

Not good enough

Von Gepo

Kapitel 17: Sympathy

Tatsuya was getting used to earning looks of sympathy. People, especially old ladies, smiling nicely at him after looking at Atsushi. Mothers followed him with their eyes, a fond smile on their faces. He could guess what they thought. They saw him as a caretaker, a brother, maybe even a bonded mate that had unfortunately ended up with such an Alpha. It irked him that no one found his situation envious. Even the young girls giggling and gossiping about Atsushi fell silent when they heard him speak and turned tail. No one wanted to be in his shoes, wanted to be the partner at Atsushi's side.

He really did not know why. Maybe you needed to get to know him to be able to cherish him. His delicious pheromones, his perfect control, his open, loving heart, his will to be a hero for the people he held dear, you never saw or got those things on first sight. Maybe the pheromones and the looks. But really, what did they matter? It was the goodness Atsushi's heart held, his love for life and beauty. His love for Tatsuya.

No one saw those. All they saw was a great oaf, a disproportioned boy stumbling through life, led by a despicable creature because he could not care for himself. Sometimes Tatsuya wanted to punch those ladies smiling at him in sympathy. It put Atsushi down, made him seen like a burden to be pitied for. Atsushi was no burden. He was Tatsuya's everything.

It hurt that no one seemed to get that. The people he met on the street, the Omegas in his dorms, the other Alpha students who weren't mentally disabled. The people supporting him were teacher Tsueda, coach Araki, his basketball team and by now his parents. Maybe. His mother might have already changed her opinion, now that he was miles away. Would it always be this way? If he were to mate with Atsushi, would everyone think he was a poor rape victim saddled with him as an Alpha?

It hurt because of what it said about Atsushi. He did not want his boyfriend seen like that. He wanted him strong and independent. Well, as independent as he could be at least. It would never be optimal but one day he wanted Atsushi to hold a job as a basketball player, to stand on a court where hundreds, thousands shouted his name. He wanted to stand by his boyfriend's side and bask in the envy of others, knowing Atsushi was his and his alone.

Was that selfish? He wasn't sure. Didn't every Omega want the perfect husband to look good at his side? And why would he even want that when he might just be that player himself? Did he really want envy? He wasn't sure. He just wanted Atsushi to get the praise he deserved. He did not want the pity, the sympathy, the veiled "I am so sorry you have to deal with this".

He chose to be with Atsushi. He even chose him over Taiga who would certainly reach the exact same stage, the exact same level of professionalism. Taiga would even reach it by himself. Taiga knew how to clean, to cook, to look after himself. He did not need a minder. Still, Taiga did not have what Atsushi had. He did not have the same eye for detail, the dedication and the skill to lose himself in his emotions. Tatsuya might not know how Taiga was in bed but he could not imagine anyone more attentive and satisfying than his boyfriend.

He felt so Omega thinking that. Yes, the sex was great. It was the best he ever had. He did not even want people to know that. At the same time he wanted to tell everyone. Maybe he wanted envy. Maybe he just wanted someone to acknowledge that Atsushi was desirable. Maybe he only wanted someone to tell him he was doing the right thing.

Every look of pity he got, he asked himself if he should choose differently. He loved Atsushi and Atsushi loved him. They had great sex. His boyfriend would be a professional basketball player and make tons of money. Their children did not run the danger of being mentally impaired. Still nearly everyone pitied him. He always told himself they didn't know the circumstances.

But he doubted. By the gods did he doubt. What should he ever do with those conflicting thoughts in his head? He wanted to bleach his mind, to stop asking himself the same questions over and over again. What did he want? He didn't know. He didn't know and he did not even know how he ever should know. How did anyone ever decide on a mate? Maybe those rape victims were fortunate in a way. They never had to ask those questions. They never had to ponder if they made the right choice. Choosing was oh so damn scary.

Tatsuya hesitated to dial. It was Wednesday, he was back in school, it was the day he always called his mother. He had never, ever missed a call. If he did they had always spoken about that before. Training, competitions, sometimes there wasn't time. But he had never missed a call unannounced. What would happen if he did not call his mother?

He sighed. This was ridiculous. They would not go back to normal if he did not call. It wasn't like anything could happen over the phone. There might be tears and apologies and ... who was he kidding, that would be bad enough. He just wanted them to be normal again. He didn't want to be treated like someone who had gone through a horrifying event. His mother had seemed a lot more shaken than he felt. Atsushi had saved him, his pregnancy test had been negative. Everything was alright.

He had to call his mother and tell her about the test. He had promised. It would take a huge load off her back. He owed her a call. They would get this over with and then they would go back to normal. He so desperately wanted them to be normal again. He just had to call and tell her and then-

"Himuro? There's someone at the door for you," a dormmate informed him.

"Thank you." He hung up the phone and moved to the door immediately. Anything was better than calling. He thanked whoever was outside to see him at ... well, it was pretty late, who could this be? He reached the first floor and had the double doors that secured their entrance in sight. They were heavy doors build to keep out crazed Alphas. If they did not open their windows, the building was even scent-proof. If anything happened they could barricade themselves in here and call the police. Anyone that wanted to enter had to ring a bell and wait until the asked for person came outside. No one but Omegas were allowed in here. So there was a meeting room

right outside the doors.

He stepped through the second security door and saw Atsushi standing in the waiting room. His boyfriend immediately put his long arms around him and said: "I sensed distress from you."

"You sensed?" Tatsuya blinked but returned the hug anyway. "I thought you smelt my emotions?"

"I smelled them before. Now I sense them."

"Did you bite me at any time?" Because sensing only happened to mates. Atsushi shouldn't be able to do that. Were they somehow bonded by accident?

Atsushi brushed his hair to the side – Tatsuya did not wear a collar, he did not have to inside their secure dorm – and studied his neck. He finally said: "I can't see any marks."

"Then how can you sense me?" That was weird. Very weird. Could two people bond without a mark? He had never heard of something like that. Bonding worked by being bitten in the throws of heat. He had not even spent a heat with Atsushi. That was only allowed when two people wanted to bond or were already bonded. In all other cases, the Alphas were supposed to go to school. Having Omegas take a week off every month was worse enough.

"Don't know." Atsushi shrugged his shoulders. "What were you upset about?"

Oh. Maybe his emotions had been so strong and linked to him that somehow it had been enough for Atsushi to sense it? But didn't emotion sensing work by smell as well? This dorm was smell-proof, there was no way Atsushi had smelled him. There were only fairytales of people being so in love and suited to each other that they completely tuned in on the other and could sense them even over miles. No one had ever been able to explain such phenomena, so naturally people thought them to be stuff of legends.

"I was ... afraid of calling my mother." Tatsuya told him. Could he really tell his boyfriend about that? Would he even understand?

"Why that? She was nice." Atsushi just watched his face, holding him securely.

"She felt so guilty about what happened in the garden. I'm afraid she still thinks like that. I don't want our connection to become weird because of that."

Atsushi looked at him without blinking. He seemed to ponder that.

Tatsuya just wasn't able to wait for his answer, he felt tears well up in his eyes. He sobbed, burying his head in Atsushi's chest. His voice laced with tears he said: "I feel so ashamed this happened. It's all because of me. Why was I born an Omega? My parents always said that the worst that could happen to us was if they ever lost control around me. They said they would not know how to live with that. Well, I don't know too! I don't know how to talk to her! I wish I wasn't an Omega. This would never have happened if I hadn't been born this way."

"I like you as an Omega." Atsushi kissed his head. "You're small and beautiful. You fit in my arms."

Yeah, of course. He wouldn't be with Atsushi if he wasn't an Omega. Maybe Atsushi wouldn't even be interested in him. Of course his boyfriend loved the scent of his pheromones. Everyone loved his god-damn pheromones. He was sick of them. If not for his pheromones he would never have been raped by his own mother.

"One day I'll mate with you. We will have beautiful children. We could not have children if you weren't an Omega," Atsushi told him with a voice full of fondness.

Tatsuya took a deep breath. Right. He was able to have children. True enough, they would not be able to have children if he weren't an Omega. Being sought after for his pheromones, for his looks, he was simply the epitome of fertility. It was what drew

Alphas to him. His pheromones marked him as someone perfect for breeding. He would have beautiful children, no doubt about that. They would have beautiful children. He smiled up at Atsushi and kissed him.

His boyfriend made a satisfied noise and wiped the tears from his cheeks. He told him: "You are my perfect Omega boyfriend."

Tatsuya had to chuckle while he cleaned his nose. Well, Atsushi might not be the most eloquent but Tatsuya got what he wanted to say. He was exactly like his boyfriend wanted him. They would not share this deep connection if Tatsuya wasn't who he was. What he was. He should take pride in his genes, not hate them for the complications they had in store for him. Atsushi would not have been able to sense his emotions if they weren't Alpha and Omega.

"Can I come with you to your dorm? Can you hold me while I phone my mom?," he asked his boyfriend.

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

It was the perfect solution. If it didn't work out Atsushi would be there for him. He might even be allowed to stay in his boyfriend's room to cry his eyes out if it became catastrophic. By now he knew their dorm supervisor, they liked and respected each other. Tatsuya greeted him on the way in. Habara, the supervisor, looked surprised but waved him in.

"Good evening again. I wanted to use your phone and have Atsushi near me."

"Oh." Habara looked shocked. "Is it that kind of talk?"

"That kind?" Tatsuya blinked.

"Well ... the part where you tell your parents that you are pregnant?"

Ouch. That hurt. It was a realistic guess on his part, Habara couldn't know how wrong ... how offensive this was. Tatsuya took a deep breath and said more cutting than he wanted: "No, I'm not pregnant. I still want Atsushi around. Can we have the phone?"

Atsushi supported that with a growl on his own. He must have smelled or sensed the upset. Habara handed the mobile phone of the dorm over in record time and just added: "Please give it back in half an hour. The other boys wait for their mother's calls. Don't let it get too late, okay? They need their promised calls."

"Sure." Tatsuya took the phone and went to Atsushi's room. He just wanted this over with. It helped to know he had a deadline. So he ignored the slight mess in the room – an opened but unfinished chips bag on the floor – and sat on the bed.

Atsushi picked him up again and sat him on his lap. It was a comfortable place, he was able to lean back against his boyfriend. He knew the number by heart and soon he heard the ring start. It wouldn't be long now. His mother knew their time, she would sit beside the phone and wait-

"Good evening, Tatsuya. How are you?," she greeted him, her voice only slightly less lustrous than before.

"Hi, mom. I'm fine. How are you?" Atsushi's arms tightened around him, a clear reaction to his insecurities.

"Well ... I can't say I have been fine. I worried. But other than that, everything is normal."

Straight to the heart of the matter. Maybe they should really just get it over with. He said: "The test was negative. Everything's fine. Atsushi and me had a great trip to Tokyo. Thanks for sponsoring that! Can you believe that I actually met Taiga there?"

"You did? What a surprise!" The answer sounded only slightly forced. "I remember how depressed you were when he left. How did it go?"

"Good, I guess. He is still the same. He doesn't notice ... anything really. There is an

Omega on his new team. I think the boy is in love with him but again, Taiga doesn't notice a thing."

"Kuroko?" Atsushi asked.

"Oh, is Atsushi with you? That was his voice, right? How is he? Greet him from me!" This was not forced at all, his mother genuinely seemed to like him.

"Greetings from my mom. And yes, I am talking about Kuroko. I think he likes my brother," Tatsuya said to his boyfriend. He turned back to the phone and said: "He says to greet you too. He's fine."

Atsushi kissed his temple while his mother began to ask questions about his meeting with Taiga. Good. They would never have to talk about the rape again. They were fine. All was fine. He relaxed in Atsushi's arms. He would be able to just forget about it. He told his mother about the places they had visited, the tournament, the failed final match with Taiga. He told her how much he was looking forward to the Winter Cup, playing against Taiga, playing against Akashi, playing with his boyfriend most of all. He added in some special moves he had seen his boyfriend do and said one kissed his neck or temple for every appreciative comment he made.

This was happiness. Why could no one see that? He felt like crying and talked about basketball and his boyfriend. Atsushi simply held him and breathed in his scent. He continued to do so minutes after Tatsuya had already ended the call. Habara came to get the phone. After he closed the door behind himself, Tatsuya cried. Atsushi held him through it.