

4 - One plus one is sometimes three

Von Gravitas

Kapitel 1: Katsuya

The silence you wake up to is eerie. These days, when you're waking up in the middle of the night, it's usually to the complaints of your baby daughter. Right now, there's no sound except for the faint snoring from Mai's side of the bed. So it actually takes you a moment to figure out what woke you.

Right, your bladder.

For a moment, you grope around for the light switch before thinking the better of it. Switching on the light might not wake Mai, but then again, it might. And she deserves all the uninterrupted nights of sleep she can get, considering she is pulling most of the night shifts right now.

Of course, your attempt to be considerate immediately backfires when, feeling your way through the dark bedroom, you hit your toe on the corner of the bed. "Ouch, motherf-" Continuing to swear inwardly, you hastily glance over to your now-stirring girlfriend. But she doesn't open her eyes, and before the pulsing pain in your toe has subsided enough for you to walk on it again, the snores are back.

Nature's call is getting louder and louder, but for a few seconds, you still can't help but stand there on one leg and stare at Mai. How the everloving fuck did you get so lucky? How do you still *feel* so lucky after... it doesn't even make sense to count the years, because where do you start? When you met? When you first knew you loved her? When you first knew she loved you? When you finally, finally got your shit together and asked her out? Sure, you prefer the way things are now, but... you wouldn't miss the other stuff, either.

Just like, sure, you see why she puts in the effort to do her hair and put on make-up and you would never in a million years complain about those skirts she likes to wear. But. Right now, there is a weird crusty bit of spit dried in the corner of her mouth, and her hair is tangled on the pillow in a way that would make every nesting bird proud. She's wearing one of your old t-shirts with a ridiculous 'Is your name Polymerization? Because I could do a fusion with you...' print.

And still, when you look at her, you feel just as surprised and... blissful as you did six years ago, when you thought you'd totally blown your first date, until she grabbed you by the collar and kissed you. Good thing she isn't awake to see your response this time, because the romance is embarrassingly cut short by your need to run to the

bathroom.

It isn't until you're on your way back, mentally half-asleep already, that you notice the light shining through the crack under Anzu's door. Your bed is calling for you *really* loudly right now, but there is a 90% chance that she's up because of *your* child, so maybe you should check in.

Your first instinct is to knock, but just in case Rory is falling asleep, you kick your little bit of good breeding to the curb and just open the door. For once, being less polite than you wanted to be was the right move, because your daughter's head is resting heavily on Anzu's shoulder. It's probably just your imagination, but somehow, the tiny, tightly shut lids and the pursed lips remind you incredibly of her mother.

It takes Anzu a moment to notice you, she's too wrapped up in the little dance she's doing that apparently just put Rory to sleep. Finally, she turns in one of the swaying motions she makes, and spots you and your dopey, sleepy grin.

She mirrors it with one of her own, except – for three in the morning, she really doesn't look sleepy. Motioning you to stay with a nod towards the bed, Anzu carefully bends over Rory's crib and puts the baby down, tucking her in before she turns back to you. "What are you doing up so late?"

"I just needed to pee... and thought I'd check in on you. You still sure you want to do this? She is our kid you know... I mean I'm glad and all but you don't have to stay up with her..." You pull back the duvet with the little pink roses on it and sit down on the bed, waiting for Anzu to join you. Another great thing about Mai: for all her feminine habits, she doesn't have girly girl stuff like this. Then again, she also has no need to compensate spending her teen years with a bunch of guys.

"Don't worry, I don't mind. I mean, I could do without the crying, but I'm glad I can do something to help the two of you. Besides, this was the deal when I moved in, wasn't it?" Anzu falls onto the mattress next to you, and promptly causes the bedframe to creak and herself to glance nervously in Rory's direction. There's another thing your baby girl has inherited from her mother, though, and that's her ability to sleep through such minor disturbances. Breathing a sigh of relief, Anzu crawls under the covers and grabs your hand to give it a reassuring squeeze. "I'm really happy to do it. I love that kid. And I was up anyway, so it's not like I'm losing any sleep over this."

That gives you pause. You've known Anzu to be awake at all hours of the night, but that was usually because *you* woke her up. As far as you can tell, she is not naturally a night owl. "What *is* keeping you up, anyway?" It's hard to tell in the dim light that the lamp on her nightstand casts over the room, but it almost looks like Anzu is... blushing? "Oh, you know. Just. Thinking. About stuff. And then I wanted to stop thinking and started to watch a movie. And then I started thinking again."

Must be some movie. When you decide to watch something in the middle of the night, the only thoughts it usually gives you are 'am I watching another episode or should I turn this off right now?' "What movie?"

Anzu leans across you to grab the laptop she's set on her nightstand, and although she doesn't touch you, for a moment you feel disoriented by her closeness. Ever since she moved in, it feels like Anzu has become emotionally closer and closer to you and to Mai, but come to think of it, you can count the number of times you've been *physically* close to each other – at least for longer than a quick hug – on one hand. Apparently, she realizes the same thing, because when she leans back, Anzu hastily makes sure to put a few more inches of space between the two of you. Instead of meeting your gaze, she pointedly stares at the computer, waiting for it to restart.

"It's a German movie. There's this... it's about two people who fall in love with the same guy." Yes, now she's definitely blushing. You're just about to ask why, exactly, that is so embarrassing to admit, when you're distracted by her screen lighting up. The movie is paused, but even with the shaky quality, it's easy to tell that those are two guys on screen, naked – at least the parts of them that you can see – and pressed up against a wall, kissing.

"What the hell?" That comes out way louder than intended, but right now, you don't care too much about waking up Rory. You care about what Rory already saw and heard before she fell asleep, although to be fair she probably didn't understand it. Still. "Are you watching *porn* with my baby?"

"What?" Anzu looks just as shocked as you now. "No, no, of course not! Why would you... it's not even that graphic! It's just a romance movie, with some sex scenes in it. I'm just..." She must realize how panicked and incoherent she sounds, because she stops and pauses for a few seconds. "Alright, I think I have to tell you something." She snaps her computer shut again and places it carefully to her other side on the duvet. Should you reply something to that? Should you say something? It doesn't *seem* like the kind of statement that needs a reply. But Anzu doesn't say anything anymore, either.

You really can't think of anything to say besides a nonplussed "...Okay...", though, so you just sit there and watch her bite her lip. Finally, Anzu takes a deep breath and turns to you, but apparently can't stand to look at you for any amount of time, so she quickly averts her eyes again.

"I think... I might be bi. Bisexual." That last word comes out mumbled, almost as if she's never said it out loud before and isn't completely sure how to pronounce it. "I know that's not supposed to be a big deal or anything and you probably don't care because of... Mai and Yugi and all that but I don't know... I just felt weird saying anything while I wasn't sure. And... I think watching movies about characters who question their sexuality has... helped me be more okay with it? If that makes sense? That's why I'm watching stuff like this. Don't worry though, I didn't show Rory any of the sex scenes or anything."

Oh.

Well, there's a situation you've never been good at. The first time you had to deal with it was when Yugi came out to you, and told you he had been... dating? In a relationship with? Having feelings for? the pharaoh. (You still haven't figured out what

exactly the proper term would be in this situation. Considering there really can't be that many other examples for the same type of relationship, though – unless Ryou or Marik were up to something – proper terminology probably doesn't matter all that much.)

Yugi was way too kind – and maybe too shy – to yell at you, so it took you a couple of weeks to figure out that awkwardly joking about how at least, that way you could be sure he hadn't been looking at *you* the wrong way, was... not ideal.

Mai, on the other hand, didn't pull any punches in letting you suffer the consequences of your stupid reaction. She gave you exactly one chance to imply that bi girls are hot, anyway, and you sure don't mind thinking of her with another woman, so it's no big deal, really... What followed was a scathing lecture and at least a week of silent treatment.

Sure, you and Mai were dating at that point, so it probably went across even worse than it would now with Anzu, but you get the feeling that she wouldn't be happy about it, either.

Maybe you've been silent for too long, though, because Anzu finally looks up, and you feel compelled to say *something*, at least.

"Cool! I mean... that's great for you! How... er... how'd you find out?"

The worried look on her face is replaced by a small smile, and the knot in your own stomach loosens a bit. Of course. Anzu would know how to tell when you're trying to be supportive, but don't know what to say. "There was... is someone, a woman, who I really like. It doesn't matter, really, because that's not happening. But I guess... she made me realize that I don't just think other women are pretty, I really... find them attractive. It's hard to explain. I couldn't tell you when I realized, I just... know. Now."

That's an unfamiliar tone. Anzu has never been one to talk about guys like this – evasive, like their names are some sort of big secret, and pessimistic, like she doesn't stand a chance with them, anyway. Then again, she has never been one to talk about guys much, at all. At least not with you.

"Why is it not happening?" you ask anyway. "Is she not into women?"

"No, it's just... there's someone else."

"For her? Or for you?" Anzu smiles sheepishly, as though you've caught her on a topic that she was trying to avoid. "For both of us, I guess. It doesn't matter. I just think it wouldn't be good. But I'm trying online dating now. I went out with a girl I met online last week, she was nice. Not my type. But, you know. Someone else might be."

Somehow, she doesn't sound entirely convinced. Realizing you still don't know what to do with the awkward silence between you, you push yourself off the bed. "Well, I guess that calls for some celebration. Do you want a beer or something?" Anzu's laughter and a well-aimed pillow hit you in the back of your head. "You call that

swill you keep in the fridge beer? Nah, I'll pass. I think there's some leftover wine, bring me some of that maybe?"

Right. You'd forgotten the part where, ever since she spent two years in Germany, Anzu acts like she's a beer gourmet or something. It's not like she actually *knows* much about it – not that you do. You just noticed from the way she always lists the same three names when people ask her what kind of beer she *does* like, then. She sure loves to act like all the stuff you can get in Japan is horrible and undrinkable. It's kind of cute, actually, in an annoying way. While you pour a glass of the leftover red wine, you briefly consider pointing out that Germany is supposed to have pretty good wine, too, and didn't she learn a thing or two about that, as well? But then, you might never get to toast her coming out, and might be stuck with the awkward silence.

"So." You try again, once you've silently toasted and each taken a few sips. "Who's this other girl, then? Guy? I don't know... that other person you were talking about? Any chance with him? Or her?"

One. Two.

Again, the seconds until her answer stretch into a silence that feels like it's making the air around you... heavier, somehow. Finally, Anzu leans over and places her head on your shoulder. Her cheek feels moist against the fabric of your t-shirt, but glancing down, you're not sure if her eyes shine like that because there's tears in them, or just because of the way the light hits them. The other thing might be an illusion, as well, or maybe it's just the way she's breathing on you.

"I don't want to talk about it. Okay?"

No. Actually, not knowing something that makes your best friend look so defeated and tired doesn't feel okay at all. But this doesn't feel like the moment to push her to speak.

"Okay."

For a while, the two of you sit there in silence, the only sounds each other's faint heartbeats and the occasional sip of alcohol. After a while, the duvet between you rustles and you feel soft, warm fingers sliding between yours. If Mai grabbed your hand like that, you'd already have marks from her nails. But Anzu's nails are neatly filed down, not noticeable at all.

"You know. I'm kind of glad that you're dating girls. I guess... I'll be less worried that you'll meet some creep we'll have to rescue you from."