When a Good Man Goes to War

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Summary

Demons run when a good man goes to war, they say, but nobody expected the good man to be so ruthless in hunting these demons down. In which a declaration of war is made to Kuroko Tetsuya when someone immeasurably precious to him is hurt, and he will stop at nothing to win the war and bring this person home. AoKuro Secret Agent!AU.

Notes

Taking a teensy break from HQ! to dabble in KnB. This is actually inspired by by an OTP prompt on Tumblr, which went as follows: "Person A being held hostage in a fortress and Person B violently leaving a mess of carnage in their wake in order to get to them. Covered in blood and questionable pieces of enemy remains, Person B finally makes it to Person A in the center of the wreckage and gives them a gentle peck on the forehead before apologizing for the wait."

Short Oneshot, secret agents!AU AoKuro, warning for blood/gore, violence, mentions of torture. Enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes.

Kuroko Tetsuya's first and foremost responsibility in life, ever since his middle school days, had been to chase after Aomine Daiki. Whether it was because his best friend always skipped out on class,
left halfway through basketball practice, Kuroko always ended up being the one who found him when no one else could. And every single time, he'd just sigh, berate him softly, and then pull him back from where he came by the shell of his ear. And Aomine would grumble and follow along nonetheless.

Except this time, when he found Aomine, there would be hell to pay.

A series of gunshots rang out, and only through lightning-fast reflexes was Kuroko able to throw himself behind the next wall, hiding from the line of fire of his attackers. The hallway was dark and dimly lit, but he was skilled, although unfortunately, his opponents were, too. Crouching, he checked the number of bullets he had in his clip and then slammed it back into his pistol, flattening himself against the wall and holding the weapon to his bulletproof vest-clad chest. In his earpiece, the constant static finally gave way to proper reception, although Kuroko momentarily winced when the voice on the other end yelled at him.

"Kuroko!"

"What is it, Kagami?" Kuroko rolled his eyes, pulling a small mirror out of his pocket and angling it to look around the corner. Through the darkness, his eyes caught the telltale flash of somebody’s phone, or walkie-talkie, or scope in the dim lighting, and that was all he needed. "Wait, hold that thought for a second."

"Kuroko-"

But the blue-haired man did not give Kagami the chance to continue, talking a deep breath before rolling out into the open. From his crouched position, his gun went up, and his attackers had only one moment to react to his sudden appearance before two gunshots rang out, both bullets finding their final resting place in the skulls of the two men in suits.

Their bodies dropped heavily to the floor, blood pooling around them, and Kuroko's booted feet splashed in the puddles as he lightly ran past them.

"Are you done with being impulsive?" The voice on the other line did not sound pleased, but did not sound very alarmed, either. "You know you were only on recon, right? There are two vans of field agents on their way and a medical chopper to boot. We're intelligence, not ground operations."

Kuroko did not reply, breath huffing hotly on his cheeks as he readjusted his mask to cover everything up to his nose. He flattened against the corner and peered around, clearing it before rushing down once more.

"You've never been this hot-headed before. What's wrong with you?"

"With all due respect, Kagami, we've only been partners for two months," Kuroko replied lightly, freezing as the sound of more footsteps came down the next turn of the winding hallway. Taking a chance, he turned it, and shot down the two people running down towards him in the blink of an eye. However, one of the shots missed and caught the first one in the shoulder, and Kuroko hissed as the other man took a moment to recover before pulling his gun up at him.

"Two months is more than enough to watch you live up to the reputation of the 'phantom sixth man' of the Special Operations. What changed now?" Kagami asked him, the question both genuine and exasperated. However, Kuroko was too busy not getting shot to reply immediately, instead rushing headfirst at the attacker in a zigzag pattern and hoping the bullets wouldn't find him in the dark. He was, after all, renowned as a ghost, an agent whose presence was so faint, his own partners would forget him sometimes. And as his shoulder connected with the other man’s abdomen, sending both of
them sprawling on the ground, Kuroko knew that he hadn't lost his touch.

"I cannot sit and watch one of my friends be hurt," was all that the agent answered into his mic, wrestling the man under him for dominance.

"Friends are a dangerous thing to have in this business, kid," his attacker spat at him, and Kuroko was glad that the glob of spit landed on his mask instead of the few bits of his skin that were not covered by his mask or his hat.

"Kuroko, who is that!?" Kagami was suddenly on high alert in his earpiece, and the agent winced before socking the other guy in the jaw. Despite the strong punch, the man under him took advantage of the freed arm and thrust his palm under his jaw, Kuroko's teeth clattering painfully as his neck snapped back. "I thought you said you weren't going to engage in close combat!"

"Change of plans," Kuroko grunted softly, falling away to give himself some distance. His hand reached into the sheath at his belt and pulled out a small knife, instinctively holding it above him, tip pointed up. His reflexes were as honed as ever when he found himself under the other man in the second it took to pull out his weapon, and he only needed to thrust the knife upwards to stab the guy right in the chest.

The guy still did try, to his credit. With every last ounce of strength he had, he pushed on Kuroko's trachea, choking the shadow for a pathetic two seconds and a half before strength left him, and he fell on top of the smaller agent, saturating his dark clothing with blood.

"Gross," Kuroko coughed out more to himself, grunting as he pushed out from underneath the body. The realization that he'd killed more than a dozen people already to get this far hit him in the face as he got up, feeling slightly dizzy, but then as he blinked, imaged flashed in his mind, recent memories of a friend in need, and he pressed on.

"Kuroko, I'm serious. Please turn back. Your shot may be incredible, paired with your freaky ability to disappear into thin air, but you won't tough it out in close combat if many of them come at you at once," his partner spoke up in his mic, now strangely serious and subdued. And concerned. "Please turn back and let ground operations deal with it."

"No," Kuroko replied curtly, wiping the knife free of blood on his pants before rushing down the hallway again. The more people came at him, the closer he knew he was getting, and the more his blood boiled at the sight that haunted the back of his eyelids with every blink.

Flesh, blood, and restraints. That's all he could visualize. And dark hair, dark with blood and dirt in the dim lighting, but that Kuroko knew to be the most royal shade of blue he'd ever had the privilege to admire.

He pushed himself to run faster.

"You're going to die for your ex-partner," Kagami sighed in his earpiece, as if not understanding.

And Kuroko resisted the urge to correct him on that term, because nobody needed to know how truly emotionally involved he was with this mission.

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Agency policy had required that they waited 24 hours after a missed check-in from an undercover agent to sound the alarm. Kuroko had always found that rule stupid, as had the entire intelligence department, and it was common practice to already start digging up information on an agent that had not reported at a scheduled checkpoint a mere 6 hours after their loss of contact.
However, when one of the agents in the Special Operations, adequately termed the "Generation of Miracles", failed to check-in, Kuroko finally understood why people waited for 24 hours before assuming the worst.

They needed the hope that the problem was a stomach bug or a missed plane flight. Not a busted cover and a session of torture.

Some missing agents did come home after they were tracked down, riding in an ambulance and hanging on to dear life. And then, some of them came home in the very same ambulance, wrapped up in a body bag. For those occurrences, 24 hours had been too many.

But agency policy was agency policy, and when Aomine Daiki failed to check in on a solo undercover gang infiltration mission, Kuroko sat behind his desk in the intelligence department and dutifully monitored every camera of the mission area he could get on his screen for the next day. He could do nothing else.

23 hours later, as he went through his 7th cup of coffee (graciously provided by his trusty partner Kagami Taiga), trembling fingers clicking through the camera feeds and hoping for a face recognition match-up of over 75%, a courier from the public relations department came running in, handing a DVD disk to Akashi Seijuuro, Captain of the intelligence division, for immediate analysis.

The entire department had sat down in front of the big screen and had watched in horror as Aomine's 23 hours of absence were explained right before their eyes.

Though the alarm rang before the customary 24 hour wait, it still took the agency 17 more hours to mount a rescue operation to retrieve Aomine Daiki (or what was left of him).

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"You could get suspended over this. For insubordination," Kagami sighed in Kuroko's earpiece, and as Kuroko shot down two guys that turned the hallway bend, jumping over their corpses, he acknowledged that he may as well be facing a court martial right then and there. But it didn't really matter if it meant he could bring Aomine home.

"I am partaking in the rescue operation as ordered," Kuroko rebutted, though they both knew it was weak.

"Yeah, you were supposed to be right here next to me, disabling security cameras for when the ground operations stormed the building. Disabling security usually means you get to stay behind, Kuroko."

"Not for him. They wouldn't have gotten to him in time," Kuroko replied a bit breathlessly, pushing himself against a wall to catch his breath as he listened to more footsteps coming down the hall. Several pairs, and by the voices that accompanied the footsteps, he could count at least 4 people. In such a tight hallway, close combat would be hard, especially since he wasn't so good at it, but he had to try. He pulled his clip out to check and swore when he found that only two bullets were left in his current clip. However, before he could replace it, the footsteps came too close for comfort, and Kuroko decided that it was time to return to his roots a little bit.

He wasn't called the phantom sixth man of the Generation of Miracles for nothing.

He willed his breathing to quiet and his body to stop trembling. Even his heartbeat seemed to drop drastically, to the point where he, in all his black-and-blood-clothed glory, practically melted into the darkness of the hallway. Not a single strand of hair dangling in front of his eyes moved as he stalked...
out his prey.

The four men finally ran within view, all of them brandishing guns and looking for him. Kuroko observed them, knowing that unless they looked exactly at him, their sweeping glances would not catch sight of him, and so he was not worried. As they began moving again, away from him into the other branch of the hallway, he swept into action.

Footsteps light and airy, the soles of his boots not even shuffling against the tiled floor as he glided over, Kuroko snuck up behind the last one at the tip of the diamond formation, and slit his throat.

And of course, he knew that his cover would be blown from then on, but he was still surprised that it took the other three men three whole seconds to realize that the small noise that came from their comrade was a noise of distress.

Of course, then they couldn't ignore the sound of blood bubbling out of the man's mouth in a choke, and they immediately whipped around. To Kuroko's credit, they didn't even spot him at first, hiding behind the body as he dropped it, and only drew their guns a second too slow. Kuroko counted his lucky stars that his knife hit its target as he threw it, the blade embedding itself in one of the men's ribcage with a dull thud before gunfire rained upon him.

It wasn't a good idea in such close quarters, and that was one of the most basic parts of field training Kuroko had received. Instead, he dropped to the ground and rolled, using the body of the second guy as a human shield to receive the bullets instead. Blood sprayed on his clothes where the body was pierced, but as soon as the bullets stopped for a breather, he jumped out from behind the guy, and shot another one with two holes: one to the leg, the other to the neck.

"Kuroko, be careful!"

As if having been jinxed, the agent suddenly found himself in a headlock, and a powerful one at that. The guy holding him could easily break his neck at this angle, and Kuroko was painfully aware of it. His knife was still embedded in the other guy's chest and his gun was out of bullets, and his hand-to-hand had never been anything to be impressed about.

Aomine was so much better at hand-to-hand than he was.

Just the thought of his childhood friend and ex-partner spurred him on, and Kuroko elbowed the guy behind him harshly. The man buckled just enough for Kuroko to slip out of his grasp, but as soon as he spun to face him, the harsh grip was back, at the collar of his jacket this time.

"I'll break your face, you bitch!" the other man yelled, and Kuroko's world exploded in pain as a fist smashed into his face. He barely recovered from the first blow, spitting out blood, when another fist snapped his head to the side.

"Shit! Kuroko, have you been captured?" Kagami asked in his earpiece, but Kuroko felt too dizzy to respond.

Instead, he put all his energy on grabbing the guy's hand with his opposite one in a weak attempt to dislodge it, earning him a laugh and a gun to the forehead.

"I'll enjoy pumping you full of holes, you miserable shit," the other man sneered, the gun clinking threateningly in his grip, and Kuroko finally acted.

His grip on the man's fist, so weak before, suddenly tightened, his thumb digging into the man's radial nerve as he twisted the hand inward, exposing the guy's elbow. With fluidity he knew Aomine would be proud of him for, Kuroko used his free palm to harshly hit the guy's elbow inwards, and...
the crack of a shattered joint, along with the howl of pain from the man, topped off his maneuver.

"Kuroko!" Kagami cried in his earpiece, and Kuroko understood his worry. The audio feed Kagami was getting would probably have freaked him out, too. He was not unfamiliar with listening to a feed and wondering if everything was alright on the other end, and so he indulged Kagami.

"I'm fine. Neutralized him. I'm taking him out," the small agent reported, kicking the guy. The man fell to his knees, still howling in agony at his arm bent out of shape, and Kuroko silenced him momentarily with a kick to the face. The man fell to the ground, and tried to crawl away, but Kuroko kicked him again in the ribs, and then the head.

Leaving his opponent just two seconds to retrieve his knife, still lodged deeply in the other one's ribcage, Kuroko spun in alarm as the guy weakly coughed out into the static of a communication device.

"Advance team 3 out... he's coming for you," he reported, the microphone in his hand trembling with his fingers, and Kuroko knelt to slit his throat before he could even get the answer.

He left the scene of the massacre before even he could hear the reply.

It didn't matter if they knew he was coming. He would still kill them all in the end, if that's what it took to get Daiki back.

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Halfway down a set of stairs, Kagami spoke up once more into his earpiece, reporting that the ground operations had finally reached the area and were setting up a perimeter before entering. Once more, he begged him to stop advancing and fall back to get backup from the field agents, but Kuroko paid the thought no heed, jumping off the last two steps and breaking off into a run.

The hallways had turned a bit colder, and the blood splattered everywhere on Kuroko's clothes was beginning to dry, seeping onto his skin in the parts where he was clothed lighter. After clicking a new clip into his pistol, he'd discarded his gloves as they were too saturated in blood to be of any efficiency to him, but now his gun and knife, still soaked in blood, slipped slightly from his grasp.

As he turned a corner and found himself at a single hallway ending with a door, he hoped that this would be the last stretch.

He knelt by the door and listened carefully. He heard no sounds from the other side, but the enemy had been warned, so they might be planning an ambush. That, or the door could be rigged. Either way, he didn't want to risk it... but it was his only way in. Every second counted to get Daiki back alive, and he couldn't waste time considering "what if"s.

He threw the door open, gun up in front of him to shoot down the horde waiting for him.

Except there was no horde. Just an empty room with overturned tables and chairs, empty computer desks, and a top landing reachable through a set of winding metal stairs, that seemed to lead to a central command board.

Kuroko had no idea what to think of this, but he did not let his guard down as he carefully walked in, and ducked by the nearest table. His hands shook with the adrenaline of having come so far (and having killed so many, god, he had the blood of so many human beings on his hands now... but it was all for Aomine, all for Aomine, all for Daiki-), but he steadied his grip and looked up from behind the table.
Suddenly, a muffled bang went off, and the next second, Kuroko was thrown to the ground by the impact of something in his left upper arm. And then, there was pain; blinding, hot, unfamiliarly excruciating pain.

Kuroko screamed in surprise.

"Damn it! Kuroko, are you hurt?" Kagami asked, his voice conveying the powerlessness he felt. Kuroko had always hated that about being intelligence. The feeling of helplessness he felt at the idea of one of his agents dying while all he could do was listen.

"Shot by sniper, left upper arm," he grunted, gently touching the wound and stifling a gasp of pain. "I think it went through. Missed shot, or they did not see me in the dark."

"Damn it, you got lucky. Any of them in the open?"

"No," Kuroko reported, and then regretted jinxing it—again. As soon as the whisper left his mouth, the door to the other side of the room opened, and about ten men stepped in, carrying guns and knives.

Suddenly, the rescue operation didn't seem like such a good idea anymore.

"Ten of them, ground floor at 12 o' clock, sniper on top floor, probably at 2 o' clock."

"Have they spotted you?"

"I think they think I'm down."

"Let them get closer so you can incapacitate the sniper. Then, shoot as many as possible of them down, and get into their midst. If it's that dark, they won't be able to see you too well. Avoid shooting at close range. And be careful," Kagami dictated in rapid fire, and Kuroko did not even hesitate to follow his orders. After all, Kagami Taiga had gone to train with one of the CIA's top agents, and had been a great field agent before requesting a temporary transfer to the tactical division. As Akashi's master tactician, his word was usually the best the agents could get.

When the careful footsteps finally came within two meters of him, Kuroko sprang into action.

His left arm burned as he used it to suppress the recoil of the pistol, but nonetheless, his finger worked the trigger relentlessly as soon as he came out from behind the overturned table. Numerous cries of surprise answered his assault, along with the thud of several bodies on the ground, but then, he had to duck again as a rain of bullets came upon him. The table took many hits (and he was thankful for the thickness of it), but several shards blown away from the edges ricocheted and cut through his skin and some of his clothes. As this point-blank range, any lucky shot would be fatal, so he had to be careful.

At the smallest opening, he vaulted over the table, and, as Kagami had instructed, ran into their midst. Only about five of them were left, so Kuroko immediately kicked one, spinning him around to use as a human shield when another chanced a shot in his direction. The man jerked with a choked cry, but before he could go limp, Kuroko shoved him at the man who'd shot him, letting the body's dead weight take both of them to the floor. Kuroko kicked the gun out of the man's grasp, but then concentrated on the next one, who came up to him with his fists raised.

Always as mindful of the sniper on the top landing, Kuroko moved silently and quickly, trying to blend into the shadows despite being in the open, and parried all of the man's sloppy attacks. He himself was very nervous at such close proximity, but he kept his head cool and well-set on his shoulders and deflected every attack that came.
Unfortunately for him, he'd forgotten the last one, who manifested himself by grabbing him from behind and looping his arms under his armpits.

"Got you now," the first one sneered, landing a solid punch on the incapacitated agent's chest, and Kuroko's breath flew away for a few seconds as his ribs cracked under the assault. Another one followed, and then an uppercut to the stomach, and finally, Kuroko's shoulders jerked as he hung his head and vomited a mix of bile and blood all over his boots and the shoes of the guy punching him.

"Gross," the man holding him commented, and Kuroko had to give him that one. However, he recovered quickly, and when his first attacker finally got over his newly ruined shoes and punched him, aiming straight at his face, he had enough logic to move his head to the side.

With the height difference, it was actually easy to avoid the punch, which landed painfully on his second attacker's nose, which snapped with a crunch.

"Shit!" the two of them exclaimed at the same time, and Kuroko took the second of confusion as an advantage to lift himself off the ground, kicking the man in front of him with both his feet. The guy was propelled back, landing harshly on the ground, and Kuroko used his momentum to throw all his weight forward as he landed, and flipped the other guy over his back, right on top of his comrade.

A shot that whizzed past him reminded him of the presence of the sniper, and Kuroko nimbly moved, despite his aching body, to retreat, all the whilst shooting the two men on the ground full of holes. Their bodies jerked, punctuated by their cries of pain, and then, they were silenced. Kuroko couldn't even bring himself to care.

However, once he was done with the two of them, he turned back to where he'd left the other one under his comrade's body, and realized that he was not there anymore.

He cursed his own carelessness and spun around, just in time to spot the man in question on the other side of the room, by the second door, holding something up in his hand. In the darkness, he could not see what it was, but by the pulling motion that the man executed with his other hand, he suddenly knew exactly what was going on.

"Grenade," he choked breathlessly, eyes widening as the small ball-shaped object flew towards him, landing at his feet. Undiluted terror ran cold in his blood as he backed off a step, but then, as always, as reliable as ever, Kagami was in his ears.

"The sniper!"

And that was all Kuroko needed to hear.

He didn't even hesitate to grab the active grenade off the ground and throw it right back at where it came from.

And then, he was running as fast he could, ignoring the cry of horror that came from behind him.

He'd almost made it to the overturned table when the grenade exploded, and Kuroko cried out as the awesome blast, confined to such a small space, actually sent him flying into the table he'd wanted to duck behind.

His head hit the heavy wood harshly, and the small agent crumpled to the ground, ears ringing with the aftershock of the blast. Thankfully, he'd been far enough to avoid being caught in the radius of the blast, but then, a rain of soft, squishy, bloody pieces on his body proved that the others had not been so lucky.
"-roko... Kuroko!"

"Ugh..." the small agent groaned, his bones shaking in effort as he tried to sit up. "Ka... Kagami...?"

"Shit! Are you okay? Did you get caught in the blast!?" his partner asked worriedly. "Sit tight, the ground operations are on their way!"

"N-No..." Kuroko grunted, shakily pushing himself up to his feet. The entire room spun, and Kagami's voice was grating to his sensitive ears, but he pushed on. He briefly noted how several of his attackers had been reduced to a pile of bloody, unrecognizable flesh, and that a part of the landing had crumpled. Since he hadn't been shot dead yet, he figured that the sniper had fallen and had been buried under the rubble.

"Kuroko, please! That blast sounded violent, you have to sit still until Satsuki and Midorima get to you, or you could risk more brain damage!"

"Daiki..." Kuroko whispered, pressing on. His feet carried him to the winding metal steps that led up to the landing, and his footsteps, now heavy and dragging, clanked all the way up to the central command centre.

Most of the monitors and keyboards had been destroyed by the blast, but there was a door right behind the central command, a red light by the monitor next to it indicating that it was locked.

If Aomine wasn't in there, Kuroko did not know where else he could be.

"Kagami," he called, taking a deep breath as the ringing faded from his ears. His vision sharpened just a little more, just enough to kneel by the small monitor and inspect it, and then, finally, he found himself with something he was familiar with. "I have a locked door here. If I transfer the security encryption to you, can you decrypt it for me?"

His partner did not respond, even as Kuroko began to work on opening the panel next to the monitor with the screwdriver in his Swiss knife. As the panel came off, he realized that Kagami still hadn't replied, and suddenly, worry flooded him.

"Kagami...?"

"Yeah," the comforting, deep baritone finally answered. "Yeah, I will. You didn't even need to ask, partner."

"Thank you," Kuroko breathed, relieved, and pulled out his cellphone and a cable, linking it to a socket in the inner workings of the monitor.

"I was just sending a notice on the other line to the rescue team. To get Satsuki on standby in the chopper, but for Midorima to come in with the ground ops. Something tells me you'll need it. Ah, got your data. Gimme a second to decrypt it."

And suddenly, Kuroko was so grateful for Kagami's existence. The man was loud and brash and impulsive, but when it came down to his job, he was one of the best. Almost as good as Aomine.

The thought of the blue-haired agent sent a pang of panic spiking through Kuroko's heart, and he looked at the door anxiously. The light was still red on it, but Kuroko would honestly scream if the door was all that remained to separate him and his other half.

They couldn't stop now.
"Got it. The digital data has been replicated, so just punch in the code. 7-8-2-0. It's all yours," Kagami notified him, and Kuroko disconnected his phone with a soft sigh.

"Thank you, Kagami. I never could've done it without you," he told him, his tone genuine as he punched the code into the monitor.

"My pleasure. Now. Go get that idiot back. And bring him home," Kagami prompted him. As the hydraulic door slid open, Kuroko could not agree more.

A sudden rush of freezing air stole Kuroko's breath at first, the contrast of temperature creating fog at his feet as he entered the new room. Unlike the other rooms and hallways he'd run through to get there, this one was not even remotely illuminated. It was pitch black, and only the small light filtering from the open door let him look into the room. Even then, he saw nothing.

"Aomine...?" he called out softly, shivering with every step. His gun was still up, just in case, but the room was so freezing that he doubted anyone was even there. "Daiki?"

"What's going on?" Kagami asked from the earpiece, and Kuroko bit his lip.

"No answer, and it's too dark to see."

"Let me see if I can get any electrical circuits infiltrated from the data you gave me. It should transmit through the Bluetooth function on your phone," Kagami muttered to himself, and Kuroko nodded, lowering his mask as he waited. His breath came out in puffs, and he couldn't quell the nervousness that gripped his heart at the thought of what he'd find when the lights inevitably came on.

And they did.

"Got it," Kagami announced, and then, Kuroko was blinded by a sudden flash of light.

The neons on the ceiling lit up abruptly, black spots dancing in Kuroko’s eyes. He shut them tightly and groaned, having to wait too long of a time for his vision to get adjusted.

And finally, when it did, he looked up, and it was not hard to find what he had come looking for in the small room.

There he was, in all his broken, beautiful glory. In the video, he'd been on a chair, but now, he was on the floor, legs out and bolted to the floor, and arms done up the same way against the wall. He had a large, thick looking blindfold looped around his eyes, and a thick gag shoved and tied so tightly on that as his vision returned, Kuroko could see the patches of dried drool and blood on the white cloth. Weirdest of all, he seemed to have headphones on his ears, or something similar. And as Kuroko carefully came closer to the man who did not even look like he was breathing, his blood froze.

Not because of the temperature, but because of the realization. That worse than the cuts littering his body, worse than the terrifyingly cold environment he’d been subjected to, worse than the stains on his clothes that could've been twelve different types of bodily fluids, worse than all the pain and torture he’d probably been through, it was the sensory deprivation that had probably done him in.

Aomine had never come off that way to anybody, but as an intimate part of his life, Kuroko knew how sensitive the guy actually was. And 17 hours of sensory deprivation would definitely have had more effect on him than any other torture method there was in any textbook ever.
He wanted to cry just by looking at Aomine Daiki's limp body.

"Kuroko. What's going on?" Kagami asked, softly, as if he knew what Kuroko had seen already.

"He's here," the small agent breathed, and came closer. Aomine did not respond to his advance, and Kuroko realized with a nauseating wrench of his heart that the noise-cancelling headphones probably drowned out all sounds around him, and that the cold numbed his entire body from feeling anything at all. "Sensory deprivation. He... He's not responsive."

"Fuck..." Kagami's voice was choked up over the line. "Ground ops ETA 4 minutes 18 seconds. Can you try to touch him?"

"I'm scared," Kuroko admitted in a whisper, gently kneeling next to Aomine and hating how pale and limp the tanned agent's body looked. His fingertips were already blue and his skin had an unhealthy, faded colour to it. His hair, usually royal blue but now dark with dried blood and sweat, was ruffled, as if he'd been dragged around by it. Just the thought of someone being so violent with someone so precious to him sent Kuroko over the edge.

He had to talk to him.

"Please be careful, Kuroko. He may not be himself. Sensory deprivation is an incredibly potent torture method, so he may be out of touch with reality when you get to him," Kagami warned him, the words straight out of a textbook. Kuroko's heart ached at the thought of how much pain his fellow agent had gone through, and how much therapy he'd have to endure to get over the experience.

He couldn't take it anymore. He gently put his hands on the headphones, and pulled them off.

And he jumped back when, at the feeling of pressure, Aomine suddenly jerked back, freezing for a moment before squirming around. Muffled groans came from him, sounding more like whimpers than anything else, and they may as well have been. Kuroko's heartstrings practically tore at the helpless sound, and before the knew it, he was cupping Aomine's face with one hand, the other furiously working to get the gag off.

The tanned agent whimpered again, leaning into the touch that he hadn't felt in what had probably been the last 17 hours, and Kuroko resisted the urge to pull him close and squeeze him tight forever. Instead, he whispered softly to him, just his name, just his name in gentle disbelief, as if he hadn't even been expecting to find him alive in the end.

The gag fell off, the blood wad of drenched fabric falling to the ground and exposing Aomine's split and cracked lips and his bloody mouth. He was definitely whimpering now, probably unable to articulate because of the debilitating cold, and suddenly, Kuroko couldn't wait for the ground ops to get there to get him out of those restraints.

"You're gonna be okay," he promised whole-heartedly, rubbing some heat back into his sunken cheeks, tracing his chapped lips with a thumb almost reverently, running his fingers in his matted hair gently, soothingly, before getting to the blindfold.

Aomine was panting then, violently, and then quickly, and Kuroko realized that he was hyperventilating, probably out of panic. As the cold had probably lowered his system's functions, the sudden spike would be very dangerous, and so he softly took Aomine's face in his hands again and brought him close to whisper in his ears.

"Calm down... I've got you... Kuroko... It's me, it's Tetsuya... I've got you, Daiki, I've got you..."
Breathe... I've got you...

"T-T-T... T-Te-"

"Shh, shh... Breathe..." Kuroko encouraged him, his heart lurching at the rattled voice that tried to claw its way out of Aomine's throat. His fingers worked even more furiously at the knot on the back of his head, and when he finally got it undone, he gently set his forehead against Aomine's. "Daiki... I'm going to take your blindfold off. Close your eyes, it's really bright in here."

As he slipped the heavy black cloth off and dropped it to the ground, Aomine took a sharp intake of breath, every hot puff caressing Kuroko's cheeks comfortingly. Aomine was alive. He was alive, and he would be okay.

"Breathe... Breathe, I'm still here..." Kuroko encouraged him, gently straddling him to press himself even closer, taking his face in his hands to remind him that he was still right by him. "It's Tetsuya. I'm here for you. I've got you, Daiki. Take your time opening your eyes. I'm still here, and I'm not going to leave you again."

He was fully aware that Kagami could hear him on the earpiece, but his partner stayed respectfully silent. If his and Aomine's relationship hadn't been clear until then, now it definitely was.

And he couldn't bring himself to care, because Aomine was alive.

"T-Tet... Tetsu...?" The familiar voice finally rose up, scared, as if it didn't even believe itself. "Am I... hallucinating again...?"

"No."

"Whenever you're ready, open your eyes. I'm real, and I'm here with you, Daiki."

Aomine let out a small whine, probably of discomfort or pain, but did not open his eyes.

And Kuroko couldn't wait anymore, because he feared he may die if Aomine didn't look at him already.

"I love you," he whispered softly, and his words caught in his throat as he shut his eyes tightly in pain. "I love you, Daiki..."

And when he opened his eyes next, Aomine was looking at him. The relief is in his eyes was evident, buried underneath layers and layers of fear, pain, and some disbelief, as if he still wasn't convinced that this was all real.

"You're real," he murmured, however, almost reverently, and Kuroko couldn't take it anymore.

He could feel Aomine's eyes scouring his body, taking in every single detail, every single bruise or speck of blood, his or otherwise, the gunshot wound still bleeding on his arm, the flecks of flesh and gore caught in his clothes, but it didn't matter to Kuroko. Someday, he'd tell Aomine what he'd done to get to him on time. But today was not that day, and that day would not come for some time.

Right now, all he could do was gently cradle Aomine's cold face in his hands, and then bury it in the crook of his neck soothingly. And when that wasn't enough, he gently pecked his dirty hair, once more, and another, until his lips were taking in every inch of him. And then, when he realized that silent tears were rolling down Aomine's cheeks, as if the other agent didn't even realize he was crying, he laughed softly, and pulled his face up to look at him, in all his battered, victorious glory once again.
"You're real. You're real, you're real, Tetsu. Tetsu, you're real, Tetsu," Aomine whispered over and over again like a mantra, and Tetsuya gave in.

His lips gently caressed Daiki's sweaty forehead, pecked a second time, and then fiercely, protectively kissed a third time.

"Yeah, I'm finally here." He laughed softly, holding him as close as he could as the sound of the ground ops rushing into the room finally reached his ears. He didn't even care who saw them now. His boyfriend, his lover, his soulmate, his entire world, his everything, Aomine Daiki was still alive, and nothing else mattered to him. "Sorry for making you wait."

"I'll wait forever if it means finding my way back to you," Aomine sighed tiredly, dropping his head against Tetsuya's chest. And nothing could ruin their blissful contentment then, not when the ground ops pried them apart to cut off Daiki's restraints, not when their head field medic, Midorima, ordered a stretcher for Daiki, not when they were both loaded onto the chopper with Satsuki, the Generation of Miracles' private paramedic, fussing over them as they were evacuated to the nearest hospital.

Nothing.

They held hands in the chopper, sweaty and bloody and dirty hands with their fingers entwined tightly, and Daiki never thought to ask Tetsuya why his hands were so bloody that day. Not until months later, when the nightmares stopped for both of them, and the positive results of their psych evals came in the mail, along with Aomine's re-entry into service.

And when he asked, a casual question put out there as they held one another close under the blankets on the couch, Kuroko only smiled and told him not to worry about it. When Aomine asked Kagami the next time he saw his boyfriend's work partner, Kagami simply shrugged, looking a bit wistful.

"Demons can only run so far when a good man goes to war," the redhead had answered rather cryptically, and had left.

Aomine cursed the intelligence division and their codes and encryptions, but then figured that he didn't really care. Kuroko Tetsuya was his boyfriend, and a good man. And nothing else really mattered.

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End Notes

AoKuro breaks my heart idk why it's such an emotional pair. And Daiki's a big baby, fite me.

I've wanted to write sensory deprivation for so long, it's so weird. Psychological damage is so interesting, I wish I could explore it more. I might write another fic, completely different, which goes into more detail, because it's really fascinating how being deprived of sights/sounds/touch/smell/speech for a long time can make you lose your mind. And Aomine's a sweetheart so I'd love to know how he coped with it. Oh well.

I wanted to include more background on the AU, but I'm honestly really tired so nah. Basically, the GoM are all really talented agents of different divisions who, together, make the Special Ops team. Now, this team doesn't operate together unless there are special circumstances, like a suuuuuuuuper classified and important mission. Otherwise, they all work in their own departments/specializations with their own partners. They go as follows:
Akashi: Intelligence:Tactical. Partner: Reo

Midorima: Field Medics:Emergentology. Partner: Takao

Kise: Ground Ops:Infiltration. Partner: Kasamatsu

Aomine: Ground Ops:Field Agent. Partner: Sakurai (formerly: Kuroko)

Murasakibara: Ground Ops:Private Protection. Partner: Himuro

Kuroko: Intelligence:Infiltration (formerly: Ground Ops:Field Agent). Partner: Kagami (formerly: Aomine)

So Kuroko does have a background in field agent work, except he kinda sucked at it so he transferred out, into the intel division for an infiltration specialization. He and Aomine are childhood friends, and secretly lovers, since relationships can be excellent and devastating leverage in this line of work. And I don't actually know anything about spies and weapons and shit but I do know that the way Kuroko broke the guy's elbow is legit and can be used if someone had you by the collar!

Hope you liked it. AoKuro is such an incredible pairing, 10/10 recommend. Please leave a review with your thoughts!

-SharkbaitSekki

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!