

2 - Leave the light on when you go

Von Gravitass

Kapitel 1: Katsuya

„I fucked up.“

That much should have been obvious by the snowflakes on your T-Shirt, and the about 30 voice mails and text messages it took for Anzu to finally open the door. Or the fact that it is 4:17 in the morning and nobody who has their life in order would need to go cry on their best friend's shoulder at that time of the day.

Anzu doesn't seem overly concerned, though.

“I thought her name was Mai. And I thought we were happy about that. You don't look happy.” Finally, she seems to realize that you're still standing in the cold, and moves to let you in. “Get into bed, I'll make coffee.” The sound of her bare feet disappears into the kitchen, and you're left to close the door behind you and find your own way in.

Her sheets still hold some of Anzu's body heat, and it's only when you have them wrapped around you that you realize how fucking cold it was outside. But at least you're cozy now, breathing the honey-citrus-y scent that you know must be shampoo but that always just screams Anzu, and for the first time in about two hours, your heart rate goes down a tiny bit.

You can hear vague noises – dishes, cupboard doors opening and closing – and wonder whether her parents are home. Aren't they going to wake up? The last thing you need is the slightly disapproving look that parental figures usually give you, even when there's no apparent reason. Although now, there definitely is. Fuck, you're in so much trouble.

What is she doing, anyway? How long can it take to make coffee? Granted, you don't often do that because usually you can't be bothered when there's nobody to make it for, but for fuck's sake. When she returns, her cup is already half empty, and she looks at least half awake, so the wait was probably good for something. She gestures at the tray she brought. “We don't have any fancy comfort food or anything, but if you're hungry...” This may be the first time in your life, but you're really not. Not even a little bit.

Anzu climbs into bed next to you and hands you a cup of steaming coffee, and you

realize why you had to come to her. Yugi is great with words, but he's not so much with the silent comfort. Well that and, there is no way in hell you're risking having to make a late night call to the Kaiba mansion, even if you know that Yugi will only be there if Kaiba isn't. It's really time Mokuba broke that news to his brother. Just about now would be a good time, actually, so at least one person in this city would be in an even greater state of shock than you.

For a while, none of you says a word, you just silently sip your coffee and wait for her warmth to seep into your skin and your body to stop shaking. Then, after you still don't offer any explanation, she sets aside her now-empty cup and finds your hand under the covers. The fingers that lock with yours are surprisingly cool, firm, comforting.

"Well?"

Where do you even begin? You're honestly not sure what you have more trouble dealing with. The news you just got? Or the way you got it? Or the way you absolutely don't know how to handle it, and nobody seems the least bit surprised?

"Mai is pregnant." Is what you finally manage. Not really a beginning at all, just a fact. It's fitting, actually, because that's how you feel. You know something has to come after that, but you're still stuck on processing the first information.

Another reason you had to talk to Anzu: she doesn't ask if it is yours. Honda, even Yugi, probably would have. But even if there was any question about it – which there isn't – it wouldn't matter.

"She left a message on my machine. Says she's going to keep it. That it's my choice if I want to be the father or just – you know." The sperm donor? As if you're going to let any child of yours – biological or not – grow up with a dad who can't be bothered to be around. Or let Mai believe this is one more thing she has to do on her own.

For a long while, Anzu is silent, the only indication that she's heard you in the way her grip tightens around your hand. "Wow. How are you feeling?"

If only you could figure that out yourself. "Fuck, Anzu, how should I know? It's awesome. I mean a kid that would be hers? And mine? That's... wow. But. Fuck. I'm twenty-four." You drain the last bit of your coffee and press your hands to your face. "I can't even get through a week without eating cold pizza for four nights in a row. How am I supposed to take care of a baby? I don't know the first thing about the... things."

You know she doesn't mean it that way, but the laughter with which she receives your words still hurts. As though you haven't spent the last four hours or so mentally replaying the reactions of everyone who ever thought you couldn't do something. Your parents. Your teachers. Even that jerk Kaiba. Hell, even Yugi, sweet as he is, when he thought you couldn't get through a duel without his advice.

But you can't really stay angry at Anzu for too long. Not when her hug is the most

comforting thing in the world, horrifying morning breath aside, and who are you kidding, you don't believe you can do it yourself. How can you blame her? Your head sinks heavily onto her shoulder, and for a second, you feel ready to fall asleep. Let tomorrow-you deal with this. That is, until you realize the up-close view of her boobs you're getting from this vantage point, and are instantly awake and terribly self-conscious. Fine, it's not exactly like you'd forgotten they were there. But when you're busy sorting out your mess of a life and also kind of trying to convince yourself and your girlfriend that you can do this thing called relationship, you have other things to worry about. You start to act like the girl you ogled in middle school, who now acts as your gay best friend's decoy girlfriend, has become kind of genderless, really. Plus, no offense to Anzu, but Skype doesn't exactly make for attractive visuals.

Yes, that's probably it: you aren't used to having her back. You've been seeing her on a computer screen for too long. That's the entire reason why your cheeks are burning up right now.

It's too comfortable though, and your head is just way too heavy, so you just close your eyes and focus on her fingers running through your hair. Mai does that, too, when she's around. Annd, the embarrassment is back. You shift uncomfortably, just in case... For fucks sake. All you wanted was some peace and one of Anzu's patented 'it's going to be alright' speeches.

"Can you just say something, please?"

At first you think the exasperated sigh that seems to shake her entire body is her only answer.

"I'm trying to think of what I can say. I mean... Mai has decided this? Did she even ask you? I know it's her decision but... I don't know. This is a lot to spring on you. And over the phone." She clearly has to force herself into saying this. Is she imagining what it would be like for herself to make this decision? Or is it just that Anzu hates being negative about other people, even if she really doesn't agree with them? "So what did you tell her?"

Her, or her voice on the machine while you listened to her message a hundred times? "Nothing," you groan, unwilling to admit it but unable to lie to Anzu. She never misses the clues. "I don't know what. Plus she's probably asleep now. Fuck, I don't know."

Anzu arches an eyebrow. If you didn't know any better, you'd say she copied that from Kaiba... didn't she start hanging out with him before she went to Germany? But she always had a way to let you know she's not buying your bullshit. Only in the most loving way, of course.

"Are YOU asleep? I understand that you're freaked, but Jou, you have to let her know that you got her message, even if all you're going to tell her is that you need to think about what this means to you. Or to both of you. Or do you want her to feel like you're ignoring her?"

Of course you don't. Mai has probably done the math and knows that you've been home for at least four hours now. But every time you think of dialing her number you get a violent flashback to the first times you tried to ask her out: the kind of nausea

that kicks you in the stomach, and the feeling of a fluffy pillow suddenly covering your brain and extinguishing all the words you could form.

Anzu's expression softens when she sees the look of terror on your face. Without a word, she pries the phone you've been fidgeting with out of your hands and dials a number. Maybe she's afraid that you'll just hang up again, because she doesn't hand it over, just listens to the dial tone until you can hear Mai's voice coming out of the speakers, and then thrusts it back at you.

It almost slips through your fingers, and you fumble awkwardly to hold the thing up to your ear while your mind is still frantically searching for something to say. "M-Mai, hey, it's me. Katsuya. And... that's your machine," you realize when there is absolutely no answer. "I, uh, just wanted to let you know I got your message. I'll call you tomorrow. We should talk about this. ... bye! Also, uh – I love you. Okay, bye!"

Well, if that's not the most incoherent voice mail of all times. But Anzu gives you an encouraging nod.

"Look, I'm sure you'll figure it out. You've always figured it out-"

"Always, like, the five other times I've become a dad?" There is more than just a hint of panic in your voice.

"No, always, as in, whenever you've had to do something else you didn't know how. And you know you're not alone. We'll all babysit, and we'll read the books or whatever you need to prep – wouldn't be the first time I help you study, right?"

Unbelievable. Does she really think it's that easy, or is she just doing this because she thinks it'll calm you down? Because if so, it's not working. You hate studying. You're bad at it. Anzu claims that it's not true, but there has to be some reason for why all of your teachers got that impression, and you sure didn't mind putting that humiliation behind you when you graduated. Plus...

"You can't learn what to do with a baby from a book! Don't you need instincts and crap like that? I don't have instincts. What am I going to do? Not like I can carry a book with me everywhere I go and whenever the thing does something, I'll just look it up. Baby pooped? Wait, I have to check my book! Where's the baby? PROBABLY DEAD BECAUSE IT TOOK ME TOO LONG TO LOOK UP WHATS WRONG WITH IT."

By now, Anzu is laughing uncontrollably, and judging by the way she doesn't even bother to be quiet, her parents really aren't home. Panic or not, it's an amazing sight, the way her giggles transform her entire face. Her hair is still poofed in weird places, her eyes still a bit swollen and smudged with eyeliner, but instead of tired, she looks... radiant.

And then, out of nowhere, her hands are on your shoulders, her mouth on yours, and you should definitely not be doing this. You shouldn't be thinking about how pretty Anzu looks, and you definitely shouldn't be kissing her. Letting her kiss you. Whatever.

You should probably be calling Mai as many times as it takes to get a hold of her, and telling her that you'll work things out, and that you're there for her, and for the baby since she decided to keep it. At the very least, you should be thinking about how

wrong this is, or how mad your girlfriend would be if she knew about this.

But your brainspace suddenly seems occupied by the weirdest things. Like the small rough patch of skin where Anzu has been biting her lip. Or why people always talk about looking into someone's eyes and being able to tell what they think. Because all you can see are your best friend's blue irises, disconcertingly close, but still the same eyes you've always known on her. No deep secrets there. Or maybe you just don't know where to look.