

Plus One

Bakugou / Ochako

Von Kroko

Kapitel 3: Bail

Ochako gives him a moment to catch his breath. She carefully gets up from the bench and approaches Bakugou to stare into the darkness with him. He straightens his back the moment he notices her next to him and rubs the back of his hand over his mouth. For a while, he pretends he didn't just go berserk for a second there. He probably expects her to say something. She doesn't. There is nothing to say. After a while, he throws Ochako a careful look, and immediately starts rustling through his pockets, as if he's searching for something. Apparently not finding what he's looking for, he cranes his neck and steps out into the rain, back towards the terrace of the hotel. "Oi!", Ochako hears him yell at what appears to be a hapless waiter, or another service person, collecting the seat cushions from the chairs on the terrace. "Get me a napkin!"

Even from the distance Ochako can tell that the waiter is not thrilled about getting interrupted in his duty to protect the seat cushions from the rain. But he complies nonetheless, and Bakugou returns with a thin white piece of fabric that he protects from the rain by holding open his collar and shoving the napkin inside.

Hand firmly stuffed into his shirt and with a face as if he's protecting a considerable cash delivery, he rejoins Ochako under the pavilion, pulls his hand out of his cleavage, for a lack of better words, along with the napkin, and offers it to Ochako.

Bewildered, Ochako accepts the piece of fabric, and she kind of wants to say thank you, but she also is not sure what she just witnessed, so she lets out a breathy laugh instead.

"If you don't want it, give it back!", Bakugou snaps, but Ochako shakes her head, which makes her even more dizzy.

"No, no, it's fine!", Ochako says and tries to bite back her giggling.

Bakugou pulls a face, shoves his hands into his pockets and wants to turn away, but she puts a hand on his shoulder. "Really, Bakugou. That's very sweet." She says it with emphasis, smiles up at him, and his face smoothes over a little at that. He breathes out, and the tension melts out of his shoulders while Ochako gets to wiping her face. If even Bakugou notices she could use some help, she really must look like an absolute

mess. Of course the fabric of the napkin feels soft and expensive. It's also slightly warm where it was pressed to Bakugou's chest, and the faintest hint of smoke and Bakugou's own scent still clings to it. It smells nice.

All these years it was completely unclear to Ochako what exactly Bakugou was to her. Whatever potential friendship they had kept getting eclipsed by the intensity of Bakugou's and Deku's feelings for each other. It did not take long for everyone around them to assume that Ochako and Bakugou were romantic enemies, vying with each other for Deku's affection. Only that Ochako had never seen it that way. From the moment she met Deku, Ochako knew that she would never get him without Bakugou, and it had never occurred to her why that would be a problem.

Strange. Even when Bakugou and Deku had been together for a while, seeing them had never felt the way looking at Deku and Melissa feels right now. And Ochako recalled that when she had been with Deku a couple years ago, Bakugou had avoided her, but he had never seemed this... crestfallen. This defeated. The opposite was the case, she recalls him looking at her with something not unlike a sort of grim respect at that time.

Through the sound of light drizzle overhead and the rustling of the trees, a shred of music or laughter wafts over to them from the wide open, brightly lit hotel windows.

"I really don't feel like going back inside", Ochako confesses and, at a loss for what else to do with it, ties the napkin around her wrist.

She can't go back to the ocean of faces, all greedily staring at her, waiting for her to slip up. She can't keep on smiling for everyone now. Her makeup is probably a mess. She's wobbly on her feet and as if she's gonna break out into tears at the slightest provocation.

"You know you can just go, right?" Bakugou shrugs. "Wouldn't even be the first one to leave."

"Hmm", Ochako makes and slowly bobs up and down on the balls of her feet. "Maybe." She looks up at him. "How about you?"

"Yeah, I'm about ready to ditch this joint." He watches as she takes a quick step to the side to keep herself from falling, as her bobbing combined with the light spinning of the world around her has her confused about her place in three dimensional space. "You're not planning on driving like this, are you?"

"Actually, I was", Ochako replies and contemplatively tips her finger against her chin.

Bakugou raises his brows. Then he points at the seams between the large white tiles on the floor and says: "Alright, walk down a straight line and I'll let you drive home, no questions asked."

"Pshh!" Ochako makes a dismissive gesture and rolls her eyes. "Please!" She positions herself and walks down a perfectly straight line to the other end of the pavilion with

almost no wobbling. She turns around with a little flourish, and to really prove how sober she is, she makes her way back to Bakugou, still doing her best to stay on the tile seams. A moment later she realizes she should have left it at that first impossible feat, to be exact, it occurs to her the second the world turns a little further to the left than she anticipated and she trips over her own feet.

Squeezing her eyes shut, she braces for the impact. Miraculously, she never reaches the floor. Instead she feels herself being caught and held up by strong arms. It takes a moment for her jumbled brain to piece together what's going on. She opens her eyes and looks up, right at the indignant face of Bakugou, who's lifting her up and putting her back on her feet, but doesn't let go of her shoulders. "That's it, I'm driving you back to the city."

Despite his forceful tone, he waits for her to nod and murmur: "Yeah, that's... probably for the best", before he guides her through the wet grass and back to the hotel. They use the corridors next to the ballroom to reach the main entrance, where Bakugou orders a bell boy to get them their jackets, a bottle of water and bring his car around.

"What about my own car?", Ochako wonders out loud while they wait in front of the hotel and the steady rain trickles from on the wide awning overhead. The lights of the street reflect in long streaks along the wet pavement. Ochako is grateful that Bakugou has one arm wrapped around her shoulders to hold her steady. What is more, his body radiates heat, and she's starting to shiver, with her back exposed to the wet night air.

"Let one of your agency dweebs take care of it", Bakugou answers.

"That's what you use your assistants for?" Ochako acts scandalized.

Bakugou shrugs. "About all they're good for."

Ochako shakes her head and clicks her tongue in mock disappointment. "You don't mean that."

Bakugou harrumphs.

The bell boy returns, bringing Bakugou's suit jacket and Ochako's little bolero, as well as a bottle of water. Almost simultaneously, a valet pulls up Bakugou's car. Absolutely nothing surprises Ochako about the streamlined roadster she's presented with. It's black with orange trimming, the headlights sleek and narrow - all in all it looks like the car version of a gamer chair. Of course it's got a muffler delete system, making the engine roar at even the slightest provocation, and a very unsubtle orange X adorns the hood.

"For the record", Ochako says and pokes a finger into her cheek while regarding the car, "if you were trying to pull me, this would be the exact moment I bail."

"Believe it or not, you're not my target audience." Bakugou rolls his eyes, puts on his

jacket and holds the passenger door open for her. "Now quit complaining or I'll let you walk home."

The car is lowered so much that Ochako is basically lying down when she gets into the passenger's seat. She bites back a laugh at the realization that the seats look exactly like gamer chairs. Bakugou gets into the driver's seat and hands her the bottle of water. "Drink that. It's gonna be a long drive."

While Ochako untangles various clips holding her updo together and lets her hair fall down to her shoulders again, Bakugou types her address into the GPS. The display states it's going to be a two to three hour drive. Immediately, a hint of shame twinges in Ochako's stomach. She forgot how far out in the boonies this hotel is, and she could have just stayed here for the night. But then again, Bakugou has to get back to the city with or without her. And what's more important, she's glad to be here, where it's quiet, where no one sees her face that is probably all puffy from crying, where she can be alone, and a bit too tipsy, and pissed, and sad, and can sip water off her bottle in silence and watch the night pass by the car window without having to feel ashamed for the state she's in.

They stay completely silent all the way until Bakugou pulls into a parking spot not too far from Ochako's apartment. She sighs and hopes nobody sees her step out of the car that probably woke up the entire neighborhood with its bellowing engine.

Bakugou opens her car door and wants to lend her a hand to help her rise from the almost completely reclined position the car forced her into, but then he signals her to stay where she is. He gets down on one knee and nudges her leg with the back of his hand, prompting her to turn towards him and put her feet on the ground in front of him. He pulls up the corner of his mouth in disdain at the sight of the red streaks where the straps of her shoes have begun cutting into her skin. Bakugou undoes the straps unceremoniously and picks up the shoes.

"What's with these silly heels anyway", he scoffs and helps Ochako onto her bare feet.

"I think they're very nice", she responds, an unperturbed smile on her face. The pavement is wet underneath her feet. She's very happy to find that she can actually stand on her own legs without wavering. Her head is much clearer too.

Bakugou makes a gruff noise and dangles the shoes over his shoulder. "They don't suit you at all."

Smiling at Bakugou's potshots, Ochako stretches her arms over her head while screwing her eyes shut. "I think I'm almost sober again", she states. "Good news is, I still got some pretty good stuff upstairs. You wanna come?"

"Absolutely not." Bakugou's tone is firm, but the night has left its marks on his face as well. He looks exhausted, in a way that's got nothing to do with being tired.

"Alright, but you should at least stay the night. How far away do you live?"

“Not far”, Bakugou grumbles.

Ever since he moved there, not a single day has passed without tabloids gossiping about Bakugou taking up residence in the really lofty part of town. Of course the exact address is kept secret, but Mina has shown Ochako photos of a state of the art penthouse far above the city, decked out with all the modern bells and whistles a pro hero could ask for. Ochako also knows it's at least another hour from here. “I promise my couch is the coziest. You'll never want to sleep anywhere else ever again”, she says. When Bakugou still doesn't move an inch, she puts her hands on her hips and decides it's time to put her foot down. “I'm not letting you drive all the way through town in the middle of the night. Now get moving.”

She pictures herself as a lion tamer when Bakugou draws himself up to his full height, which is a good six or seven inches taller than her, straightens his shoulders and glares at her for a couple seconds. She neither yields nor even blinks. Then, without another word, Bakugou locks the car and shuffles towards the front door, Ochako's shoes still dangling from his shoulders. Feeling rather accomplished, Ochako follows him.

The elevator has barely enough room for three people in it. Entering it, Ochako becomes suddenly acutely aware of the fact that Bakugou has not buttoned his shirt back up after he hid her napkin inside, as his cleavage is right below her eye level and close enough for her to peek into it. His chest describes a perfect dip between his pecs. Not that she expected anything less from him. Not that it's anything new to her. But somehow, in this state of post-inebriation, she can't help but notice the tension in Bakugou's shoulder muscles, the perfect slope of the nape of his neck, and she catches herself wondering what the soft skin of his throat would feel like against her lips.

Her eyes dart up at him. His furrowed brows imply that he's noticed her staring. She quickly averts her gaze, only to be met with their reflection in the mirror.

After what must have been the longest elevator ride of her life, they arrive at one of the top floors. Ochako hurries to squeeze past Bakugou and makes for her apartment door. Hit by another wave of self-consciousness, Ochako apologizes for the state the place is in before they even enter. They step inside Ochako's cozy and practical apartment.

“Over here's the bathroom, that's the kitchen”, she says and points to the doors on the one side of the corridor. “This is the living room, and that's the bedroom.” She points to the doors on the other side of the corridor. “It's not much, and my parents keep telling me to get something bigger. They say I can afford it, and I mean, I guess that's true, but I don't need anything else. Also a bigger apartment would mean so much cleaning!” She turns towards Bakugou, who's standing behind her, has put down her shoes and is now in the process of getting out of his own. “I guess I could get myself help with the cleaning!”, Ochako adds, hoping that she's read his thoughts. “But honestly, why bother! I got this beautiful view, and I feel cozy up here, and...” She realizes she's rambling, so she lets the sentence trail off.

Bakugou doesn't seem to mind either way. He pushes the apartment door shut behind

him, an expression on his face that's hard to read. Ochako takes a step closer, maybe because she wants to help him out of the suit jacket. Or maybe she does it because being too far away from him makes her feel cold, and lost, and she wants to stay close to him. Her hands are on his lapels, and she's fumbling with them. "It's really unusual, seeing you wear something like this", she murmurs with a contemplative smile. "Gotta say, I could get used to the si-"

Her words, and thoughts, the whole world around them stops in its tracks as Bakugou delves down and presses his slightly parted lips to her mouth.

This comes... as a bit of a surprise. And then again, it's no surprise at all.

Ochako's heart thumps against her ribcage for one painful beat, and she can hear her own breath coming out in a huff as her fingers close tighter around the lapels of Bakugou's jacket.

Two calloused hands reach for her, cup her neck, travel up her cheeks and into her hair, hold onto her as if she's a long lost lover.

He breaks the kiss, but keeps holding onto her, and finally she can see his expression for the vulnerable, cracked open rawness that it displays. Bakugou's brows furrowed, his teeth bared, his own breath choppy and strained, like he's barely holding back, it's clear that he's waiting, asking, begging - To hold her, to be held. He has been barely keeping it together these past few hours and only let out his grief for a precious couple of seconds back at the pavilion. But it's not enough. This night is far from over for him.

And Ochako can feel it too, the burning of the scarlet red eyes mirroring the coal-seam fire still scorching away at her own insides.

Ochako doesn't know whether they are saving each other from this mess, or dragging each other deeper into it. All she knows is that it feels warm, and good, when she gently pulls Bakugou closer by the lapel of his jacket, so close that their bodies are perfectly aligned all the way from chest to hip, and kisses him back.