

Wounds

A perpetrator's perspective

Von Gepo

Kapitel 13: Farewell to an old friend

"How did it go?" Doctor Enjoji asked.

Aomine wordlessly handed over his book and spoke while she read: "This is the basis, we meet up next Sunday to learn more."

"You have really good friends, you know that?" She smiled proudly. "Often people like you surround themselves with others who have the same problems. They spent their time drinking, making stupid jokes, watching or doing sports. Not that doing sports is a bad thing but if you have nothing else in your life, it is something to immerse oneself in to connive at the fact that you would not know what to say or do otherwise."

"Yeah, I simply sit there and listen to others, not exactly knowing what to say most of the time."

"But your friends are really good people, they know and they accept that you often don't. You seem to have strengths that overpower your flaws. Or at least they did for a long time. With age, people gain social competence, so what was accepted in youth will not be acceptable behavior forever."

He just nodded.

"So you will continue to learn emphatic behavior?" She waited for another nod.

"Explain to me in your own words, why you are doing this, what you will gain from it."

"Others like me more, they invite me because they like me, not to gain something from me. Tetsu and Satsuki will be proud of me and not leave me, Satsuki might even start her own life instead of being held back by me. And ... I think I'll be proud of myself."

"That sounds nice. So what will be the drawbacks?" She noticed his confused blinking.

"Everything comes with a price. What will you lose when you train empathy?"

"Well ... the ability to hurt others."

"What is that good for?"

"Err ... that others stay with me because I am pathetic and need help?" He averted his gaze. "I might lose Satsuki. But I'll do that anyway when I tell her what really happened." He saw the doctor open her mouth but he remembered something else. "I'll lose a lot of freedom."

"Freedom?" She sounded surprised.

"The ability to leave without looking back. To let others down without caring. I feel ... domesticated. Empathy puts chains on my behavior."

"That is true." Her smile had dimmed. "A lone wolf is not an emphatic being. Is

returning to the pack worth giving up that freedom?"

"I am not sure." Kuroko and Mitobe flashed up before his eyes. "As long as I am to live in company, I guess it is better that way. The other way would be to live by myself, so I don't hurt others."

"In the end, this is the question of making a decision. Forgetting about what others want for you or expect of you or what might be good for you in the eyes of society, do you want to learn this? To be one of the pack, so to speak?"

Well, did he want that? He didn't want to hurt others again. But wasn't there a way to keep his freedom and not hurt others? It's not like everyone had to like him. Maybe he could be a bit more emphatic and stop with that? Oh, he didn't know.

"That's not exactly an answer. Training won't help if you don't want to learn."

"I just don't know. If I learn this, am I really the same person? This is teaching me team-play. What if I lose the edge loneliness gave me?"

Doctor Enjoji nodded and said in a grave voice: "That is the price to pay, yes. A lot of artists lose the capturing feelings they express in their art when they become one of the normal people. Gaining happiness by becoming part of the normal population might mean losing the skills exile gave them. You would not be a professional basketball player if you did not have such a shitty childhood. You might even lose some of your more daring skills."

"But I'll gain team-play. It will give me a set of new skills." He closed his eyes and took a deep breath before looking the psychiatrist in the eye. "I'll do it. I'll learn empathy."

Mitobe wrote him a letter, detailing what kind of body language showed what, even drawing some of the explained postures. Midorima read it over his shoulder, finally asking if he might get a copy of that. Aomine felt cocky enough to say: "Make two and give one to Akashi."

"He doesn't need it. He knows what his body language says. If he looks bored, you can be absolutely sure that he wants to look bored."

"So if he behaves like a lunatic, he actually wants to do that?" Aomine raised an eyebrow. "He's been nicer since Kuroko whipped his ass but he's still an asshole with a stick up his behind. You are even more so but you have an excuse. You just took his though."

"What you call a stick up someplace not to be mentioned is seen as etiquette by others. Just because you come from a place where farting in public is hilarious instead of disgusting, does not mean that all of us are raised on that level. If you want to be less obnoxious to people around you, I would advise on basic hygiene and hygienic behavior first."

"You are a clean-freak, Midorima--"

"Guys, really, you are getting out of hand" Kazu stopped them, having his hands on his daughter's ears who looked like she was close to tears. "In different groups of people, different behavior is seen as fitting. Good behavior therefore means being able to adjust to the people around you and you are both bad at that. Aomine tried his best when he visited us and he mostly adapted just fine." His gaze turned to him. "My husband was able to let go of a lot of his quirks and it would be nice of you to acknowledge that."

"Yeah, fine" He grumbled. "You aren't as bad as in middle school."

"Well, you are still better than Murasakibara." Midorima heard the small cough Kazu made. "And you behaved well when you visited us."

"My husband learned to have a more open body language in our first year of high-

school. He can teach you a lot about etiquette if you would like to learn. Though his kind is so unbelievably nice and attentive that normal behavior looks rude afterwards."

"Midorima and attentive?" Aomine tried his best not to make a very rude gesture. "That seems far-fetched to me."

"It does make sense that when you learn to be very attentive and everyone's behavior seems rude to you, you tend to get rude as a reaction. It is not a good way to react but when you don't know better, it makes sense. Just like you think he is rude to you, he thinks you are rude to him. That way you will never understand one another."

"Then why do I have to go cross that bridge?" He whined.

"To show you are the bigger person" Kazu said without mercy for his own husband who winced slightly.

Aomine blinked and whispered to him: "You are so whipped."

"I asked for it. Nobody else tells me about the mistakes I make."

"Well, I can give you a lis-"

"Nobody that I trust." The other looked him straight in the eye. "He is someone I can learn from. You are someone who could actually learn from me at this point because I have been doing this for four years."

Damn, that hurt. He wished he had an excuse but no, that green-haired idiot was actually right. He had friends. Aomine had no real ones. He had a husband and a family. Aomine had none of those. He clenched his jaw before puffing up his chest and saying: "You just look, I'll learn this faster than you and then you are the one without a clue again!"

"Social competence is not a competitive-"

"I don't care." He looked at the list. "So first of all, I'll do something nice by scanning this list and sending it to you. Give me your e-mail address."

"Please" Midorima mumbled.

"Oh, shut up, I'm still learning. No, wait: Shut up, please." He smirked and held out his phone.

"Somehow, I fear you'll be obnoxious by choice next." The other shook his head. He still typed in his e-mail address.

"Aomine Daiki!"

The screeching, definitely unamused voice made him cringe. Not good. How had Satsuki found him? She wasn't supposed to be able to find him. Did she track his phone or something?

"Daiki, you are banned from doing any sports. So why are you here playing basketball?"

"Sorry, everyone." He passed the ball to one of his teammates. "I was found out."

"You do not sound sorry at all!" She came to stand beside the court, stemming her hands into her hips. "You should know yourself that you are on leave to rest and heal, not sneak out to play basketball."

"I'm on leave because I am an insufferable prat and coach does not want me back until I learned to be nicer to people. So I am learning to be nicer while playing basketball."

"You have a broken rip, you idiot!" She screeched.

He went over, clapped of one of the players on the sideline and sat beside Kikyō who kindly told him: "Yoshi is always reprimanded as well."

"Who's Yoshi?"

"A friend from kindergarden."

Well, thanks. That lifted his spirit. So he really was as bad as a three-year-old. He pouted for a bit, feeling Satsuki's angry stare in his side. After a minute or so, she decided that the game was more interesting than him and asked: "So why is everyone playing different positions?"

"The guys agreed to do a mix-up, so I could learn support play as a point guard. They told me I get nicer when I learn to look out for my teammates." He didn't look up to see her reaction. Stupid Satsuki could think whatever she wanted, it wasn't like he cared.

"That is a marvelous idea." She actually sounded pleased. "But not before your rip is healed."

"It's only a broken rip. It's been over a month, so it is stable again. Now I just have to breath through the pain. I wouldn't be able to do a whole training menu but one or two friendly games where I stay in the back aren't that bad."

"I'll ask the sports doctor again, okay? If he says yes, I will not stop you."

He looked up in surprise. Had she really just relented? He couldn't remember when they ever had an argument that did not end with him giving in or her being unable to threaten him further. This was an actual compromise, right? They never had one before. She was stubborn as a mule, just like he was. This communication thing was actually working.

"Do you have an achy-achy?" Kikyo asked.

"Yeah, someone hit me really hard" He explained. "But I'll be as good as new in a month or two."

"If my tummy hurts, I have to stay in bed. It's really boring."

"I'm bored as well."

"You could come over and play with me!" She invited him.

"We'll have to ask your mommy first." Maybe if she asked, Kazu would actually say yes. Not that he had ever said no – he seemed to be one of the very few who did not fear him – but Aomine did not want to overstay his welcome. A lot of people here seemed to have bad experiences with Alphas and all knew that he wasn't the nice kind of Alpha. It was like running around with a sign saying "dangerous animal". A lone wolf was free but by now he wasn't so sure that freedom meant contentment.

"...and so Midorima said I was allowed to come play with his daughter. I never thought he would let me anywhere near his child! That's awesome."

"Like you said last week, emphatic behavior will get you invitations you would not get otherwise. Only people that aren't dangerous are allowed around children."

"Yeah" He grinned. "I think Midorima is the most suspicious a guy can get, so it's really huge that he allowed me to come play with his daughter. I mean, he was ... uhm, he was there when I killed Aoki. He attacked me and tried to snap my neck."

"What stopped him?" She cocked her head.

"I did. I'm stronger. I nearly broke his hand – his hands are extremely important for his work – but our captain stepped in and reigned me in."

"Where there any other people present?"

"Nah, Tetsu, me, Midorima and captain. It's really strange to say captain ... his name is Akashi. You might have heard of the Akashi group."

"The president just died." She nodded.

"Oh ... did he?" So Akashi had finally killed off his dad. "I guess I should do a courtesy call and congratulate him on a job well done. He's been trying to kill off his father for

years. That was an open secret. So he's been looking for a way not to leave evidence."

"The papers said it was a stroke."

"Rather a stroke of genius to make it look like one." Aomine shook his head. "Akashi is really, really screwed up. I'm a cute kitten against him. I'm not a doctor but I'm sure he is what they call a psychopath."

"And he stopped you when you tried to break this Midorima's hand?" He answered with a nod. "Did he look like he was trying to stop you when you attacked Tetsu?"

He shook his head. Akashi had not moved an inch. Not even after the thing. He had simply watched when Midorima tried to kill him.

"Was he with you when you raped Tetsu for the first time?"

"Yeah." Aomine looked aside. "He had promised Tetsu to stop me if I overdid it. Even though Tetsu screamed, cried and bled, he did not do anything."

"Was he with you when you raped Tetsu again when that one tried to make up with you?"

"No, I was alone with Tetsu. The others often left us alone. I think they knew what I did, at least Akashi did. Midorima and Murasakibara listened to Akashi, so they left when he told them to go. They were both unhappy about that but none of them ever confronted me. I'm sure Akashi told them not to."

"Why would Akashi do that? It sounds like he purposefully wanted you to hurt Tetsu."

"I think he got off on that. As far as I know, he never raped Tetsu himself but he had everyone of us rape Tetsu. He stood right beside us when we raped Tetsu in the hunts. Sometimes he stayed back and watched me rape Tetsu in the locker or the showers. He never openly jerked himself off but he was aroused every time. In my opinion, that sick sadistic bastard just loved using us like puppets without getting his hands dirty."

"With what you just told me, it would not be a problem to jail him." She leaned back on her chair.

"On what charges? Tetsu agreed to the hunts. We agreed to the rapes. We were all fourteen and fifteen, no one more than two years apart. Except for the psychological one, no one had lasting damage. We were all consenting. One might argue that we were all consenting because he used emotional abuse on everyone of us but who would believe that a fourteen-year-old got four Alphas and an Omega to agree to gang-rapes? He always stepped in when anyone was in danger of doing lasting damage except that one time when I killed Aoki and then, he had Midorima call an ambulance. You can't even get him for this not-helping-someone-in-need shit."

"Have you ever confronted him about that?"

"Hell no!" He jumped from his chair. "I'm not suicidal anymore, you know? If I tell him what I think of him and he thinks that might be a threat, I'm dead in a second. When my suicidal behavior threatened the team, he told me to go die. When someone cockily challenged him, he attacked the guy with scissors to his face. When he doesn't like people's attitude, he has them kneel before him. That guy is really, really screwed up." Calm down. Lower your voice. Control your breathing. He sat down again. "I mean it, that guy is dangerous. I won't ever tell him what I think of him."

"Have you broken contact with him?"

He shook his head again but spoke before his therapist could: "I tried. But Satsuki often calls him, he's a charming, handsome friend for her. He never let her see his ugly side. I tried to ask her to break off contact but she asked why and I couldn't tell her. And he's still friends with Tetsu ... as I said, Tetsu can't get angry, so they're still friends."

"I fear for the one you call Tetsu. Does he know what you think of Akashi?" Doctor Enjoji's eyebrows were tightly knit together.

"He says that is his decision and he does not have to run them by me. He says he can look after himself and that I should concentrate on my problems with Akashi and talk them through with him."

"That sounds like he did talk about it all with Akashi and that they made up."

"Yeah, I'm sure Akashi had some very nice words for his behavior. Then he scratched Tetsu's dog's ears, smiled charmingly and let out a bit of his pheromones because he is the strongest Alpha I ever met. The guy could crush me with one hand. He always holds back but those few times I did annoy him, he made me run in fear."

"You don't have to like him. If Tetsu knows everything and still decides to be friends with him, that is his decision and he is right to tell you that you should mind your own matters. There is one person that should be warned though."

"Satsuki."

Doctor Enjoji nodded and said: "But first you have to tell her about your assaults."