If I lose my senses to pheromones, you'll come get me to wash me off. You'll protect me from the other Alphas."

"I will." Atsushi lay a hand over his heart as if to swear.

"Okay." Tatsuya nodded again. He would do this. He just had to try. If worst came to worse, he might be raped, he might get pregnant. He would not be forcefully mated to someone. And Atsushi would be a wall between him and every threat there was. He had to trust his boyfriend.

