Unfortunately, You Can't.

by mistakeandcheese

Summary

No, none of the others would have expected that Germany was an omega either. But he is, and he hates it. If the secret ever got out...
Chapter 1

When Germany saw the headline ‘German Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices Bans Heat Suppressants’, he had choked on his morning coffee and nearly fallen out of his chair.

“What’s up, West?” His brother said, snickering from across the breakfast table. “Goebbels come back from the dead?”

Germany threw the newspaper at him and watched his face whiten.

“Oh mein Gott. That’s how they make wurst nowadays?”

“The other side. Dummkopf. On the back, in the small box to the left.” He watched his brother’s face, if possible, whiten more.

“West. Do you have any left over?”

“No. I’ve used them all up.”

The former nation of Prussia swallowed dryly. “You can’t go in today.”

Germany shook his head. “I have to. It’s an important meeting. Everyone is going to be there.”

Prussia threw his hands up in frustration. “Emphasis on ‘n’t’ then!”

“I cannot skip. I’m hosting. Besides, my...condition is not due for another day and a half.”

Prussia's eyes skimmed along the newspaper again. “Says here half the reason they banned them was due to ‘extreme buildup of symptoms, and irregular displacement of natural patterns.’”

“What was the other half of the reason?”

Prussia went quiet for a moment, lips twitching as he scanned the article. “Lobbyists” he said finally.

Germany’s older brother argued with him the entire time he was getting ready. “Come on, West, we don’t look that much different. Maybe if I slick my hair back and act like my funny bone got surgically removed, then I’ll pass as you.”

“You are too short to pass for me.”

“Brother, thou hast wounded me! Wounded me, I say!”

Germany scowled and popped an aspirin.

"Are you getting cramps?” His brother asked immediately.

"Nein. A headache. From you."

Prussia sighed. "I know you don't like it when I talk about this. But I worry you forget about the risks. You've been suppressing this so long I worry you forget what you are."
"Believe me, brother" Germany snatched his suitcase from behind the door, and tersely nodded goodbye. "I am aware."

The door closed. On one side of it, Prussia inhaled a lungful of air, held it, and released an anxiety packed breath.

On the other side, Germany began walking. As he did he put a hand gingerly over his belly. It did feel kind of odd today.

Click. Slide one. Click. Slide two. Germany felt a certain sense of calm come over him as he progressed through the discussion slides. International trade issues. Done. Global health. Done. Humanitarian aid policy. Done. All that was left was Mediation for nuclear de-escalation and Should Ping Pong qualify as an Olympic sport? Then lunch break. Seeing things fall precisely into their properly allocated time slots, and seeing the itinerary (his itinerary, when it came down to the execution and logistical details part of it) progress steadily forward gave him a satisfied sense of order and control. As they neared lunchtime, however, this began to crumble.

“I don’t know. It barely requires any muscle.”

“Neither does curling.”

“But does that mean omegas would be allowed to participate?”

“No but guys, guys, did you see me cream Russia in that last hockey match? Did you see it?”

And...focus lost. The room crackled to life as everybody began arguing about that last hockey match.

Germany growled and popped another aspirin. Then he stood up. “Everybody shut up!” He roared across the table. “Since I am the only one who knows how to follow an itinerary around here, we are going to follow my rules. Eight minutes for each person, no chit chat in between turns, and--”

Before the pill even hit his gut, Germany felt something...wrong. Wrong wrong wrong, and yet, completely natural, for him.

Suddenly the room felt much too warm. Between his legs he could feel his body preparing itself, pushing stalwartly onward like an army of soldiers with a faulty connection between it and its general screaming orders from across a radio, in a bunker miles away. His heat was about to start.

No, no, stop it, stop it, HÖR AUF. No one can know! He’d kept truth of his nature secret his entire life. Why? Omegas don’t lead world meetings. Omegas don’t command attention with a single yell. Omegas don’t get listened to. They get mounted.

He braced his arms against the table, trying to make the gesture come off as down to earth and demanding, when indeed his knees were beginning to tremble and he could feel a thick bead of slick beginning to roll down his inner thigh. You should have listened to your big brother, West.

Attempting to seize back control of his breathing, Germany’s lungs shuddered with effort as he shifted his focus back to his audience. He could see some of the alpha countries beginning to raise their heads, sniffing the air with a sudden attentiveness. He couldn’t hide his pheromones. They worked like invisible dancers, twirling through the air and reaching out with slender, airy fingers to tip the chin of each nation towards him, whispering words of "This one is ready. This one is ready
to mate. He needs it. Who is he? Follow your nose. He’s the one who smells terrified.”

“Hey. Does anyone else smell and omega in heat?” Romano blurted.

Terrified? Of course. Besides from his fear of losing respect, Germany knew that he was in physical danger. Nobody (except Prussia, of course) knew that he was an omega. Naturally, he was still unbred. No mark, no alpha scent mingled in his own to tell others to stay away.

Hurriedly tapping his papers into a neat rectangle, he attempted to make a quick decision. Escape to the bathroom, and risk the absence of the scent giving him away? Or stay and try edge closer to the nearest omega (France), to make it harder to discern who the scent was coming from?

He felt a wave of tight, needy heat seize his lower regions. He decided then he must escape. The back of his pants was beginning to moisten. His thighs were trembling. And who was he kidding? No one would mistake him for France. France’s scent has reeked of England for centuries.

Before anyone could say anything, he hurriedly mobilized himself. He kept his legs straight, his course steady, muttering something about needing to excuse himself to the bathroom. It’s not such an odd thing, he told himself, for an alpha to do, upon catching the scent of an omega. Perhaps the others will think he has simply gone to take care of...a personal issue. Of course, he was hardly thinking at this point; every logical thought was being smudged and bullied by a single accursed message of his biology: mate. Mate. MATE.

He hardly made it. As soon as the bathroom door swung shut, Germany gasped, barely feeling the harsh smack of his knees against tile as his legs gave out and he sprawled to the floor. The musky smell of the alpha bathroom hooked him, and he braced his hands against the tiles helplessly. The sensations were building like heat pushing against the walls of a volcano. His pelvis pushed against the floor, yearning to feel something pressed against it. His knees slipped, and he gave a cry as his thighs splayed against the tiles. His head was pounding. All of his innards were gaping, yawning, contracting, begging to be filled with something, anything, and his normally deep voice cracked and went hoarse as his body used his mouth to voice this need.

There was a yell outside the bathroom. “Hey, is anyone going to check on Germany?”

Germany panicked. Get up. Get UP! His legs wouldn’t listen to him. Rolling onto his side, he hooked a hand bitingly around the leg of the first stall, desperate to drag himself into some locked up semblance of privacy and security.

Too late. The bathroom door smacked open and in flowed England, Russia, Romano, Hungary, America, Japan, and Italy. Yes, even Italy was an alpha. And Germany was not.

He had rushed into the alpha bathroom because that's where he always went. He had had to if he wanted to keep up the masquerade. Now his senses were being overwhelmed by the sheer cloud of mixed alpha scents above him. It was horrible; his body responded by shivering and rutting, as warm fluid soaked his underwear and stained his pants. Meanwhile his instincts screamed fear: There are predators all around you. You ran into the predator bathroom. They are going to devour you from the inside out. They are going to take turns. It is going to hurt. You will be able to do nothing but open your legs and get knotted by every country in this room.

Germany whimpered, and then smacked a hand over his mouth. He couldn't believe he had just made that sound; and more threatened to spill out. His breath was coming out in short little pants as he pressed his sizzling forehead against the floor, shielding his face. He couldn't smell Prussia. No big brother to protect him today. He felt a pair of hands firmly grasp his shoulders, and he resisted being flipped over by curling into a ball, still gripping the stall leg as another squirt of lubricant
gushed out between his legs.

“Don't make this difficult Germany. Come on now.”

His arms trembled as he resisted.

"Come on you twats, lend a hand, won't you?"

Another set of hands were placed on his shoulders, and his fingers pried from the stall, allowing him to be turned onto his back.

The other countries stared down at Germany's flushed, wettened face. The normally slick blonde hair was sticking in damp strands around his forehead. His tall, muscular body was weak and shivering, his butt shadowed by a puddle of fluid. His eyes were filled with lust and plea and a spark of resistance.

Germany spoke through his teeth. “When it’s over I swear I will find the one who went first...I’ll find them and I’ll—Ah!” His threatening hiss was interrupted by a sudden wave of hormones which caused his abdomen to contract and his hands to jump between his legs to apply a quivering pressure.

“I can’t believe it” Romano laughed. He knelt down and pinched Germany’s chin between his fingers, forcing the flushed face to gaze lightheadedly up at him. “The potato bastard is an omega! Who’d have thought, eh? This makes things a lot different.”

Germany’s lips trembled. It seemed his worst fears were about to be confirmed.

North Italy gave his brother an earnest tug of the shoulder. His voice contained a strain of tearful sympathy for his friend. “Come on now, fratello, don’t say that! Can’t you tell he’s scared?”

“Yes, Romano” Japan nodded solemnly “Mr. Germany would probably appreciate his space before we do anything else.”

“Poor thing” Hungary said melodically. “So much easier to conquer now.”

“Da. Poor thing” Russia said, fingering his metal pipe. “So easy.”

America threw Russia a competitive glare. “I can help!” he announced, ripping a paper towel from the dispenser and running it under cold water. He handed it to England, who squatted down next to Germany and placed it over his forehead, in all the manner of an alpha who has been mated for years, and has grown accustomed to dealing with his partner’s periodic heats.

“That’s right, everybody. We’re here to help” England said. He threw a sharp glance to the other nations. “And nothing else.”

Germany's chest rose and fell in disbelief. “So you're not going to...even though I'm...?”

Romano gave another harsh, dubious laugh. “To each his own, England.”

Everybody could see the panicked glance that Germany threw him. England rolled his eyes, and refocused his attention on the omega.

“Chin up, lad. This is the twentieth century. We don’t do that anymore. It's quite unfashionable, what with sovereignty agreements and the popularity nowadays of being a decent bloody human being.” Shooting Romano a glare, he changed his tone to one of a sympathetic businessman. “Now,
that's among most of us, but as I can imagine, you're rightly anxious about traveling home by yourself. We will arrange to have someone escort you back, and make sure you are securely locked inside a nesting location.” He raised an eyebrow. “I assume you have one? Or is this your first heat?”

“Nein...” Germany said. He felt the pang of lost privacy as he was forced to admit that this was not his first heat, inviting others to wonder when he first presented and how long he had been fooling them for. Despite this, his panic was ebbing slightly. “I have one. Don't I...Don't I get say in this, though? What if I want to finish the meeting? If anybody has suppressants on hand, maybe I can--”

He saw the other nations exchange glances ranging from incredulity, to pity, to amusement.

“No.” England said firmly. “Unfortunately, we don't, and unfortunately, you can't.”

“Da, in this state, your presence would be a distraction more than anything else.” Russia agreed.

America’s eyes bounced tensely to Russia, before landing on Germany. “Why would you even want to stay, dude?”

Germany lowered his gaze. Why should he want to stay? Because it was his duty to stay. But he supposed his duty wasn’t up to him any more.

Feeling somewhat cooled down from the cold press, Germany pressed his hands against the floor and sat up. His palms felt empty and naked against the tile. Like the hands of a horseman whose reins had just been ripped away. He winced as his slick coated body parts make faintly wet sounds from the motion of sitting. Some of the alphas looked away quickly, while others stared with dilated eyes.

England cleared his throat. “Alright, your pick. Which alpha do you want to escort you?”

Germany’s eyes fixed upon his closest friend, who was nervously eyeing his twin brother, who was ominously eyeing Germany. “Italy.” Sure, Italy was useless in a fight, but that was why Germany could trust him. As for protection...well, it was mostly just the alpha scent that Germany needed.

“Italy? Alright, if you're certain.” England took Italy by the shoulder and put on the tone of a grandmother telling her bumbling kin exactly how to pick up eggs from the grocery store. “Make sure you bring him straight home. No dilly dallying or getting distracted. Walk close to him so your scents mix. No public transportation. And when you get home, make sure to get him right into his nesting area. Got it?”

“Ve~”

“Got it?”

“Si.”

“Alright, good. Off yeh go.”

Germany watched this transaction with a sense of distant surrealness. And then Italy was kneeling down next to him.

“Can you walk, Germany?” he said gently, with a concerned hand lingering as if to touch Germany's shoulder. A waft of the mediterranean nation’s faint alpha smell mixed with his personal scent of sun dried tomatoes and soft, sweet vineyard. A shameful, intrusive, and primal
part of Germany’s brain whispered *This alpha wants to take care of me. Take care of me. Take care of me.*

Turning pink, Germany quickly pushed away Italy's hand. “I can walk” he snapped, perhaps a little too harshly. Ignoring the trembling in his knees, he clawed his way to standing and squared his shoulders, unfurling to his full height to remind the others that he was still taller than most of them.

His insides were still in turmoil, but the first wave of hormones seemed to have passed. “Come on Italy. Let's go.” he tried to say this confidently, and prayed to Gott that the others couldn’t hear the anxious warble in his voice.

With Italy trailing by his side, he strode to the door, signaling that this bathroom drama was over. The others shuffled to the exit slowly. Germany took a deep breath. On the other side of that door was a world that would never see him the same way again. He began to push it open.

“*Good luck, potato bastard.*” The whisper scuttled over his shoulder like a spider, just as he felt a painful pressure of a hand kneading the flesh of his right butt cheek. It happened so quickly that he didn’t have time to create a properly outraged reaction, but simply lurched forward, stumbling through the doorway with heart smacking against the inside of his chest in disoriented panic.

“Is something wrong, Germany?” Italy asked, oblivious to the sneaky pass.

“Nein…” the other alphas had already filtered back to their seats, amd with the room's eyes on him, Germany did not want to make a scene. “Let's just get my things and go.”

The journey home was harrowing. Italy drove (according to common consensus, an omega, let alone an omega in heat, was a safety hazard behind the wheel) and Germany found himself clenching his hands and feeling awfully ashamed about the damp, scent-heavy stain he could feel himself leaving behind on the leather passenger seat. Before he got out of the car, Germany cleared his throat and stared hotly down at his own lap. "Italy, I apologize for interrupting your time at the meeting, and for not considering my condition before entering your car. If you would allow me to grab some tools, I would be happy to clean it for you."

Italy replied with a breezy wave of his hand "Oh, nada nada, Germany. It doesn't bother me a bit. Let's just get you nice and safe and comfy inside. I'll even cook dinner!"

The *sklip sklap* of nails and alert barking greeted them before Germany had even finished fumbling for his keys.

"Easy, easy" Germany muttered, as spit flew from their jaws and they raised their hackles at Italy. Whenever Germany was in heat, the scent of any nearby alpha drove his dogs up the wall. Even Prussia had to watch out around them.

"Germany, your puppies are scary" Italy whimpered, hiding behind him.

"I'll put them outside" Germany mumbled, ushering them back through the hall, the kitchen, and out the back door.

When he came back through, Italy was already in the kitchen." You go take care of yourself, Germany" he said cheerfully. "I'll have dinner ready by the time you're done."

"Alright. I am going to take a shower."

Italy pouted. "But Germany, I thought you were supposed to go to your nesting spot and--"
“Nein” Germany interrupted, feeling a hot embarrassment crawl up his face. “I do not want to do such things until after I am washed.”

“But Germany, England said--”

“England does not have slick all over his legs, Italy!”

“But--”

"Nein!" Out he stormed.

Chapter End Notes

To give some historical context, this story takes place after World War Two, around the time of the Cold War. When I mentioned this in the notes for a later chapter, one historically savvy reader correctly pointed out that East and West Germany would be divided during the Cold War. Since I want the brothers to be able to interact during this story, I've done something sneaky. Keep your eyes peeled for historical allusions to the Berlin Wall, and division between Germany and his brother. And if you have any other historical questions/corrections/doubts, feel free to let me know!
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Now that everybody has learned that he is an omega, Germany knows that things are going to change. Just what does that mean? He is only beginning to find out.

Warm puffs of steam clung to the German's head as he bumped it against the tiles. How am I going to manage this? He thought hopelessly. I’ve exposed my weakness to the world. And besides from that, now they all know went my cycle begins. This isn’t only an embarrassment, but a strategic disadvantage.

Suddenly, he realized that (for once in the shower), he and his thoughts were surprisingly alone. Warily, he turned around, expecting the smiling face of his Italian friend to come bouncing toward him through the mist.

“Italia?” He called. Nothing.

Clasping the towel around his waist, he cracked the door open cautiously, and peeked out into the hall. “Italia, I am in the shower.” Normally, it didn’t matter if they were in the middle of cooking, cleaning, or a war. Within the first five minutes, Italy almost always would find a way to weasel his way into the shower with him. Social Bathing. It was sort of a Roman thing.

Germany grew concerned. What if Italy was in some sort of trouble? It wouldn’t be the first time Germany had to rescue him from his own bumblings. Tucking the towel into a skirt shape, Germany left the bathroom and began his march down the hall.

He froze a few feet from the kitchen doorway. The light from the kitchen streaked yellowly across the hardwood, and a shadow of a person was cast onto the floor. The person had a knife. Knowing there was a pan hanging just on the other side of the door, Germany flung himself around the corner and grabbed the handle, shouting “Drop the weapon!”

Startled, Italy nearly dropped the tomato he was about to slice and shrieked “Don’t hurt me! Oh...Germany...it’s you.”

Sighing, Germany relaxed his hold on the pan and apologized. “Sorry, Italy.” Shifting from one foot to another, he realized that he was standing: wet, bedraggled, nearly naked, and trailing a horrendous puddle of water through the middle of his kitchen, right in front of his guest. He ran a hand through his hair agitatedly. “I suppose I am just on edge today.”

“Is something wrong, Germany?”

“Well, no” Germany said, feeling awkward. “It’s just...you always like to surprise me in the shower.”

Italy blinked up at him. “Do I?”

“Ja” Germany said, in a really, how do you not know what I’m talking about? kind of voice. “You always try to shower together.” Germany remembered how the first time this had happened, it had nearly scared the life out of him. It had been only one day after his first ever heat, and he had
thought that the mediterranean nation must have found out and decided upon knotting him then and there. He soon realized, however, that Italy was just Italy, being Italy.

Italy smiled wistfully down at the bulbous red fruit pinned delicately under his fingertips. “Si, those were so much fun.”

“Do you want to join me?”

Italy’s face pinkened slightly. “Oh, no, go ahead without me.”

Germany swallowed down the pang in his chest, already knowing the answer to his next question. “Why?”

Avoiding his eyes, Italy traced a finger down the swollen seam that split the tomato down the middle. “I couldn’t do that to you, Germany. I wouldn’t want to startle any omega that way.”

“But I wouldn’t be—”

“Go on, Germany. Go finish your shower. Dinner will be ready soon.”

Something in Germany’s throat felt raw. Nodding numbly, he did as the alpha told and retreated back down the hall to finish washing.

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“West? Oh mein Gott. West? Are you here?” Prussia’s voice, seeded with worry and muffled by walls and walls of wood and concrete, sliced through the silence of the house. The dogs were barking again.

Germany slit open an eye, breathing shallowly and ignoring the sweaty scraggles of unkempt hair that clung to his forehead and face.

The second wave of his heat had hit him, thankfully, just after Italy had left. Now he was lying on his side in between a crush of fitfully organized pillows, in a cool, dimly lit bomb shelter. The room was located under the basement of his house, and had doubled as his nesting area since the day he first presented.

“West?”

His eyes slid to the narrow, well-oiled sex toy that rested innocuously beside his limp hand. He turned his face back against the cushions, not wanting to look at the thing. He should be okay without acknowledging its existence for another hour.

There was an anxious knock from the other side. “West, are you in there?”

“Ja” he croaked.

“West, I heard what happened.”

Germany screwed his eyes shut. *Here comes the ‘I told you so.’*

“Are you alright?”

He swallowed dryly. *It was the second most frightening and shameful moment of my life. Things are never going to be the same again. I hate myself for being this way.*
“Ja. I am fine.”

“West” Prussia paused cautiously. “I caught the scent of an alpha when I walked in. Are...are you sure you’re alright? You’re the only one in there, right?”

“Italy was the one who dropped me off.”

“Just dropped you off? Nothing else?”

“It’s Italy, Bruder.”

“West.”

Germany sighed, and could tell his exasperation was definitely thick enough to cut through the concrete. “Yes, Bruder. He dropped me off, and then cooked dinner. Then he left. Nothing else.” Groaning, he rolled onto his back and massaged his abdomen, hoping it would do something to soothe his cramps. “Kannst du feed the dogs? I didn’t get the chance before I came in here.”

He heard Prussia give a sigh of his own. Whether it was exasperation or relief, he wasn’t sure.

“Sure, if they don’t bite my head off first. Gute Nacht, Kleiner.”

“Gute Nacht.”
A bead of sweat rolled down Germany’s forehead. Panting slightly, he slowed down and listened to the pulse thumping in his ears as dopamine coursed through his body.

He checked his stopwatch. 7:48:01. Not his best time, but not bad for 10 laps.

The park was beautiful today. The grass was vibrant, the sky blue, and a perfect breeze there to cool him off. It was as if he had been born into a newer, nicer world. Nicer than the inside of a bomb shelter, anyway.

It felt so damn good to be done with his heat. Though he’d been avoiding intense training (which other countries tended to interpret as militarization) for a while now, he still liked to keep fit, and moving his muscles was always the best way to flush out the last of the hormones from his system (and regain a semblance of dignity after weeks of mewling and rutting). Lowering himself to the fresh grass, he began doing push ups, counting under his breath as he went.

“Eins. Zwei. Dre. Vier. Funf…” Exercise was a great distraction. Count, and do. It helped to take his mind off of other things; things like the newspaper that had been jammed through their front door, with the blaring headline “Fatherland? Germany Goes Hot at World Meeting”, or the call from his boss, who had screeched “Warum on Earth wasn’t I aware of this? You need to make more alliances now,” or the Federal Industry of Foreign Affairs issuing a guide titled “Omega Decorum During Professional Meetings”, or the Industry of the Interior sending him a hastily packaged box of various embarrassing hygienic devices, along with a pamphlet titled “Growing Up! Puberty for Omegas”, as if he needed a piece of paper to tell him what he already wished he didn’t know.


As he was counting, he heard something nearby. A person whistling to their dog perhaps? He ignored it.

“Zehn. Elf. Zwolf…”

And then he heard it again, but louder. It was followed by “Looking good, baby. Up and down, just like that.”

The scent of a group of alphas was permeating the clear spring air, and Germany began to realize what was happening. Pursing his lips, he pretended that the catcallers didn’t exist, and focused on a blade of grass illuminated acid green in the morning sun. In an effort to block out their voices, he raised his voice to a crisp tone.

“Dreizehn. Vierzehn. Fünfzehn…”

“That’s right, sweetheart, show us what that body can take.”

Germany’s pulse quickened, and strands of hair began to fall out of place as he continued, determined to finish his set.

“Vierzig. Einundvierzig…”
“You like using your arms? I got a pair of barbells you could try.”

Germany’s eyes began to glaze over as he withdrew himself mentally from the outside world. His arms pushed faster and faster, and soon…

“…Neunundvierzig. Fünfzig!”

Fifty. Done. Finished. Getting up quickly, Germany collected his water bottle and stopwatch from the ground, hearing a few claps and whistles from the alphas as he bent. “Good show, sugar, good show!”

His face was flashing hot and cold. Tempering his desire to sprint into the bushes, or to storm over and punch them each in the mouth, he walked stoically away. Keeping his eyes ahead, he left the field and strolled through the park, back towards home. He hardly blinked, hardly broke his eye contact with the nothing in particular that he was staring at.

His eyes were beginning to burn.

And then he heard a single “Yay! Good job!” accompanied by the sound of little hands smacking together.

Despite him, his eyes swerved to the source. A little girl with twisty, beaded pigtails was hanging over the edge of an abandoned monkey bars, smiling at him.

He blinked, unsure of exactly what he was being applauded for now. His mouth was a hard serious line at this point, and he didn’t think he could manage to turn it into a smile, so he gave her a curt nod and kept walking.

When he got back home, he dropped his things dispassionately onto the kitchen table. He knew his mood swings should be finished by now, but his chest still felt as if a heavy weight were resting on it. He idled into his bedroom to grab some paperwork to distract himself with.

“West, I’m back.” Prussia was home. The dogs barked happily and left the bedroom wagging their tails.

“In here” Germany called.

Soon his brother appeared in the doorway. “Good doggies. Good good. Bask in my glory.” He gave them each a final pat and then leaned his elbow against the doorway.

“You wanna go to the park? They look like they could use a walk.”

“I’m working right now.”

“We could play Fußball” his brother sang, bringing a new soccer ball from behind his back.

“I’m not going. I need to finish this.”

Prussia made a raspberry sound and flopped backwards onto the bed. “I can’t believe I raised you to be such a killjoy. Can’t it wait? You love going to the park.”

“I was just there.”

“And wasn’t it awesome?”

Germany leaned over his desk and pushed his reading glasses up the bridge of his nose, feeling his
mouth form another tight, unsmiling line. “No” he said shortly. “It wasn’t.”

Prussia went quiet. Germany swallowed dryly, trying to ignore the silence over his shoulder. Then he said, “I’ll go again later.”

“Awesome” Prussia said. Germany heard the sound of the dogs following his brother back to the doorway. “We’ll be waiting in anticipation.”

Germany nodded, knowing it wouldn’t be long. He didn't want to go. He absolutely didn't want to go at all. But he couldn’t just give up his park. He wouldn’t be losing that easy.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is sort of short, apologies! Three things I want to mention:

1. If anyone wants a point of reference, this story is meant to take place after World War Two, around the time of the Cold War. This might be helpful to know for future chapters.

2. Sometimes when I put non English words into a story, I put translations at the end. If the meanings are sort of defined by the context (or if the word has been used previously), I sometimes omit the translation. But if you think a more direct translation would make any chapter more enjoyable, please feel free to let me know.

3. Thank you for the encouraging comments and kudos. They really help to motivate!

sincerely,

mistakeandcheese
“West, are you sure you don’t want me to go with you?” The former nation of Prussia asked.

“I’m supposed to representing the both of us” Germany grunted, straightening his tie in front of the mirror. “You would only be making a scene.” He could let it slide that Prussia had insisted on coming with him to America. The hotel bills were a little higher, but Germany had always felt it was important not to let his brother stay cooped up by himself all day. But to the meeting itself? That was another story.

“Well” Prussia gushed, coming up behind him and striking a few ‘cool diplomatic poses’ in the mirror. “It is hard to ignore my awe striking presence when I enter the room. But I can tone it down. Put on some sunglasses. A dark, fitted suit. Be the intimidating hunk that lingers mysteriously and sexily in the corner. Just so you have a little extra muscle is all.”

Germany pinched between his eyebrows. “I do not need any extra muscle, Bruder.”

“I know, I know” Prussia said, raising his pitch and putting his hands up. “You’re a hunk. Of course you are, I raised you that way. But that’s beside the point.” He tapped his nose knowingly. “It’s the intimidation factor we’re after here.”

“I am plenty intimidating by myself” Germany said, becoming irritable as he pushed past him to grab the suitcase by the door and his lunch for the day.

Prussia sighed, nearly sounding his age. “Of course you are, little one. Here, at least—” he left the room and came back with a dark bottle “—wear some of my cologne. To help you smell more like me.”

“I will bring it” Germany said shortly. “Schonen tag.”

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It was a short walk from the hotel to the conference building; and a busy street, in broad daylight. *Rent a car or something, get a taxi!* Germany felt a testy ‘huh’ sound rumble up his chest at the memory of his boss's advice. Ridiculous. He could handle an eight minute walk.

His appearance into the conference room went about as well as he could have expected. Eyes flitting to him as he entered. Some curious sniffs at the air as he walked by. He had stared straight ahead and made sure to lose nothing of his professional demeanor. There was nothing new about him, after all. The novelty of him was only a novelty to them. Right? After sitting down, he felt too shy to talk to anybody. Especially anybody that had seen him at the last meeting. In retrospect, this bothered him. He had a reason to be there, didn’t he?

When it came his turn to talk, he found it a completely different experience from before. Eyes were on him, or rather, every inch of him that pressed against his suit and pants. Feeling self conscious, he turned toward the projector screen, showing the table his back, and heard a whistle and a few snickers.

His knuckles cracked as he balled his fists and slowly turned around. His eyes raked across the room like a blue flame razing down a desert countryside. “Can we” he growled “Please” the room
went quiet “keep this professional.”
His voice was gravelly and low as an angered tiger. The silence was held as if by gunpoint. Then—
“Oh, don’t be so catty”
“Yeah, take it easy.”
“Come on, give us a smile, Germany.”
Stunned, he blinked a few times and began to feel his face turn warm. It was not a smile.
“Ah, now he’s going into a mood. Shit.”
“Aaw, sweetie, don’t cry. Why don’t you take a break?”
“Don’t” he said loudly, hating himself for the waver in his voice “tell me to take a break. I’m not done.”
There was a bleed of mutterings in various languages.
“Yeesh. Crazy bitch”
“Somebody’s near their heat, huh?”
“Wonder if his asshole can stretch as big as his mouth goes, eh?”
He turned away from them, and spoke into the projector screen for the rest of his presentation.
“...In conclusion, the development of cooperative business models can help to leverage working conditions and boost productivity if quality control regiments are formatted in advance, and a reasonable balance between individual and team incentives set in order. Thank you.”
There were some dull claps, and he sat down, relieved to be done. His throat felt dry, so uncapped his water bottle and tipped it against his lips.
“Thirsty, eh?” Romano said, leening past his brother to leer at Germany.
Germany coughed on his sip. Scowling, he capped the water again. “Not anymore. My gratitude for your concern.”
“Romano, sh! America’s about to talk and if we interrupt him he’ll probably bomb us!” North Italy squeaked, tugging on his brother’s sleeve.
“Pff. That chicken bastardo wouldn’t dare go after a member of his precious NATO.”
“What was that about NATO?” America said, his now shaded glasses flashing ominously as he grinned cheerfully in their direction.
“Did I say something about NATO? You must be going crazy, amico.”
Germany shifted uncomfortably, instinctively lowering his gaze.
*Wait. Why am I looking down?
Because two alphas are talking, and I’m in the middle.
This is ridiculous. Look up.*

He did, in time to see everybody beginning to get up, and push in their chairs. It was time for lunch.
Italy gave Germany a tap on the shoulder. “Germany, can we go eat outside? It’s so nice today.”

“Yes, that sounds good” Germany said, relieved for an excuse to get away from the conference room. Grabbing their things, the two friends headed down the hall and towards the building’s courtyard. Before they got there Italy said something about needing to pee and he peeled away from Germany to duck into the bathroom marked with a bold letter A. Germany glanced to the bathroom, and then quickly looked away, trying not to be reminded of what had happened at the last meeting. No more Alpha bathrooms for him.

He really needed to step outside.

Germany walked out into the sunlight and let out a tense breath. It was nice, he thought: this little outdoor area in the middle of the building complex. Like a safe little meadow folded between the cracks of pavement that the skyscrapers and traffic and broken neighborhoods grew between to make New York City.

He noticed some petals amongst the grass. They were pretty; beautiful, really. They reminded Germany of the rolling hills of wildflowers that sprawled gently across his own countryside. Going to one knee, he picked one of the many clover flowers and took a moment to gaze at it.

“Aw, how cute!” China was a ways away smacking Japan on the arm and gesturing to Germany. “You were right, didi. He is very girlish.”

Moment ruined. Germany got to his feet, slipping the flower swiftly into his coat. He saw Japan throw him a sheepish look. Feeling something akin to betrayal, he walked away so that he could find somewhere to be alone.

Germany sat with his back to a tree, the flower twizzling slowly between his fingers, which looked giant in comparison to the plant’s delicate stem. He should have thrown the thing to the ground when the other nations had seen him.

But it’s not its fault it’s a flower.

“Ooh, what a pretty flower!” Italy had arrived. He plopped happily down next to Germany. “I wish I had some paper. Then I could draw it.”

Germany fished a pad of sticky notes from his breast pocket. “Here” he said dully, handing it over.

“Grazie! Do you have a pen too?”

He did. Germany always liked to have a little bit of stationary on hand. Just to keep things organized.

Italy happily set to work, his tongue poking out a little as he sketched. Germany rested his cheek on his hand, thankful for the opportunity to sit in silence. He wasn’t feeling very social today.

When Italy finished, he handed the sticky pad back to Germany. It looked like he had drawn on every single page. Great, an entire notepad gone. “Look Germany, it moves!”

Germany flipped through the pages and watched an inky moving picture of a person with their knees drawn up to their chest, twirling a flower round and round and staring at it with low eyelids and a glum curve to their lips. At the end it read, “Directed and produced by Italia. Starring: pretty flower. Co-starring: Germania.

“The thing was, my co-star looked so sad the entire time” Italy said. “I wonder if talking to me would make him feel better.”
Germany sighed. “I doubt it, Italia.”

“Well, then the next best thing is to eat. Do you have food?”

"Right. Food."

He reached for the brown bag that lay forgotten by his feet.

Wurst, and a banana.

"Actually, I don't think I'm very hungry" he lied. It was probably overkill. But he didn't want anyone making fun of him for the way his food looked as he ate it. Spain and Romano were chatting not far away, and he didn't want to take the risk.

"Really?” Italy said, peering into the lunch bag. "But your food looks so delizioso!” He took out his own, which was, of course, pasta. "Maybe you just need to try something different. Here, Germany, let's switch. This is ditalini e ceci, leftover from last night. Try it!” In a blink he switched their meals.

The pasta was short and compactly shaped, with some well seasoned chickpeas and vegetables mixed in. Just looking at it made Germany's stomach growl audibly.

"This looks amazing, Italia."

Italy smiled proudly, and glanced to Romano and Spain, then back to Germany. "That's what my brother said about it last night."

...And if Romano had eaten it, he couldn't possibly make fun of someone else for eating it too. Germany examined Italy's happy smile as he bit off a chunk of banana and rolled his feet back and forth on the spot where the shadow of the tree met the sunlight. "Thank you, Italia" Germany said quietly. Why did his throat feel so tight?

"Hm? Oh, nada nada. That's what friends are for.”

“Oi. There they are. Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dummkompf.” England had apparently been looking for them. He leaned his forearm against one of the lower branches and grinned. “Some of us are planning on going out for drinks after the meeting. Just wanted to let you guys know, in case you’re interested.”

“Oh, that sounds like fun! Grazie, England.”

“No problem. Be hush about it though. We’re trying to keep it a NATO only thing. I want to get drunk and am absolutely not willing to maintain the mood and hand eye coordination necessary for peeling a drunken American away from a half drunk Russian mid way through the night.”

“Is it really that bad, England?” Italy asked, looking worried.

“Oh, no” England sighed, rubbing between his eyebrows as if he had a massive headache. “They just nearly broke each other's jaws fighting over the moon again. The bloody moon, of all things…”

Germany nodded. “Alright. Understood.”

“Great. See you then. Cheers.”

Chapter End Notes
Translations:
schonen tag: good day (German)
didì: little brother (Mandarin Chinese)

Note: Post World War 2, China and Japan would not be on friendly terms
Germany’s eyes scanned the bar, as he tried to ignore the strange shadow of anxiety that pulled at the pit of his stomach. Why am I even nervous right now? He wondered, feeling a tick of frustration with himself for it. The meeting was over, the workday done, and the next international conference not for another week and a half. His eyes fell to a rowdy group of Alphas that were playing pool on the other side of the room, and then to one that was leaning across one of the booths, showing a lot of teeth as he smiled and chatted with heavily tattooed, unimpressed looking beta.

“—And for the omega, a beer” one of the bartenders said, flashing a smile as Germany’s order slid across the table toward him. “Let me know if you need anything else, babydoll.”

In his entire life, he had never felt more out of place in a bar than he did now.

But at least he had beer.

Germany took a gulp of his drink, feeling soothed by the frothy, bitter flavor.

From beside him, Italy grinned. “You have a beer mustachio, Germany.”

“Is that so?” Germany said, pushing his lips out in a brief, brief impression of the face his brother made whenever he got one of those. Giggling, Italy handed him an extra napkin and he wiped his face.

Feeling a ping of hope that his mood might possibly turn around before the end of the night, Germany drank a bit more, nearly almost chuckling as he watched Italy wince at the American attempt at mixing a Campari Americano.

Then he felt a painful little jab in his belly. Germany put a hand on his abdomen, wincing as he drew his knees together underneath the countertop. His heat wasn’t yet here, but it wasn’t far off, and ever since getting off the suppressant pills he had experienced the occasional out of place symptom.

“Does something hurt, Germany?” Italy asked, putting his drink down.

“Nein. Well, ja, just a little. It’s not a problem though. Just forget about it.”

“You know, I’ve heard before that alcohol can make crampy feelings hurt more.”

As if I would let that stop me from enjoying a beer. “Beer is barely alcoholic” he said gruffly, taking another swallow. He winced as a harder jab hit him the pelvis and his knees banged together underneath the counter.

“Ahia” Italy hissed, wincing himself as he watched. Then his smile bounced back. “Well, maybe I can find a beer that is even more barely alcoholic. We are in America, after all.”

Before Germany could stop him he had gotten up and slipped away through the crowd, toward the side of the bar where a different bartender was sullenly wiping down empty glasses.
Germany sighed, and hunched back over his drink. Maybe he should take it a little more slowly.

“How you holding out, old chap?” England said, in his loud, post-a-few-pints drinking voice.

“Alright. Danke.”

England sighed loudly. “It’s a mad world out here, Germany, a mad stonking world.”

“You don’t need to tell me that.”

“Too right, too right.” England took a big swig of his ale and thumped it down with a satisfied sigh. “To think we’ve been through so much trouble with the world wars and all that blathering nonsense, and it was all because of an omega.”

“Hear hear!” someone shouted.

Germany genuinely didn’t know what to say. Was he allowed to say anything? He had always kept his eyes lowered when talk of the world wars came up. Now that he was officially an omega it seemed all the more appropriate.

“You know what?” England slurred, scrutinizing him like an old man reading the back of a pill bottle. “Now that I think about it, you look weaker than back then. I wonder if it’s from making the full turn.”

Germany felt his jaw click from the pressure as he became painfully self aware of the fact that his body took up less space than it used to. “That is because of the demilitarization you all recommended after my leadership in World War Two. It has nothing to do with being an...with not being an alpha.”

“Are you-hic-sure? Because I know that this one—” France made an annoyed huff as England tugged on a strand of his hair “—became a lot less menacing after his first heat. That was… that was back in...”

“1815” France scoffed. “Really, Mon Anglais, how could you not remember such a thing?”

“Oi, you forgot our anniversary the other day!”

“I did not forget, I was simply in silent protest.”

“Over what?”

“Over you forgetting to renew our gym membership.”

England let out a groan. “But I did that three days ago!”

France tossed his head like a golden mare flicking off a fly. “But it was three says too late! And now, my flabby thighs have suffered the consequences.”

"Shame."

"How could you agree with such a thing?!!"

"You're the one who said it!"

France’s fingers danced delicately over England’s arm. "And I'm the one who knows what I may or may not do for you tonight."
Germany wondered at the strange power dynamic that was unfolding between the two. He imagined himself leaning alluringly into an Alpha and touching their arm slightly, ever so slightly, before pulling away, smiling teasingly, and crossing his legs like he had the most powerful weapon stashed between them. His shoulders slouched forward. He would never be able to be that way.

“Your thighs are fine.”

“They cannot be fine! They must be beautiful!”

“Then they're thumping beautiful you dumb twat! Just like the rest of your sodding goddamn self!”

“Mon Chou. That’s all I wanted to hear.”

_I will never wield power like France._

Growing horribly sick of the conversation, Germany buried himself back in his beer and turned his stool the other way.

Spain was smiling good naturedly at the soccer game bouncing along on the TV across the bar. He gave Germany a sympathetic look and said “How you holding out, Muchacho?”

“Alright” Germany said, following the game with his eyes as well. They both stared at it for a while, Germany starting to feel as if some semblance of his old life were coming back to him. Then the goalie on the screen missed a shot and the whistle blew.

Spain put his chin on his hand thoughtfully. “Sabes, I always wondered why Prussia was so protective of you. I suppose it makes sense: he figured you really needed it.”

Germany’s hand tightened around his drink. “I don’t” he said shortly “need protection.”

Spain let out a tired little chuckle. “Oh, but you will, pobrecito. Especially now that everybody knows.”

Germany’s pulse jittered. He swallowed dryly, wishing he could down his entire drink at once.

“Let me give you some consejo, Hijo” the Spaniard sighed. “Find someone big and músculo. Aggresivo, si puedes. To scare off los sinvergüenzas.” He pointed vaguely to Germany’s physique, and took a sip from his caña. “They’ll be all over you, because you look like a challenge, but you still smell fantástico. Mate as soon as you can, to get rid of that smell. Chaval, you smell purer than La Virgen María.” His eyes flicked to Germany’s glass. “And never, never leave your drink unattended.”

“How do you know all this? You’re not—” Germany lowered his voice, feeling a flurry of hope rise up in his belly. “—An omega in hiding?” Spain had once been amongst the strongest nations on the map. If he was actually an omega...

“Yo? Dios no” Spain chortled. “Dios no. No. Hermano,” his tone dropped, and he gave a smile somewhere between wistful and regretful. “I used to be an empire. I know all the tricks.”

Germany’s guts curled toward his core. Unconsciously, he shifted to put some space between them.

“That’s the idea, niño.” Spain said, smiling bitterly. “But don’t worry about me. Just trying to be caballeroso. Plus, your hermano would never forgive me.”
Germany felt gloom settle over his chest. “Danke, I suppose.”

“Yo Germany” America was coming toward him, gigantic, unreal smile already plastered in place. “How you holding out?” Adjusting his shades, he leaned his elbows over the counter as if he and Germany were having some incognito conversation.

“Everybody asks me as if I am sick” Germany replied, rubbing his temple wearily. “Nothing has changed.”

America’s voice dropped. “But...but isn’t it harder, once they all know?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Has anyone attacked you yet?”

There he goes, looking for another chance to be the hero. “No. I don’t intend to be attacked.”

America broke into another smile. “That’s the spirit! But has Russia tried anything?”

“Nein.”

“Do you think he’ll try anything?”

“How should I know what Russia intends to do?” Germany snapped.

“I bet he’s gonna try something” America muttered, looking frazzled.

“How are you holding out, America?”

“So why did they ban heat suppressants in Germany?”

“America!” England called, leaning backwards in his seat, so as to shout past the backs of France, Spain, and Germany. “Lay off ‘im why don’t you? Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition.”

Even Spain laughed at that. Germany cringed, feeling like the butt of the joke, even though he was pretty sure he wasn’t. Then Italy showed up with the extra drinks for the both of them.

“Germany, I was talking to that pretty bartender over there and she told me that this is the best drink if your tummy is cramping and so I got one for you and I got one for me because it looks tasty and I’m curious so here you go. Saluti!” He held out a spindly, conical glass with a sweet, milky looking fluid and a slice of fruit on the side. Germany felt his face go red.

That was definitely a drink for Omegas.

“On second thought, Italy, I think I’m all set, I’m sorry.”

The rest of their barmates burst out laughing. Spain wiped a tear from his eye “Oh, Cariño, I think it’s okay for you to accept a drink from this guy, ah Dios mio…”

“Italy of all alphas,” France tittered, throwing his head back in amusement “Sweet little Italy! He wouldn’t—”

“—He wouldn’t know the difference between a roofie and a Tootsie Roll” England cackled. “God, that’s brilliant.”

Germany stood up. “I think I’ll be leaving now. Gute nacht.”
“No, Germany” Italy said, looking tearful. “You can't go out on your own. It's too scary for an o-
”

“I can do it, omega or not” Germany snarled. He was tired of it. Tired of being told that he couldn't handle himself. Tired of being restricted by the damn weakness of his preprogrammed sexuality.

Germany turned his collar up sharply, shook Italy’s hand off his shoulder, and sped out the door, tall frame hunched, brooding, and quivering with an anger that he kept repressed between clenched teeth.

Chapter End Notes

1815: Year the United Kingdom defeated France in the Battle of Waterloo. This put a stop to Napoleon Bonaparte and ended the first French empire. (Source: Wikipedia)

Translations:
Campari Americano: Italian drink
Ahia: Ouch (Italian)
Danke: Thank you (German)
Nein: No (German)
Ja: Yes (German)
Mon Anglais: My Englishman (French)
Mon Chou: My Cabbage/Sweetie (French)
Sabes: You know (Spanish)
Pobrecito: Poor thing (Spanish)
Consejo: advice (Spanish)
Hijo: Son (Spanish)
músculo: muscular (Spanish)
Aggresivo: Agressive (Spanish)
si puedes: If you can (Spanish)
los sinvergüenzas: people without shame, scoundrels (Spanish)
caña: glass for beverage (in this context)(Spanish)
Chaval: Kid (Spanish) Note: In North and South America we're more likely to hear Chaval
La Virgen Maria: The Virgin Mary (Spanish)
Hermano: Brother (Spanish)
Dios, no: God, no. (Spanish)
niño: boy (Spanish)
Caballeroso: gentlemanly (Spanish)
Saluti: Cheers (Italian)
Cariño: Sweetie, darling (Spanish)
Gute nacht: good night (German)
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Warning: potential triggers

I want to go back. I want to go back. I want to go back to the way things were.

Stop it. Before this you were only living a lie.

I liked the lie better.

Germany sped up his pace, trying to shake the useless strings of sniveling, emotional thought out of his head as he walked home. That sort of weakness was for omegas.

Why am I, of all people, like this? Maybe I could get my boss to stage some sort of reverse reveal. Surprise! The first reveal was a fake. We called it too soon. Just a mistake. His hand wandered to the metal pendant he wore around his neck. A mistake, that’s it. It has to be a mistake. He squeezed the iron cross until he felt his hand bleed. God must have made a mistake.

The flickering pink of a neon sign slid across his face as he passed through an empty side street and entered another. The conference room hadn’t been far from his hotel. The bar wasn’t very far from the conference room, ergo right now he wasn’t very far from his hotel. And yet--

The word slithered through his mind, this time as a creeping, primal hiss. Mistake~

Germany’s nose twitched. The walkway he was on smelled like old cigarettes, sour food, and stale alpha.

Pausing for a moment, he hurriedly patted down his pockets in search of Prussia’s cologne. Realizing it was probably somewhere in his suitcase, he decided it was better to keep moving; he lurched around the next corner, and found himself face to face with a complete stranger.

“Hey Baby. Why the rush?”

“Excuse me” he said gruffly, attempting to sidestep.

“Oh woah woah woah, don’t be so cold, doll, you only just met us.”

Scratch that, three strangers.

“Out of my way” he said, gritting his teeth. In response, they stepped into his way more.

“Ouch. Cold as ice. You know why?”

“Oh, I know why.”

Germany’s eyes followed the first alpha as he took a slow, semicircular path around him and inhaled the trash bin tinted air as if it were a fragrant spring breeze. “Sweetheart, you smell mighty lonely. Doesn't he smell lonely, Johnny?”
“Hella lonely, Rickie. What do you think, Tommy?”

“Loneliest omega I ever smelled, Johnny. Smells great.”

Germany let out a low growl. “Point your noses elsewhere, men.”

“Ooh, this one likes to talk sharp” Rickie said, taking a step closer. “You don't sound like you're from around here either. You wouldn't be a kraught now, would you?”

Germany removed his hands from his pockets, weary that he might have to use his fists. The alphas were slowly approaching him, darkness slipping over their faces, making their eyes look slick with yellow lamplight as they moved into the shadow of an old brick building. Instinctively Germany backed up. Were they going to attack him? He had his hands raised into half fists, not wanting to show any body language that would immediately get him into a fistfight of three against one. At the same time however, he was slowly becoming cornered. His breath caught sharply as his back bumped against a rust red wall.

“Don't be scared, honey. We just wanna make you feel less lonely is all.”

Three opponents, one centered, two flanking at 5 o'clock and 9 o'clock. There's a gap. Take it. **TAKE IT!**

Germany’s eyes darted to the gap at his left. Peeling from the wall, he made a cop out to the right, and then dashed in the opposite direction. There was a shout, and then his shoulder banged against the wall as he was caught and shoved back against it. A pair of arms boxed him in, and the rancid breath of a horny alpha filled the air around his neck. He yelped as a set of fingernails scraped against his scalp, and the sky, brick, and spidery fire escapes in between blurred past his vision as his head was yanked by the hair. Someone’s forearm hooked around his throat, and the three alphas collectively pressed him onto the ground. Germany gasped as one alpha pressed a knee against his chest and a hand against his throat. When he tried to get a grip on this alpha, he felt his arms get wrangled and pushed down by another. *I can't breath. I can't see. Where is the third?*

The third was squatting near his legs, tongue lolling in anticipation as he dragged down the omega's pants.

Germany’s blood prickled in a horrified wave against the inside of his skin as he felt his underwear get yanked to his knees, and his pelvis become exposed to the cold night air.

“Damn Sugar. You're all slicked up down there. Excited?”

Just as the alpha made to push his legs open, Germany kicked. Hard.

There was a yowl as his foot smashed against the stranger’s penis. Swinging up his knee, Germany slammed the chest crusher in the small of the back, causing him to slip forward, windless, and lose the grip on his throat. The coward holding his arms lost the grip on one, allowing Germany to sock him in the mouth and scramble out from underneath. The first alpha unfurled from his injured dick and came swinging at Germany with a roar. Germany dodged, dodged, jabbed, jabbed, whipping around just in time to grab the one sneaking up behind him and toss him into his friend. The cowardly alpha had already fled. Realizing they were out matched, the other two hurled some sexual slurs at him before bolting.

In sudden darkness and quiet, Germany was left alone. Breathing heavily, he adjusted the clothing that had been left pulled down to his knees, and inspected his knuckles for any blood stains. Not that DNA evidence of any sort would be helpful. A group of alphas assaulting a lone omega on the
street was hardly something the authorities would bat an eye at. Besides, he had won. And so, after straightening his suit jacket and scooping his briefcase from the ground, he ran out of that ally, away from that neighborhood, and all the way back to his hotel. Before entering the lobby, he hurriedly belted his pants and smoothed back his hair. Slowing to a brisk walk, he nodded calmly to the hostess and took the stairs. It was hard to get the key in the doorknob the first few tries, but then the metal crunched open and he slipped nonchalantly inside. The room was cool and dark and his silhouette stood tall and firm in the closed doorway.

Then he took two steps forward, collapsed onto his bed, and started shaking uncontrollably. Turning his face into the mattress, he wiped the lukewarm water that pinched out of his eyes, and tried to muffle the shivery breaths that began to escape his chest and flutter into the sheets.

Suddenly the door swung open and the light flicked on.

“Hey West, guess who's got--Oh shiesse...what happened? What's wrong?”

The familiar scent of Germany’s older brother curdled with a tang of protective concern. Prussia clunked the six pack of beer down on the counter and hurried forward to sit next to his younger brother, who was curled in a tight ball and trembling on the edge of his bed.

“Bruder, what happened?” Prussia repeated, quieter this time. Germany's hair was flopping desperately in all directions. His ears were red and his pale neck bruised in five fingerlike marks.

Prussia’s blood froze. “Did somebody attack you?”

There was a wet sniff. “Three.”

Prussia's scarlet circled pupils contracted to horrified pinpricks. “No…”

“But I got them off of me, Bruder--they ran away.”

Prussia let out a whoop of joy and relief. Jamming a fist into the air, he sprang from the bed victoriously. “That's my little brother! Show them what you're made of!” ruffling Germany's hair, he danced across the room and cracked two beers from the six pack.

"Come on" he gestured the beer and then tossed it to Germany. "A toast. To celebrate and to forget."

***

They didn't have much time to get drunk though. Within the first ten minutes, there was a knock at the door. The two brothers sat up. A strong scent--of the sort that occurs when an alpha becomes angry, or protective, or violent, was diffusing from the other side of the door.

"Do you think it's one of them?” Prussia mouthed silently.

Germany stared at his brother, trying to ignore the electrified taste of fear that was buzzing between each of his taste buds. "No idea."

Prussia tipped his head to the side twice, and then traced a semicircle with his index finger. Germany nodded, and they quickly stuck to the wall on either side of the door.

There was another impatient knock. Prussia held up three fingers. "Three, two, one--"

Prussia flung the door open and the two brothers drew back their fists in unison.
"Germany?" Italy stepped inside and Prussia reflexively brought his fist down to clobber him.

"Don't hurt" Italy snarled, dodging the blow.

"Woah woah, wait, it's me, total accident" Prussia said, stepping back quickly.

"Where's Germany?"

"Italia, I'm here" Germany said, swiftly stepping out from behind the door.

Italy immediately crumpled against him."Ah, Germania, Dio mio, I used the payphone to make sure you made it home, and then you didn't pick up, and then I got worried and so I walked out from the bar to your hotel and as I was walking, I remembered that you still had your suitcase so tried paging you and then I heard this beeping and I turned my head and I saw this little glowing rectangle coming from the ground in this dark alley and the alley smelled like alphas and blood and then I realized it was yours that I was calling right there on the ground and I was so scared Germany, so so scared."

"It--it's okay, Italia" Germany stuttered, hooking his chin over Italy's shoulder and patting his back, like he used to hug him at the end of training. "I am fine."

Italy looked up at him with teary eyes. He covered his mouth and gasped. "Germany, your neck-- they strangled you, didn't they?"

"Tried" Germany corrected. "They tried to. As you can tell, they did not succeed."

"Please, tell me everything."

Germany sighed. He really didn't want to. But saying 'no' to Italy was even more difficult. He, Prussia, and Italy all found a place to sit so he could tell the story. It would have been painful, let alone embarrassing, but luckily he had his inebriated brother to help.

"And then he gave him the ol' one two" Prussia slurred, jumping up and pounding the air with his fists. "And as they ran away like the cowards they are he laser eyed a hole through eacha their stupid heads and flew outta there bing bang boom."

"Germany, I didn't know you had laser vision! That's not actually a thing, is it?"

"No, it is not actually a thing, danke Bruder, please sit down."

"Well, he might as well have" Prussia said, taking another glug of beer and laying across his bed. "He might as well have." He sighed and closed his eyes happily.

Italy beamed at Germany. "Wow Germany, I always knew you were tough, but that's crazy tough! They were probably expecting some cute little delicate omega when they smelled you, but they had another thing coming! Not that you're not cute--haha--" after turning a little red, Italy defaulted to a vacant smile and got up from the bed he was sitting on. "Alright, Germany, I'm glad to hear you're alright. It's pretty late, so I guess I'll be getting back to my place for a little siesta before the plane tomorrow."

Germany stood up too. "Would you like to sleep here? I could secure some extra blankets."

"Oh, Grazi, but I'll need to pack tomorrow morning. Goodnight, Germany!"

"Alright, Gute Nacht" Germany said, giving Italy a hug goodbye. Italy, for once, hadn't been the
one to initiate it. After a briefly frozen moment, he wrapped his arms around Germany and
squeezed him warmly, nestling his chin over Germany's shoulder.

Eventually, Germany heard Italy's voice, speaking softly next to his ear. "Be more careful,
Germany. I don't want bad things to happen to you."

Instead of feeling patronized, Germany felt that same strange, alluring tug at his chest. *This alpha
wants to take care of me. Take care of me.* Closing his eyes, he felt his mind still at the calm,
meddeterminian scent that was next to his cheek. "Don't worry," he said, feeling his neck relax and
his face tip a little closer.

He felt Italy's nose touch his ear. "Goodnight, Germany."

Italy's warmth receded as he let go, and Germany shook the lull away from his head and opened the
door for his guest. "Sleep well. Have a good flight."

When he closed the door behind him, his chest felt oddly aglow. Turning out the lights, he settled
into bed, put his arms behind his head, and gazed up at the ceiling. For such a horrible day, he felt
remarkably not miserable.

Then, suddenly, he heard his brother's voice. "Watch out for him."

Prussia had one eye slit open. Germany made a little jolt, having thought that his brother had fallen
asleep.

"It's Italy, Brother." Germany said, rolling his eyes.

Prussia's reddish eyes seemed to burn through the darkness. "Exactly."

"Ridiculous."

"West, I've never smelled you smelling more like an omega than you did just now."

Germany felt a lurch of frustration in his gut. "I'm sorry my scent has offended you" he growled,
turning to face the opposite wall. "Unfortunately there's nothing I can do about it. Go to sleep,
East."
“Yes Sir.” Germany said, hearing his chair squeak as he turned to look at his calendar. The sunlit room was still and quiet as his eyes scanned across the days.

“No Sir, it shouldn’t be a problem,” he said, turning his chair back around.

He stared adamantly at a knot in the wood of his desk as he listened. “Yes, Sir.” He cleared his throat. “Yes, I understand Sir. Yes Sir, but—” He closed his eyes and exhaled quietly as he listened.

“Yes Sir, but I can’t—No sir, I am not. No Sir, I don’t claim to be one. Yes, Sir, I—” His jaw set as the squiggly little voice on the phone interrupted him again.

Then he spoke.

“Sir, no. Absolutely not. I am going to go to the conference. And I would ask you to please not speak to me in such a way, Sir, as you are neither my dictator nor my mate. Yes, I appreciate your concern. Thank you. Goodbye.”

He hung up the phone, and returned adamantly to his paperwork.

Prussia’s voice interrupted the silence. “Is das Miststück giving you a hard time?”

Germany kept his eyes on his work and said, “He tries. I will not be dictated in such a way.”

“Das ist mein Bruder” Prussia said, with somewhat less gusto than normal. Leaning against the doorframe, he chewed his fingernail for a moment, and then said, “But are you sure you actually want to go?”

Germany’s eyes beamed up at him like two blue lasers. “It is my duty to go.” Then they went back down to his paperwork.

“Yeah but—” Prussia sighed and traced his thumb and middle finger agitatedly down the sides of his face. “It’s kind of a stupid idea.”

“Ist mir egal.”

“West! There are going to be two angry, nuclear dickhead alphas in that room, and if something goes wrong, you are going to be right in the middle of it. You think Austria is going to be able to keep them under control? That dry noodle beta? Come on. I thought you had brains.”

“Austria will need my help, Bruder. He needs all the muscle he can get.”

“Your muscles are not up for auction.”

“There must be order. I must go.”

Prussia slapped a hand over his face and groaned. “Oh ja. Why would you listen to me? It’s not like I totally predicted the outcome of what happened at that last meeting, and not like you completely ignored it and lost your secret and completely screwed yourself over as a result, and it’s not like the reason you’re dealing with all this now is because you didn’t listen to me in the
Germany was silent. The tip of his pen quivered over the page for a moment. And then he said, “You are incorrect. The last meeting was the one in America” and continued working.

Prussia crossed his arms and growled darkly. “And what happened there?”

Germany put up his hand sharply. “Genug” he said. "I am very busy today, Bruder." He briskly dotted the last sentence and slipped the papers into their correct file.

“Busy?” Prussia said, eyes following his brother as he left his desk and passed through the doorway. “With what? Finishing the paperwork you just finished?”

He followed Germany into the next room, where he was already sweeping the floor.

“Cleaning.”

“Okay. Ja. Das ist gut.” Prussia said, frowning suspiciously as he sat down on the sofa. He lifted his feet as Germany crawled by with a handheld vacuum at the carpet. “You know, I cleaned earlier this morning. You don’t have to go crazy over it.”

Raising his voice over the sound of the vacuum, Germany responded from underneath the coffee table. “Yes I do. Italy is coming over today. We must be prepared.”

“Italy, huh. Why’s that?”

The sound of exasperation was teenager-worthy. “Because he is my friend, Bruder.” Germany crawled out from underneath and put the vacuum back. He straightened, and frowned in Prussia’s direction. Prussia frowned back. Then Germany snatched a pillow from off the sofa, muttering “Das ist nicht richtig…” before moving the cushion to the other side of the sofa. There. It had definitely been out of balance before. “Das ist richtig.”

But then he noticed that there was more dust.

Fetching a vacuum cleaner again, he returned to his hands and knees and became lost in the loud purr of the machine and the satisfaction of watching the floor become clean. Then he noticed a wrinkle in the carpet behind the sofa, so he stayed on all fours and crawled over to fix it. When he fixed that one another one crinkled up somewhere else, so he moved to fix that one.

“West?” Prussia’s face, cautious and quizzical, popped over the edge of the sofa. “What are you doing?”

“Eliminating the imperfections.”

“Gott, don’t say it like that, like, ever again, West” Prussia groaned, pinching between his eyebrows.

“You’re right you’re right” Germany said quickly, popping up and grabbing a pillow from another chair to fluff and arrange feverishly.

“Your heat isn’t due for another few weeks, right?”

“Correct. Why do you ask?”

“You’re nesting.”
Germany shot him up a quick glare and then snatched both pillows off the sofa and put them on the chair. “I’m cleaning.”

“Heyeah right, and I’m Canada.”

“If you had cleaned properly this morning, then I wouldn’t have to be doing it now.”

“And yet you still would. West, maybe you should postpone this little teaparty of yours. You seemancy.”

“Nein. Ich cancel nicht. He has already made the trip, and will be arriving in four minutes, if all goes according to schedule. Since he is Italy, he will probably be coming in 34 minutes to an hour. But das ist nicht wichtig. He is coming.”

It turned out that Italy arrived in approximately 8 minutes. For him, an impressive feat, which he had apparently achieved by speeding the entire way.

“Hello Germany! Look, I’m on time today!” He said, stepping through the doorway and grinning proudly. “And I only had to drive at 90 kilometers an hour. Oh, hello doggies!”

“Well you are actually four minutes late” Germany said, eyeing Italy’s windswept hair as he took his coat and found a place to hang it, amongst the duo of jostling dogs. “But I would rather that than you getting yourself killed in an auto accident.”

“Italy!” Prussia came into the room. There was a big grin on his face and a slow, puffed up stiffness to his walk; like a rooster ruffling out its feathers to another. “Gut to see you. Is that hair a new look? Sehr draufgängerisch. Very alpha.”

“Oh” Italy rubbed the back of his head, smiling sheepishly. “Do you think so? It was kind of an accident.”

“Ah” Prussia said, nodding and smiling in the way that looked like the rooster had grown the teeth of a dog, and decided to growl with them. “I see.”

“Bruder, don’t you have work to do?”

“No.”

“Then I will ask you to take the dogs for a walk” Germany said, pushing a furry brown head away from himself. “They are being disruptive.” Both had lost interest in Italy, and were at Germany’s side, trying their very best to jam their noses between his thighs.

“A short walk” Prussia said, picking up the leashes. “But I’ll be back soon. Lots of work to do.”

Italy laughed. Prussia stared at him, and then laughed shortly before pulling the dogs outside. “Don’t have too much fun without me!” he said, shutting the door behind him.

Germany sighed, and turned his attention back to his guest. “Have a seat, Italy. Would you like anything to drink? I have beer, coffee, and das Sprudelwasser.”

“Un caffè sarebbe fantastico” Italy replied gratefully. “If I wasn’t with you I would probably nod off into a siesta right now.”

“Would you like me to prepare a bed for you?”

“Oh, no no. Non ti preoccupare. I came to see you! Plus, lately I haven’t been sleeping very well
“Oh?” Germany asked, setting the coffee pot on the stove. “Why is that?”

Italy rested his hands on his cheeks and let out a puff of air. “It’s just such a scary world, Germania! I can’t stop thinking about that meeting that’s coming up. Why do America and Russia have to fight so much? It feels like one of them will make one little mistake and then we’ll all get dragged into world war three. I know it’s not very alpha of me, but I don’t like going to war.”

“I don’t think anybody does, Italia” Germany replied, feeling his eyes glaze over as he watched the air above the pot curl with little breaths of steam. “I know I certainly won’t be trying to any time soon.”

He poured out two cups and watched the liquid bubble like heated tar. He poured some milk, watching the color turn mild and creamy.

“Grazie” Italy said, taking his gratefully. “I really hope you’re not bothered by my lamentarsi. I suppose I got off easy compared to you and Japan. I’m just so glad I surrendered early. I didn’t really like going against you two afterwards but…”

“I am glad I lost” Germany said quickly. “At first it felt good, but then it hurt. That boss...was hurting me.” He put his coffee down, hearing the cup rattle against the saucer as suddenly, he had to try to stop his fingers from trembling. “I am glad it is over.”

Italy’s eyes went wide. His shoulders visibly hardened as he leaned forward and lowered his voice. “Wait, your boss. He never tried to—?”

Germany felt the air in the room electrify. His chest fluttered as he squirmed slightly in his seat, the thumping in his ears echoing the same mantra: *Take care of me. Take care of me.*

“No” he said, clearing his throat. “He didn’t know that detail about me. I hid it well.”

“But you can still take care of me.”

“Are you alright, Germany? You look warm.”

“All ist gut.” He got up and poured himself some cold water. “Just thirsty.”

Italy relaxed against the back of his chair. “I’m so glad you’re going to be going to that meeting. I’m no good at mediations. If I were Austria I would be so scared! But you’re good at keeping everybody in order, so it will be okay, right? I don’t know. I don’t think I’m going to go. I’d rather stay at home and eat myself into a heart attack. If the world is going to end, I would rather end it sitting in my cucina with a bowl of gelato.”

“Do not worry, Italien” Germany said, over his shoulder. “I will make sure everything is alright.”

“I’ll take care of you too.”

“Ahh, che sollievo” Italy sighed. “But you be careful too, Germany. È importante.”

“Ja. I will.” Germany felt the corners of his lips pulling slightly upward as he stood with his front to the counter and an empty glass between his hands. “Italien, do you want anything with your coffee?”

“Sure! What is there?”
Feeling another strange flurry in his chest, Germany brought over a little green bowl from the counter. “I picked these strawberries for you. It is strawberry season here so it is right if you try them now.”

He pushed the bowl into Italy’s hands and sat down across from him.

Italy smiled and took one happily. “Mm! Wow, your fruit is so good, Germany. Grazie!”

Germany nodded, watching as Italy’s teeth split the delicate skin and opened the berry’s pink innards to the world. Two bites, gone.

“Have as many as you would like,” he said, resting his cheek against his fist. Italy smiled and Germany felt something in his chest do a little leap.

And then he actually leapt as the door behind them burst open. “Gute Hunde, gute Hunde!” Prussia’s voice was, if possible, more loud and garish than normal. “You must be hungry after all that walking huh? I am too. Come on Welpen. Lunchie lunchie lunch!”

Germany closed his eyes as the sound of Prussia spilling kibble on the floor and the dogs barking and Prussia laughing filled the kitchen.

“Are those strawberries?” Prussia said, reaching over Italy’s head and grabbing a fistful. “Awesome! They’re totally in season right now too.”

“Si, they are delizioso” Italy said, setting the empty bowl back down on the table. “Thank you, Germany.”

Germany felt a flit of annoyance. It really wasn't proper for his brother to be so rude to a guest. “Italy, I think I would like to go to the living room. Do you want to join me?”

Italy agreed so they left the kitchen and headed for the sofa. Germany saw that some of the pillows were out of order (Danke, Bruder) and quickly rearranged them before allowing Italy to sit down. “There” he said “Das ist besser. Go ahead.”

Germany was just about to sit down next to him when Prussia waltzed into the room and plopped down in the center of the couch with a loud, satisfied sigh. Spreading his feet as far as they would go, he draped one arm along the sofa and burped loudly as he raised a beer to his mouth with the other. “Oh Jesus. Das ist gut.”

"Bruder!"

"What?"

Germany glared at him.

"Sit down, Kleiner. We can watch a Krimi."

"There is no room."

"Sure there is" Prussia said, shifting his knee so the other corner of the couch was slightly more free. "There’s also the chair and the floor" he said, reaching for the clicker. "You’re resourceful. The world is your oyster, West."

"You think I should sit on the floor?"

Prussia shrugged. "Berlitz does it." He gave the dog at his feet a sloppy chin massage. "Cuz he's
good boy, yes he is, yes he is."

"Fine" Germany said tersely. "I will sit next to Berlitz."

Circumnavigating the coffee table, he knelt down in front of the sofa, on Italy's side.

"Aw, Germany is good too!" Italy cooed, reaching forward and patting his shoulder.

Prussia stared down at Germany. His jaw twitched. Germany stared back up, feeling, somehow, that he had won something, despite the fact that he was on the floor, next to the dog, at Italy's feet.

The silence was stiff. And then Italy cut in. "I'll sit on the floor with Germany too!" he said enthusiastically. He slid off the sofa and landed beside Germany. "Now we can both sit like puppies" he giggled.

Prussia stood up. "Take my seat, West. I've been overcome with a burning desire to wretch into the toilet. Must've been the strawberries." He left the room. Berlitz jumped promptly onto the sofa.

Italy eyed the doorway cautiously. "I thought the strawberries were good" he said, sounding crestfallen.

"He's just hungover" Germany said, hoping to remediate the situation. "And impolite. Don't mind him."

"Is he angry with me?"

"Angry? No. What reason would he be angry about, Italien?"

Looking down at his socks, Italy shrugged his shoulders in a small, indirect way that made him look like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar. "Non lo so."

"Then do not worry."

"Okay, Germania. If you say so."

Germany felt a sour lurch at his brother for making Italy feel so unwelcome. "Do you want to move back onto the sofa, Italien?" Germany asked.

"Oh no" Italy said, his eyes crinkling at the corners as he smiled again. "I'll stay. I think your puppy likes it up there."

"Alright" Germany said, drawing his long legs up to his chest, to avoid them hitting the coffee table. "I'll stay here too."

Berlitz's tongue lolled happily as he rolled over on the center cushion, effectively coating it with his hair.

I can clean it later Germany thought to himself. Settling his chin over his knees, he let his eyes fix upon the dramatic crime show that his brother had left running. He watched as an alpha secret agent inserted a slender needle, dripping with poison, into a chocolate truffle, before placing the candy carefully back into the box.

"Oh Dio Mio" Italy whispered, sounding horrified. "He's ruining that food." Germany looked over and nearly chuckled at the wide eyed focus on Italy's face. Then, giving his head a little shake, he returned his attention to the screen.
He had missed what had happened after the needle, but somehow the secret agent had ended up passed out on his hotel bed. A rather voluptuous female omega crept into his room. She was big. She was rosy. She looked like she knew what she wanted.

Germany's skin felt warm as he watched the omega on the screen greedily pull at the secret agent's pants. _Prussia would have really liked this Krimi_ he thought to himself.

The omega was now presumably naked, and what was visible of her pink body jiggled as she crouched over the secret agent and began kissing him, whining slightly as he grunted through his drugged stupor.

_They make her look..._ Germany felt his eyebrows contract as he watched her get distracted by the box of chocolates. _They make her look..._

She licked her chops as she popped one into her mouth, and then returned her attention back to the drugged alpha.

..._like a pig._

His heart rate spiked as Italy gasped and clung suddenly onto his arm. "Oh no, Germania, she's going to get killed by the poison!"

Sure enough, now she was twitching helplessly on the bed, frothing at the mouth as the secret agent (now, miraculously awake) gazed down upon her, shaking his head in pity.

Italy looked upset, so Germany decided to change the channel. Something about the show had unsettled him as well.

"Ah, Grazi, Deutschland" Italy sighed, leaning slightly against Germany's arm as he flicked to another channel. "That show was too sad for me."

Germany tried to ignore the shiver that ran through his chest. "Me too" he said.

He had just settled on some miscellaneous cooking show when a stark ringing pierced the room. The telephone on the coffee table was trembling like a grounded wasp. Leaning forward, Germany picked it up.

"Hallo?"

The voice on the other side sounded annoyed and Italian. "Ay, potato bastardo, I'm looking for my idiota twin brother. Is he with you?"

"Yes" Germany answered cautiously. "Would you like to speak with him?"

"Of course I want to speak to him! Do you think I called to gossip with you?"

Saying nothing, Germany handed the phone off to Italy.

"Fratello?" Italy said, sounding hesitant. "Is something the matter?"

Germany heard the muffled sound of the voice on the other end.

"No" Italy said. "I don't know if I'll be home for dinner. I'm with Germany right now." Italy winced as the other side's exasperation with the obvious leaked through. "No" he said once. Then a line formed between his eyebrows. "No, we're in his living room right now."
Germany watched as Italy's face went from bemused to horrified. Instantly, he was speaking in
rapid Italian. "Oh Fratello. Non dirlo! Non mi piace. Non mi piace quando parli di lui in quel
modo." Italy's eye's bounced up to Germany, before he twisted away and hissed into the phone.

"Smettila. Perché sei così cattivo? Sì, sono un alfa...Smettila! Se essere un alfa significa che devo
farlo per lui, allora non voglio esserlo. Dovresti lavarti la bocca con l'acqua santa. Perché devi dire
cose così meschine per me?"

There was some aggressive Italian from the other side, and then the line went dead. Italy stared at
the floor, and then said a quiet "Ciao."

"Is something wrong?" Germany asked.

"Oh, haha. Ve.' Italy’s voice sounded deflated as he dropped the phone back onto the receiver. “It’s
nothing."

“What happened?” Germany pressed, worried about his friend's sudden drop in demeanor.

“Nada” Italy said, sniffling a little bit. “Nada nada. My fratello just was being mean."

Italy closed his eyes, wincing as tears pricked the corners. Germany’s chest ached, and he didn’t
know what to do about it. He fidgeted where he sat, feeling sweat collecting in the palms of his
hands as he hugged his knees tightly to his chest. Then, quickly, he leaned over and kissed Italy on
the cheek.

Italy’s expression changed as he looked at Germany with wide brown eyes and slightly parted lips.
Germany fidgeted and felt his face turn pink as he stared adamantly at his knees. Glancing
fleetingly up, he swallowed dryly and said “Ist das besser?”

Italy broke into a smile. “Molto.”

***

Later, Germany was sitting on the sofa with his reading glasses perched neatly on the bridge of his
nose. The clock ticked quietly behind him. Italy had left him by now, but the sweet aroma of the
anise cookies they had baked and eaten together that evening still lingered in the air. All was
peaceful. Until--

“West~watcha reading?”

“Oh‒what oh, nothing. Engineering” Germany stumbled, slapping his reading material flat onto his
lap and covering it with a hand.

“Oh ho ho” Prussia said, pouncing on the younger brother–

“East, let go of me. Stop, give it back!”

‒and wrangling the thing from his grasp. “Engineering, huh? Probably more like por–”

With one hand pushing flat his brother’s face and the other holding the pamphlet “Growing up!
Puberty for Omegas” at arm's length, Prussia let his excitement fall and become replaced by a
bemused frown. “Huh. So that's how it works. Never knew.”

Germany pawed away his brother’s hand and stood up irately. “Give it back, Bruder.”

Prussia flipped to the page Germany had been on. “‘Courtship, Breeding, and Sex,’ huh?”
Germany short circuited, and immediately sat back down, feeling as if his entire face had caught on fire.

His brother sat next to him. “Why’s that on your mind, West?”

“It’s not on my mind” Germany heard his mouth say, as he stared adamantly down at his lap. “I simply decided that I should educate myself on matters to do with myself. That’s the page I ended up on.”

“Well it’s not a bad idea” Prussia said, scanning the page he was on. “But you won’t be needing this.” Tearing out the section on courtship and sex, he tossed the pamphlet back to Germany and walked out of the room.

Germany stared, shellshocked, at some miscellaneous spot on the floor. Then he got up and rushed after his brother, feeling clumsy and disjointed as he gripped the next doorway and got to the kitchen, just in time to watch his brother put a lighter up to the corner of the paper, and drop the ashy curls into the bin.

He swallowed dryly. “That was a government issued pamphlet.”

“And now it’s a government issued pile of dust. Tada! Magic.”

“You did not have to burn it.”

“West, I’m not going to let you read some government issued slop about how to get yourself fucked.”

“You are not going to ‘let’ me? East, you are overstepping your boundaries.”

“Why do you need a pamphlet to tell you about sex anyways?” Prussia said, rolling his eyes as he grabbed an apple from the counter and chomped into it. “Let me just tell you.” Talking with his mouth full, he leaned against the table and said “The omega (that’s you) lays on his back and opens his legs so some dashing alpha can come along and stick his stick in there. Said alpha proceeds to stick the stick in his hole so as to knot him and fuck him and make him scream until said alpha is very well good and finished; then said omega spends the rest of his life on his back, trading off between squeezing out offspring and opening his legs to get fucked again.” He tossed the apple core into the trash. “Does that sound good to you, West? Is that something you want to do?”

The memory of three alphas holding his arms down and his legs apart as he squirmed and sputtered for air flashed across Germany’s mind. He stood rigidly in the doorway, with his fists balled up at his sides. “No” He said finally. “No it is not.”

“That’s more like the brother I know. Say, you want to go to the gym with me? There’s a right and a wrong answer, you know.”

Germany muttered something about militarisation.

"Oh come on West. No one's going to care if you do a few chin ups. You've been looking softer lately." Prussia gave a snort of amusement. "What? Are you trying to look more like an omega now? C'mon. Go get your stuff."

Germany moved slowly into his bedroom to change. As he peeled away the sweater he had been wearing, his eyes caught on the mirror, and he saw himself naked from the waist up.

He looked at himself. His shoulders were broad, his eyes sharp and his frame strong. For a fleeting
moment, he allowed his shoulders to cave forward, causing his frame to look smaller, rounder. As his eyes focused on that one small change, he felt a strange sensation, almost as though a little bird in his chest were shivering its wings, caught in indecision over whether it wanted to fly down or up. He noticed then, too, the slight broadness of his hips, the plumpness of his thighs, and the softness of his skin.

And then he saw the rest of his body, looking big and awkward and hunched. *Ridiculous.* But even as he squared his shoulders and set his jaw, his hand wandered to his abdomen--just above his pelvis, where the body parts that he had just been reading about, the equipment that actually made him an omega, resided. His fingers bent harshly, and his nails left angry tracks of pink across his skin. A hot bead of water rolled down his cheek.

Gritting his teeth, he closed his eyes and hated himself for crying, because it felt like the ultimate proof.

Chapter End Notes

Translations:

German:

das Miststück: that jerk
Das ist mein Bruder: That's my brother
Ist mir egal: I don't care
Ja: Yes/yeah
Nien: no
Shiesse: shit
Genug: enough
Das ist gut: That's good
Das ist nicht richtig: That is not right
Das ist richtig: That is right
Gott: God
Nein. Ich (cancel) nicht: No. I am not canceling ("cancel" is in english)
das ist nicht wichtig: that isn't important
Sehr draufgängerisch: very reckless/cool/dashing
das Sprudelwasser: sparkling water
Alle ist gut: Everything is good
Gute Hunde: good dogs
Welpen: puppies
Danke Bruder: Thanks, Brother
Das ist besser: that is better
Oh Jesus. Das ist gut: Oh Jesus. That is good.
Kleiner: Little one
Krimi: Crime show (can be murder mystery, thriller, etc)
Ist das besser? Is that better?

Italian:

Un caffè sarebbe fantastico: a coffee would be fantastic
Non ti preoccupare: don't worry about it
lamentarsi: complaining
Ah, che sollievo: ah, what a relief
È importante: it's important
Si (they are) delizioso: yes, (they are) delicious
Non lo so: I don't know
Oh Dio Mio: Oh my God
Grazi, Deutschland: Thank you(Italian), Germany (German)
Fratello: Brother
Non dirlo! Non mi piace. Non mi piace quando parli di lui in quel modo: Don't say that! I don't like it. I don't like it when you talk about him in that way.
Smettila. Perché sei così cattivo? Sì, sono un alfa...Smettila! Se essere un alfa significa che devo farlo per lui, allora non voglio esserlo. Dovresti lavarti la bocca con l'acqua santa. Perché devi dire cose così meschine per me?: Stop it. Why are you so mean?
Yes, I am an alpha...Stop it! If being an alpha means that I have to do that to him, then I don't want to be one. You should wash your mouth out with holy water. Why do you have to say such mean things to me?
Ciao: bye
Nada: Nothing
Molto: very much

Note: In this story, Italy and Germany interchangeably use the Italian, German, and English versions of each other's names.
7 AM, Central European Daylight Time. Germany got back from the park, sweat crawling down his neck and biting darkly into the edges of his stark black tank top.

Holding his shoulders staunchly, he moved to the kitchen and downed an entire glass of water in about four seconds. He panted a little bit, and then refilled his cup. Still thirsty.

“Guten Morg—” Yawning, Prussia wandered into the kitchen, hair mussed on one side and a pair of very old pajamas sagging loose from his shoulders. “Yikes” he said, interrupting himself. “Bruder, did you even go to sleep?”

“Ja” Germany affirmed. “And then I woke early to exercise.”

“Nice” Prussia said, grabbing some bread and plopping into the nearest chair. “You should make sure to get some sleep though. Your eyes are nearly as red as mine.”

“I plan to go to bed at approximately 9:20 pm. That will allow me time to get back from the park and take a secondary shower.”

“You’re going again later?”

“Ja. I do not have any meetings today, so I have time.”

“What are you doing in between?”

“In the morning, whatever I want. In the afternoon, errands.”

“Oh, cool” Prussia said, stuffing the last piece of bread into his mouth. “We’re out of bread.”

“I noticed.”

Prussia swallowed thickly. “Do you want me to go with you? I mean, I know you’ll probably be okay if it’s just the supermarket or whatever. But if you’re nervous about—”

“I have no need to be nervous, East. I can take care of myself.”

“Thatta boy” Prussia said, grinning proudly. “Sometimes you nearly convince me that you’re not an omega after all. Go get’em, tiger.”

Germany gave his older brother a brief smile, feeling something between uncomfortable and encouraged. He had decided to forgive Prussia for destroying his pamphlet the other day. After their discussion, he had come to the realization that he didn’t want to learn about stuff like that anyways.

He left the kitchen to go take that shower. No more than three minutes, since washing again later meant using extra water. And so he stood under the stream, keeping his eyes shut against the suds in his hair as he hastily rubbed the soap out of his skin. *Scrub, rinse, repeat.* Being quick also had the benefit of keeping him from looking at, touching, or thinking about his body any more than
necessary.

After that Germany still had time to kill before the afternoon, so he decided to spend it in his living room with a book in his lap. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. This time, the book really was about engineering.

*The chief components of a three cylinder engine include…*

As time passed, he found himself becoming increasingly interested with his surroundings. It wasn’t that what he was reading was boring to him, it was just that…

...that pillow *really* looked like it needed to be fluffed. He picked it up and felt a wave of satisfaction as his fingertips pressed into the soft fabric.

And then he froze, and tossed the pillow back onto the sofa.

*Weak combustion may occur if the piston rings become worn down over time. Leaking due to this primary leads to…*

Germany closed the book. He sat for a moment, eyes raking around the room as he began to sweat and tap his leg fretfully.

He got up. Feeling restless, he wandered down the hallway, in search of something else to do. He popped his head into his room and gave it a careful scan. The organization was impeccable, since at 5 AM, before he had set out to go to the park, he had made his bed, organized his desk, and dusted all undusted surfaces.

Turning away, he wandered back down the hall, and found himself in Prussia's room.

Everything there was orderly too: clothing folded, desk clear, floor swept. But on the bed, the blanket was crinkled. Prussia must have sat down again after he had made it.

In a wink Germany was there, plucking at the corners of the sheets, snapping the blanket back over the top, and making sure the pillows were all correctly fluffed. It felt so good. So good. So g—

"West?"

“I saw a spider” Germany blurted, snapping back up ridgedly.

Prussia leaned against the inside of the doorway, eyes falling first to Germany’s hands, clasped tightly in front of his belly. “On the inside of my pillow?”

“After I removed it, I noticed that your pillow was at an unoptimized density. You'll hurt your neck sleeping that way.”

Germany anxiously tried to make something of Prussia’s expression. It had the hardness of a coach looking at his most disappointing player, and the softness of a father looking at his most precious daughter. “Thanks for fixing it, then.” Prussia said gently.

Germany lowered his eyes and tried to ignore the impulse to shut himself into the nearest closet and hide until death.

"Bitte schön" he mumbled, exiting quickly.
Deciding that he needed to get out of the house, Germany put on his sneakers and went out to check the mail.

This was definitely what he needed. Germany breathed in deeply. The air smelled particularly good that day. A gentle breeze cooled him as he sat on the front porch and went through the pile of papers. Junk, bill, junk, magazine—Germany cocked his head as he tried to figure out what was going on on the front cover, when he realized it was one of his brother’s magazines and so quickly put it at the bottom of the pile. Junk, another bill, and some anti-capitalist flyer that had probably been put out by one of East’s friends, junk…

“Hello, Germany!”

Germany jumped, all the mail exploding out of his grasp and sliding onto the first step.

“Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to startle you” Italy said, beginning to stoop to help him pick up the papers. Germany crouched forward and gathered it all quickly, ignoring the friendly hand that extended next to help him up.

“Italy, what are you doing here?” Germany asked, clutching the mail and feeling as though a drum were being flung against the inside of his chest.

Italy smiled brightly. "I had some free time so I decided to come over and see you”

"I...I am glad" Germany said, wondering how he hadn’t noticed the red Ferrari pulled up along the streetside. "But unfortunately I must do errands today, so I won't be available to socialize."

"Errands? I'll go with you!"

"A-Are you sure?" Germany stuttered, feeling his pulse quicken as Italy hooked an arm around his elbow and smiled in that ditzy-looking way. "It's going to be very boring."

"Not if we are together, Germania. Where do we have to go first?"

And so Germany ended up bringing Italy to the supermarket with him.

Germany was busy trying to choose out a good loaf of bread when Italy peeled away from him, claiming that he had seen something good in the alcohol aisle. "I'm going to get some wine, in case we want it for later" Italy said happily. "I'm glad so many of your markets have a lot of my food in them. It makes me feel at home."

While Italy was gone, Germany’s eyes glazed over the bread selection, and he tried to think about how he was going to handle the next errand, which involved going to the drugstore and buying some things he would rather not have anybody he knew see him buy.

He was still contemplating the issue as they walked out of the supermarket, and crossed the street to the nearest drugstore. Before they entered, however, he took a look through the glass and cursed.

“Schiesse” Germany hissed, slouching slightly away from the store window. The clerk on shift was one he knew to be a very nosy alpha. The first time Germany had had to go out and buy any omega related hygienic products, the clerk had taken a deep whiff of the air and grinned, licking his lips unsettlingly.

“What’s wrong, Germany?” Italy asked obliviously.

Germany straightened his back and cleared his throat. “It’s nothing. I am fine.”
They went into the store together, Germany brainstorming wildly to try to come up with some way to get Italy away from him so that he could slip off into the aisle labeled “Omega Hygiene” and grab what he needed before Italy saw. It wasn’t that he thought his friend would give him a hard time about it if he did see, but he just didn’t want to let that happen. The thought of it was too embarrassing. “Italy” he said, coming up with a cunning idea, “could you do a task for me?”

“Sure Germany, as long as it doesn’t involve witchcraft, war, or my economy.”

“I need to get a candle for the bathroom” he invented. “Something fragrant and sweet, but not overwhelmingly so. Fruity scents are okay, but not if they are too tangy or artificial smelling. I need you to go to the third aisle and sniff every single one to decide what is best. Natural waxes are preferred.”

“Aye aye, Captain!” Italy said, giving a normal, historically sensitive salute, and then skipping off to the candle isle.

Germany let out a sigh of relief. Moving quickly and quietly, he collected everything he needed from the omega isle and sped to isle 1, so that he could edge to the end of it and spy on the register.

Still the same clerk. He sighed, and decided he would just have to go through with it. Better to get the things in a bag before Italy came back. Marching up to the counter, he stared straight ahead and tried to ignore the immediate change he could smell in the air.

The alpha broke into an oily grin. “There’s my favorite customer again. You were gone so long I was starting to think someone had gone and eaten you up when I wasn’t looking.”

Germany looked down upon the shorter individual briefly, before clearing his throat and saying nothing.

“Let’s see what we have here today” the clerk said with relish. He picked up the first of Germany’s items. “Ooh, this is a popular brand,” he said, eyes flicking up to Germany, who kept his gaze stalwartly forward. “Keeps things from slipping out when they’re not supposed to, right? It’s alright, sweetheart. I understand. Sometimes you just get so excited and you can’t hold it all in. But why don’t leave this out and just let it drip? I wouldn’t mind.” There was a beep as he finally wrung it in.

Germany’s jaw clicked, and he felt every muscle in his body tense as the alpha’s scent became stronger. “And this one” the clerk said, holding up the next item. “Important for maintenance. Gets right up there to the very deepest corners. Nobody wants to taste an omega who hasn’t used one of these before.”

Beep.

“Well, maybe I wouldn’t mind so much. A little bite never hurt my tongue before.”

Germany felt so disgusted that he nearly wanted to vomit. Most of the feeling was directed at the alpha’s behavior. Some of it was from the thought of somebody actually tasting the horrible omega body fluids that he always tried his best to hide the existence of.

"And number three" the clerk announced. "A new toy, just for you and your hungry little hole."

At that Germany finally bowed his head and closed his eyes. His face was burning from humiliation. He had needed to get a new one, because his dog had slipped by him and gotten hold of his old one while he had been cleaning the week before. As a rule of thumb, he only used those sorts of things during his heat. But lately he had been feeling an increase in strange, out-of-place
bouts of need—one of which had left him panting and bleeding on the bathroom floor, because he had hurt himself using his fingers, one of which had a chipped nail at the time.

"Aw, don't be ashamed, sweetheart. You can't help it, what your body craves. But what I don't understand is why you don't just find yourself a real alpha. It's not like there isn't anybody up for the job." The clerk grinned, showing off a pearly pair of canines. "You know, the job of fucking you senseless."

"Scusami, what was that?" A scented candle was thunked heavily onto the counter. Italy was standing there, his mouth hanging half open as he stared at the clerk with wide, incredulous eyes. "What a horrible way to talk to somebody!" Italy said, beginning to get teary-eyed as he pointed at the clerk scoldingly. "Didn't your mother ever teach you anything about being nice? You should be ashamed! Disgustoso. You think you're so tough and scary, huh? Well I have news for you, Signore, he could beat you up anytime if he really wanted, and he's my best friend, so I would be watching from the side and cheering the entire time!"

"What are you, some kind of half-baked alpha?" The clerk spat back.

Italy's barely threatening appearance did not change. But his scent did. Germany's hair stood on end. "You leave him alone" Italy growled. "Or I'll make sure this shop never sells a single Italian product for the rest of its life."

He angrily slapped his money on the counter, grabbed the scented candle, and then linked his elbow into Germany's, dragging them both out of the shop.

As soon as they got on the other side of the door, Germany shook his arm out of Italy's grasp and stepped away, covering his face as he tried to hide his shame.

"Germany, it's okay to cry, don't worry about--"

"I'm not crying" Germany said, wiping his hand furiously against his face, as he cringed away from Italy's concerned touch. "And I didn't need your help. I don't need anyone's help."

"I-I'm sorry, Germania. I just hated seeing that man talk to you like that. I wanted to take care of you."

_Take care of me._ Germany felt as if the burning sensation in his face and eyes had spread throughout his entire body. "I think I have to go home now." He said, suddenly feeling very anxious for another reason.

"Okay, I'll drive" Italy said quickly. They drove down the autobahn at about a hundred kilometers an hour, the entire way. When they got to Germany's house, Germany waved Italy goodbye and rushed in without another word. As soon as he got inside, he shut himself into the bathroom and let out a repressed gasp. His thighs hit the floor and he fished feverishly through the bag of items he had just purchased.

His back peeled from the floor each time he pushed the object into himself. He tried to block out the face that popped into his head each time he did it, but it was next to impossible. _Above me, on top of me, inside me…_

He snarled like an angry cat as disgust with himself broke through.

_I shouldn't want this. I shouldn't want this._

He whimpered like a beaten dog as he pulled the thing out and felt slick run down his skin and onto
the floor. *You can't help it, what your body craves…*

...*You should be ashamed.*

Chapter End Notes

Translations

*Guten Morg–* : Good morn–
Bitte schön: You're welcome (Bitte can also be used for "please")
Schiesse: Shit
Germany trudged into the kitchen, shoulders slumped and dark shadows of exhaustion under his eyes. He had failed to wake up early that morning. His night had been warm and restless—and when he had cracked the window, the unusually pleasant smelling breeze had only made him feel hotter.

“Schiesse” Prussia said, looking up from his newspaper to ogle his brother. “You really need to get more sleep, Bruder.”

“I tried” Germany snapped. “But it was too warm last night. You didn’t leave the boiler running, did you? That’s a huge waste of money and energy, you know.”

“I didn’t do anything!” Prussia said, putting his hands up in a gesture of innocence. “Maybe you’re just coming down with something. It would make sense; the economy isn’t exactly dazzling at the moment.”

“I’m fine.” Germany growled, leaning against the counter as he sluggishly reached for some breakfast items. “And my economy is too.”

“Okay” Prussia said, apparently deciding that it was better to just leave the topic alone for now. “Never mind then. Do you have any plans for the day? Any errands to do with any of your little friends?”

Germany glowered down at the jar of marmalade, and wondered what his brother meant to suggest by his skeptical inflection on the word “errands.”

“I can’t do any errands. It’s Sunday.”

“So you’re not doing anything with Italy, huh?”

“Why would I be doing something with Italy?”

“Because you’re friends.”

“He left yesterday evening.”

“No he didn’t” Prussia said. “He slept in his car, next to our house, the entire night.”

Germany dropped the jar of marmalade on the floor.

“I know” Prussia continued, eyeing the mess as Germany swore and searched for something to pick up the broken glass. “I was as riled as you are. When I went out to confront him about it, he woke up, screamed something about needing to give you your scented candle, and then split faster than an American after an ice cream truck. There’s still tire tracks burnt onto the sidewalk. Hey, don’t throw out the marmalade, it’s still good.”

Germany drew up a chair and pressed his face into his hands, wishing he could crawl back into bed and reset his entire day.

“Hey.” Prussia leaned forward and took on a low, serious tone. “If he’s following you around, or giving you some sort of hard time, you know that I’ll go and—”
“He’s not giving me a hard time!” Germany burst out, “He just needs to give me my scented candle, okay?”

“No. It was just an errand. And I still need to pay him back.” Germany groaned as he got up from his seat. “I’ll be back later. He’s probably driving around in circles somewhere, panicking about one of us ripping his head off if he comes back to our house.”

“Well, it’s not an invalid fear” Prussia growled under his breath.

Germany, completely exhausted with it all, fixed his brother with an imploring look. “Can you please just...take a day trip? Bring the dogs with you. Go hiking. All I want to do is find Italy, pay him back for the favor, and have the rest of the day for myself. I really need it, East. I haven’t been feeling myself lately.”

Prussia examined him for a moment, and then sighed, appearing to lose his resolve. “Alright. I’ll go find something to do. But don’t let your guard down. He may be Italy, but he’s still–”

“–an alpha. Yes, I know.”

“Don’t forget it.”

“I won’t.”

"West, remember" Prussia warned, "You've got that important meeting coming up. The last thing you need is to smell like you've been dominated."

"Yes, Brother” Germany sighed, nodding his head obediently.

Germany hadn’t considered that his request would require his brother to take the car. And so he ended up spending a considerable chunk of his Sunday wandering around, on foot, in search of a red Ferrari. It’s probably better this way he thought to himself, as he passed another plot of barley grass, and eyed a butterfly that fluttered peacefully past him out of the greenery. Otherwise he’ll get spooked and speed off again. Italy really could be quite flighty. Spineless, more like. But at the same time…

Germany shook his head. It really didn’t matter to him whether Italy was brave or not. They weren’t war allies or enemies any more. They were just friends.

Germany walked until he reached the center of town. He was just beginning to become pessimistic about his odds when he saw it, glinting in the sun like a shoe shined apple. Italy had parked outside a church.

Germany’s footsteps echoed as he entered. The church was mostly empty, except for a few altar servers setting up for the next mass, and the occasional old person hunched over a pew. And then there was him.

“Italy.”

“This is a place of refuge!” Italy squeaked, shielding his face as if he expected a blow.

Germany slid into the bench beside him. “Italy, I’m not going to hit you.”
“Oh, Germany” he sighed, letting his hand fall. “I thought at first you were your brother and you had tracked me down to beat the living cannoli filling out of me.”

“Listen, Italy, I’m sorry about that, he really doesn’t mean any ill will. I told him about the candle and he agreed to leave you alone. And I’m here to pay you back.”

Italy pushed away Germany’s money. "Ah, no, I can’t accept a payment in the house of God, the new Pope told me that apparently we weren’t supposed to be doing that the whole time! Can you believe that?"

“Right” Germany sighed, putting his wallet away. “Do you think I could find you after the mass and–”

“Germany, sh! It’s about to start!”

Germany shut his mouth and looked up to the altar, were a man in robes was beginning to speak. The smell of the churchy incense mixed with the musky scent of an aged alpha. The priest was an alpha, of course. They almost always were, especially in Catholic churches. “Good evening, brothers and sisters, today we gather to….

And so he ended up staying for Mass.

After an hour of sitting, standing, kneeling, sitting, standing, and sitting again, the deep, dampered sound of the bell wrung out, and Italy and Germany walked out of the church together.

As they headed toward the red Ferrari, Italy beamed. “I feel so much better now, Germany. As if all of my sins have been washed away. Now we can enjoy the rest of our Sunday with each other.”

Germany paused. He had been planning to pay for the candle and then send Italy on his merry way.

Italy reached into the passenger seat and took out a soft yellow colored object. “Here, Germany. I hope you like it. The scent made me think of you.”

Germany took it and swallowed thickly. *Honey and wildflower.*

Germany felt bad. It seemed impolite to send Italy away, after he had gone through all that trouble to deliver a candle Germany hadn’t even really needed in the first place. “Do you want to know how it smells when it is lit?” he asked, for some reason, dropping his eyes shyly.

Italy turned his head slightly to the side, like a dog assessing a curious situation. “Are you inviting me over your house, Germany?”

Germany realized that this was the very opposite of what his brother would have trusted him to do when left alone with the house. “Ja” he said, almost defiantly. “My brother is gone, so we can do whatever we want.” *Afterall, it’s my house too.*

Italy looked relieved. “Then sure. I’d love to see how it smells when it is lit.”

Italy got into the driver’s seat and Germany sat beside him. “Did you really walk all the way here?” Italy asked as they started off.

“Ja” Germany said, watching the scenery fly by as Italy took a quick turn down a backroad that went by the park. “Watch the speed limit. There are children around here. And dogs. And ducklings.”
Italy massaged the brake pedal and made an amused and affectionate looking smile. “Yes Sir.”

“What is it?” Germany asked, frowning, “Why are you making that face?”

“Oh, no reason” Italy said. “It’s just–sometimes I wonder how on earth nobody realized you were an omega sooner.”

“I’m just advising you to follow the rules.”

Italy didn’t retort, but pointed at something in the park. “Deutschland! That girl is waving at you.” Germany saw the one with the twisty pigtails, perched on top of the monkey bars, alone. Not sure why she seemed to have latched onto him as a friend, but not wanting to disappoint a child of his nation, he waved back.

“Do you know her?” Italy asked.

“Not personally. I recognize her.”

Italy grinned cockily. “Maybe it’s my car then. Girls love flashy cars.”

“Italy, she is hardly ten.”

“And children especially love flashy cars.”

“I think you love flashy cars the most.”

Italy shrugged, still looking satisfied with himself. Germany stared out the window, his mind reverting back to what Italy had said. Do I actually seem to him like an omega? How? Was he supposed to feel insulted? The thing was, he didn’t. He was confused. That sort of comment had so far only been said to him with a taunt, a sigh, or a predatory grin. He stared down at the candle in his lap and winced, thinking about the clerk at the drugstore.

Italy glanced to him. “Duetschland, there aren’t any speed limits on the autobahn, right?”

“Nein” he answered, somewhat listlessly. “There are not.”

“Bene” Italy said, eyes sparkling as he turned onto the next exit. “Buckle up.”

Germany argued as he felt the rumble of the engine kicking into top gear. “Italy, of course I’m buckled, it’s one of the most important safety precautions when one is in a motorized vehicle, and just because you can go as fast as you want doesn’t necessarily mean that you should make it a point to–”

“What was that, Germany?” Italy shouted, grinning in his direction. “I can’t hear you over the wind in my ears!”

“Keep your eyes on the road, not me, you dummkopf!”

“Aye aye, Captain!”

Germany shook his head, thankful that the road was mostly empty. Then he felt a thrill rise up in his chest as Italy completely floored it, and the flowers and cropland and windmills and sky became a blur of green, blue, and sunshine. As he gripped the seat for dear life, his ungelled hair whipped around his face in a tangled blonde halo, and he remembered that he hadn’t even brushed his teeth before rushing out of the house that day, but he smiled anyways because nobody but perhaps Italy could see him right now, and he couldn’t help it; it felt like he was flying.
When Italy took the next exit, they were hardly 5 minutes away from home. As they trundled down the road at a relatively sane pace, Germany saw the drive come into view and he sighed with relief. *Still empty.*

Italy giggled as they went to the door. "Germany, I like your hair. It looks good that way."

*Does he really think so?* Germany swatted the butterflies in his stomach, shaking his head as he caught his reflection in the kitchen window. "Ridiculous" he said. "I'm a mess right now. Which reminds me, I still need to brush my teeth. If you will excuse me, I will be heading to the bathroom. You are free to make yourself at home."

Germany figured he might as well wash his face and fix his hair while he was at it. By the time he came back to the kitchen, Italy was cooking.

"Hello Germany! I decided to make lunch because it's lunchtime. Well, maybe breakfast for you, since you left in such a hurry this morning."

Germany's hand wandered unconsciously to a rag, so that he could wipe up the scraps of grated cheese he could already see dusting the countertop. But he was hungry, and Italy’s food was always amazing. “Alright, Italia. Let me know if you need any help.”

“Do you have any lemons?”

“Ja.”

“And a bowl?”

“Ja.”

After handing off the fruit, Germany looked in the cabinet and felt a jarring sense of disorder. The plates were stacked completely incorrectly (if color and sheen had any weight in the matter), and the gap between them and the cups was completely different from the gap between the cups and the bowls, and he thought he noticed a piece of dust so it seemed quite correct to take the rag and–

He realized too late that he was nesting, and froze, glancing guiltily in Italy’s direction.

Italy continued humming as he zested the lemon and smiled vacantly.

Germany quietly handed over the bowl, and then felt his hand creep slowly back towards the cabinet. Italy continued to hum.

And so, as Italy cooked, Germany spent the time puttering around the kitchen, arranging the dishes, smoothing out the table cloth, and polishing the countertops, making sure everything nice and neat and perfect for lunchtime.

“Wow Germany” Italy said as he turned from the stovetop with his finished product. Germany dropped his eyes to the table cloth and cringed like a dog about to be shamed with a rolled up newspaper. “The kitchen looks so good!” Italy continued. "You already finished the hardest part of cooking. Grazie!"

Germany's expression cleared, and he felt his lips curve--ever so slightly--upward. He *had* done a good job, he thought to himself.

Afterwords, they went to the living room with full bellies and nothing to do but the thing they had met up for in the first place. Italy lit the candle and sat next to Germany, looking intensely relaxed.
and satisfied. “This is so nice, Germany. I love it when we’re not at war. It feels like we can eat and sleep and do everything human beings are supposed to do.”

Germany decided to gloss over the questionability of whether he and Italy counted as bone fide humans, and instead said, “But Italy, that’s what you used to do when we were at war too.”

“Exactamente. Now I can do it all without being bothered. And you can do it too. Just think relaxing thoughts.”

Germany inhaled the gentle, summery scent that was slowly filling the living room. He let his body relax against the sofa. “I suppose you’re right. I guess we should enjoy it before America and Russia blow us all up.”

Italy covered his ears and groaned. “Is that your version of relaxing, Germany? Don’t even say such a thing, per favore. Besides, it’ll be alright. You’ll be there. You can handle them.”

Yeah, right. “Yeah” he said. “I suppose you’re right.”

“Oh! You know what I just remembered?” Italy said, springing from the sofa suddenly. “I still have that wine in the back of my car! What better way to toast the end of the world than that?”

“I thought you weren’t expecting the end of the world” Germany called after him, as the door swung shut behind.

Italy came back in a blink, fished around in the kitchen for a moment, and then shuffled into the living room, looking giddy as he sat next to Germany with two glasses of drink, and the bottle in between them. “Saluti!” he said, clinking his cup against Germany’s.

“Prost” Germany relented, taking a sip. He was normally a beer guy, but this was excellent wine; Italy had chosen it, after all.

They sat together, some of the time talking and some of the time not, watching as the candle began to hold more liquid and the bottle began to hold less. Eventually Italy put his glass down and said, “Germany, remember the time we got stranded on the beach together?”

Germany nodded, remembering it well. “You made a very good sand sculpture. I was impressed.”

“I impressed you?”

“I could not have done it.”

Italy gave a nostalgic sigh. “I know that we were in a bit of a pinch at the time, but that was such a fun day, Germany. I really enjoyed it.”

"Ja" Germany admitted, finishing off his drink. "I actually did as well."

Italy refilled his glass, and then Germany's. “Do you remember how we used to sunbathe together? That was fun too.”

“Ja” Germany said, remembering how Japan had been shocked at his and Italy’s display of casual nudity. He remembered his first time glancing over Italy’s body, getting the faint whiff of his scent, and feeling reassured by its mildness: *Maybe I’m like him. Maybe I’m just an alpha with a faint scent too. Maybe that’s why nobody can tell yet.* Feeling heavy, he tipped his head back against the sofa and closed his eyes.
“Are you drunk, Germany?”

“No” Germany said, leaving his eyes closed. “Just only a small amount tired.” He did feel pretty warm though. Maybe it was because he was more accustomed to drinking beer than wine. Then he felt a weight nestle against his arm and his eyes split open.

Italy sighed as he leaned against Germany. "Really? Because I think I might be a little drunk. Maybe it's because you're so strong, Germany. Maybe that's why."

At that, Germany felt a two pronged swell of anxiety arise in his chest. *Is he...is he flirting with—? No, there must be something wrong with me. But what if...?* He decided to address the other prong first. “Wait. Italy, if you’re drunk, how are you going to drive yourself home?”

Italy hiccuped. “I can drive, is not a problema Germania. If I just go faster then I’ll be home sooner and I’ll be less likely to get in any trouble.”

Germany shook his head. “I don’t think das ist a good idea, Italien. I think you shouldn’t drive.”

“Ahh Germania, there are probably hundreds of other people out there driving around drunk right now. How are they going to notice me in all of that? You worry too much.”

“Italy, nein” Germany said, standing up with all the intention of insisting he drive Italy home instead. The sudden motion made his head spin, and he nearly lost his balance and tripped over the coffee table.

Maybe he was more drunk than he had thought.

“Oh, it’s okay Germany, I’ll just get a taxi. I have enough pasta to pay them back.”

“No, they don’t like it when you pay them that way, Italy. I feel like I am telling you this all of the--hic--time.”

And then, as if fate had called to resolve their argument, the phone rang.

“Hallo?” Germany answered, giving his head a much needed shake.

“West, thedogsandSpainandI are over at France’s place, an’ he’s like super loaded with wine a lot so I think I’m gonna spendthenight here--No, Berlitz, that’s mine--cuz it’s probably not an awesomeidea for me to drive whenI’m so awesomely turned UP, and no offense but you’re kindofastickinthemud when you’re sober so I thinkthe party is here. Jus’ wannid to leyou know.”

“Alright, Bruder” he said, suppressing another hiccup. “Danke for letting me know.”

“Bi-” there was a belch “-tte schon. But hey before I go did youeverget tha’ thing from Italy?”

“The candle? Yes, I have it.”

“Okay, das ist gut. Just remember that--no, FRANCE, he is not with Italy, he jus’ needed him to give him a scented candle for--no it is not code for anything, Monsieur, get your mind out of the gutter. West, jus’ member to lockallthedooors before you go to sleep. Kay?”

Germany sighed in exasperation. “Yes, Brother.”

“HeyI’m serious, sometimes you forget the back and it drives me nuts.”

“That was one time when I was a child.”
“Newsflash: you’re still a baby, baby boy. And two times, West. It was two times. If you need a spare key, it’s under the porch, but you know that. Anyways, that’s it. Tschüss! Gute Nacht! Or as this guy would say, lèche moi le cul!”

Germany hung up to the sound of a faint *Honhonhon* and his brother sounding cocky about his great pronunciation of something Germany was pretty sure did not mean “Good night” in French.

“Was that your big brother, Germany?”

“Ja” Germany affirmed. “And don’t worry Italy, you can stay here. He’s not coming home tonight, and he’s probably going to be sleeping late tomorrow.”

“Ah, what a relief, grazie mille. I didn’t actually think it was a very great idea to get in the car.”

Germany sat back, relieved that he didn’t have to worry about any car accidents that night. “Glad to know you have some spark of common sense left in there” he mumbled, laying his head against the sofa again. He had forgotten in the moment what the other prong of his two pronged anxiety was. Oh well. What was the point in looking for more worries?

Italy giggled. “Your face gets so pink when you drink alcohol, Germany. You look like you’re blushing.”

At that, Germany felt the heat prickle up his skin in an actual blush.

He felt the cushion move as Italy shifted closer. “Wow, now it looks like you’re blushing for real.”

Germany’s hand jerked to the TV remote. “Let’s see if there’s a Krimi” he said quickly. There wasn’t. He kept his eyes glued on the intensely boring local news cast that was rolling along on the screen, and felt his pulse slow down as Italy relaxed again against his end of the sofa.

Germany felt himself become less tense the longer he sat there. Maybe it was because he was with Italy, one of his closest friends and allies. Maybe it was because of the wine. They sat in silence for a while, and Germany closed his eyes. After all, he had barely gotten any sleep the night before. He knew better than to sleep though. He still had to lock the doors for the night. That didn’t mean he couldn’t rest though.

After another while of time, Germany was resting with his chin against his shoulder and his hands folded neatly over his belly.

“Germany, do you remember when we became friends?”

Germany opened his eyes and saw Italy sitting there, his brown hair highlighted to an almost reddish color as he stared at the candle, somewhere between wide awake and sleepily entranced. Germany nodded and felt a small, somewhat shy smile take his face. “That was the first time I ever made a friend” he admitted, rubbing out the cramp in the back of his neck.

“Do you remember how you found me in that box in the woods?”

“Ja. I was worried I was going to have to fight the great descendant of the Roman Empire.” Germany remembered puzzling over the patheticness of Italy, and then believing for one terrifying moment that he had been tricked, that the harmlessness was a ploy, and that Italy really had sinister intentions. Even though he didn’t know about himself back then, the scent of an alpha always would put him on edge.

“But then it was just me.” Italy said.
“You were terrified.”

“Of course I was!” Italy said, scooching himself to a more upright sitting position. "Some tough scary stranger with a gun had found me all alone in the middle of the woods! But then…” his eyes contained a faint imprint of candle’s flame as he faced Germany and gave him a soft, genuine smile. “It was just you.”

Germany felt his breath catch as he met eyes with Italy and was hit by the full force of his gentle expression. Feeling a shiver in his chest, Germany forced himself to look away from Italy and at the candle instead. It felt as if that little stub of wax had spread its fire to the walls. He could sense Italy's eyes on him.

Italy moved closer. "I really like spending time with you, Germany."

Germany stood up. "I-I think I will step outside for a moment. My brother's spare key is under the porch."

Germany felt a great wash of cool night air as he stepped outside onto the back porch. Breathing out tensely, he leaned his forearms against the railing and rested his forehead against his wrists. His face was radiating warmth like a stone in a sauna.

After not too long, he heard the door open behind him. "Are you alright, Germany?"

"Yes" he said quickly. "I was just enjoying the fresh air."

"The key is under the step, right Germany? I can grab it for you."

"It's fine Italy, I'll--" of course he didn't really need the spare. He wasn't one to lose his house keys. It had just been a convenient excuse. "Thank you" he mumbled, as Italy came back up and placed the key on the railing beside his elbow.

"Germany, look at what else I found down there!" Italy smiled as he pulled a daisy from behind his back and handed it to Germany. “Isn’t it pretty?”

Germany stiffened his shoulders and cleared his throat. “Ja” he said, sparing it a short glance before handing it back. He tilted his head away and gripped the railing tightly, staring hard at the floorboards of the porch, and the way his shadow created a lonely puddle of darkness against the wood. He saw another shadow intersect with his own as Italy drew closer.

"I thought you might like to have it” Italy said, sounding hurt. “You usually like pretty things like that, Germany."

Germany looked at the daisy's pale petals, feeling sick as he shook his head and heard himself respond to Italy's crestfallen tone. "Leave it out here. It belongs outside. I think we should get ready for bed soon."

“Oh. Okay.”

Germany turned his back on Italy and hurried inside, putting out the candle before heading to the bathroom to pee and brush his teeth; molars done, canines done, front done, tongue, roof of the mouth done, do again, do again, you can stay in here an extra five minutes…

Then he went to his bedroom and hovered around, plucking nervously at the bedcovers, as if he hadn’t already made the bed two times over when he woke up that morning; oh wait, oh no, I forgot to lock the doors, Brother is going to be mad, is Italy still outside? This pillow looks wrong,
"Germany?"

He whipped around to see Italy standing in the doorway.

Germany took a step backwards. “I–Italy, you are in my bedroom” he said stupidly.

Italy’s silhouette was dark against the light of the hallway. “Yeah, I thought you said we were going to bed soon.” He took a step forward, and his face, innocent and confused as ever, was washed in light.

Germany exhaled, not realizing that his breath had been trapped. *It’s Italy*. He reminded himself. *It’s just–*

*Italy~*

Italy peeled his shirt away and Germany went numb, feeling his legs hit the edge of the bed as he stepped back again and stumbled, before quickly taking a seat. He could feel the bedding against his hands, the shirt against his chest. Something about the air made him hyper aware of every part of his body.

Italy sat next to him. “What’s wrong, Germany?” he asked. “Why do you suddenly not want to be close to me?”

*Does he not realize? Does he not realize?* “It’s not–It's just–We can’t–” Germany sputtered, keeping his head down and his eyes wide open. “We can’t sit here.”

“Why not?” Italy asked, beseechingly. “We used to lie in bed all the time.”

“That was when we were friends,” Germany said, without thinking.

"Are we not friends anymore?” Italy replied, touching his arm.

*No, that’s not what I meant.*

“Because” Italy's voice was a small, innocent suggestion. "I was just starting to think that maybe...you liked me.”

And yet he knew everything.

Germany’s heart stopped. He couldn’t talk. He couldn’t think. He could hardly breath.

Apparently, he stopped for too long. Italy dropped his hand and sighed sadly. “You...don’t like me.”

Germany’s heart kick started. “Nein!” he said, louder and quicker than he intended.

Italy cocked his head. “Nein…” Germany said, quieter and slower than he intended.

Italy examined his face for a moment. And then he said it. “Do you want us to be each other's?”
Germany stiffened. *I shouldn’t.*

“Oh.” Italy said. "You do not want to say."

Germany tipped his face away, and avoided those eyes as if they were the plague. *Don’t look. Don’t look.*

“Look at me.”

*I can’t. I can’t. I can’t.*

He did.

“Germany…” Italy sighed, and looked back at him as if he were gazing a melancholy piece of art. His voice sounded hopelessly fond and pained. “You don’t have to be a lonely omega to be a strong omega.”

Germany could feel his blood pounding against the inside of his face. *Kiss me. Kiss me. No, I’m scared. Kiss me.* It was as if a bus of emotions linked to strength and independence and insecurity had crashed head on with a monster truck of *what I want.*

Italy’s warm, sunbrowned hand cupped the side of Germany’s face, and Germany closed his eyes, letting out a shaky exhale.

As he inhaled, Italy’s lips touched his own.

Chapter End Notes

Translations:

Tschüss! Gute Nacht!: Bye! Goodnight!(German)
lèche moi le cul: lick my ass (French)
grazie mille: thanks a lot (Italian)

Historical note:

Prussia says the economy isn’t dazzling because while people in West Germany benefited from an economic revival in the late 1940s, people in East Germany were experiencing economic stagnation under the communist regime.
A fire lit in his body. Germany stayed frozen for a moment, a warm waterfall of new feelings glazing his brain as his body reacted to Italy's lips, and then, Italy's tongue at his lips.

Germany pushed forward, crawling on all fours and kissing Italy all the while, until Italy toppled onto his back and Germany had his knees on either side of his lap, like a lion about to bite its prey in the jugular. The lion was tamed as Italy touched him; Germany shivered with a strangely mindless sense of focus and his best friend and decades long crush stroked his chest and traced his back and cupped his butt and moaned as Germany pressed him into the sheets. For a moment he thought that he would never, ever stop kissing Italy, and then--

--then Germany paused, like a hot whirlwind of action suddenly quieting midway through the storm. His thighs were trembling on either side of Italy's hips. A silky warm moisture was radiating from his pelvis, as if the contact had brought the beginnings of his heat on early. The urge to continue hit him in waves, but he knelt, stiff and frozen as a paralyzed dog. He looked away from Italy's curious face and mumbled "I don't know what to do next." Should they keep going? If they did, what would they do? What was going to happen? After all, his only reading material on this had been burned.

Italy's smile was mild and affectionate. "Here" he sat up, and laid a gentle hand on Germany's chest. Germany felt his shirt get pushed delicately off his shoulders, before he was guided softly onto his back. He stared up at the ceiling, not processing a single thought other than the tickle of Italy's fingertips unfastening his pants. Then Italy's face was above him. Italy stroked Germany's face as he kissed his mouth. Then he stroked his chest as he kissed his neck. Then he stroked his side as he kissed his belly. Germany let out a little gasp as Italy stroked somewhere else, and kissed somewhere lower.

"I-Italy, isn't that d-dirty and un…" he gasped "pleasant…?" Italy popped up from between his legs, the fold of his hairline falling sharply over half his face, his lips shining as if he had just devoured an oily bowl of pasta. Grinning slightly, he ran is tongue over his teeth and said "It doesn't bother me a bit, Germania."

Italy’s face disappeared again and Germany arched his back, seeing nothing and opening his mouth to make some sort of noise, until who knows how long later Italy’s face was hovering somewhere above his own, looking worried. “You’re crying, Germany. Does it hurt you?”

“W-What? Nein...It..it’s just..” he searched cluelessly for the right word “...frightening.”

Italy kissed his cheek, one two, just like Germany used to do to him at the end of training.

“Enough for now. Sleepy time.”

Germany sat up and grabbed his arm. “Please. Please take--” He struggled as the heat crawled up his face and he heard the pitch of a beggar slither into his tone. “Take everything. Please.”

Italy smiled in a way that made Germany feel eons younger than him. “Mi dispiace” he murmured. “I can’t take everything while the other is crying. It would make me feel mean.”

“I will not cry, I promise I will not--"
Italy patted his hand, sending a ping of nerves up his arm and into his chest. “Germania, your heat starts next week. Please. Wait until then. You are not thinking like you normally do right now. I don’t want to do something you will feel bad about later.”

The oddity of Italy being the voice of reason hardly registered. “Bitte” Germany gasped, meeting Italy’s amber brown eyes “Bitte. Bitte.” He crawled forward onto Italy’s lap, and he felt the alpha’s body twitch underneath him.

“G-Germany…” Italy whined as Germany trembled and leaked on top of him, breathing shallowly against his hair and squirming restlessly against his body. Italy closed his eyes covered his ears like a child trying to avoid the temptation of a candy commercial.

Germany parted his thighs as far as they would go over Italy’s lap and tipped his forehead against Italy’s forehead, feeling the words flutter off his tongue in Italy’s language-- “Per favore, per favore”--as, at the same time, he wondered why his own face was wet; was it tears, or sweat?

Germany felt Italy's hands curve around either side of his hips. He could feel the alpha coming to life underneath his splayed thighs, and he could feel hot air swirling around his inside head, and boiling blood pounding through his heart, and he couldn't do anything to stop the trembling that had bitten tight into his every muscle, so he just pressed closer to feel something steady against his skin. Whatever magic Italy had done was still buzzing through his body, making him believe in nothing but more.

Italy's grip tightened, so that his fingers pressed dappled indents into the sides of Germany's butt. Germany's stomach seemed to lurch into his chest. It's going to happen. He hid his face against Italy’s neck, and heard himself let out a small, pitchy whimper.

At that, Italy's grip relaxed. His hands moved down Germany's sides in slow, soothing strokes. Germany opened his eyes--he hadn't realized how tightly he had screwed them shut--and wondered what was going on. The hands wandered to his back and rubbed in little circles, until Germany felt his spine unarch, and his abdomen relax. Then the hands moved to his chest, and his shoulders. When Germany next inhaled, his ears were level with bedding and he was on his back again. Is...is he going to do it? Italy's hand was on his belly, gently rubbing out the spasms. No, he’s not. Gradually, Germany's body stopped trembling.

Soft white moonlight fell through the window and settled like silk across Germany's belly and the gentle hand that continued to rub him in soothing circles. He was still breathing in little pants, but eventually that slowed down too. When it did he felt the bed creak. Italy sat up and watched his face for a moment, before brushing the hair back from his forehead and planting a light kiss there. Then he settled back down, hugged Germany close, and said, "Not tonight."

***

The next morning, they sat together over breakfast. Warm white sunlight streamed peacefully through the curtains, illuminating the floor as the two nations sipped at coffee and munched on toast coated by a fig spread.

Germany looked up from his toast crumbs and blushed. Italy smiled that smile that could be construed as either peaceful or vacant. “It was good.” Germany said finally.

“Oh Grazie, I made it myself” Italy beamed. “First, you pick the figs when they’re nice and ripe, and then you boil--”

“N-no, I meant…” Germany cleared his throat “I meant last night.”
Italy paused, and then said “I’m glad you are feeling better.”

“I was not feeling bad.”

“Bello. You were scared.”

“I-I…” Germany couldn’t deny it. Letting someone else take control like that, and give him such uncontrollable feelings...it was terrifying. “I was frightened by how good it felt.”

“I am glad you liked it” Italy said softly.

Germany felt his heart nearly bruise his own ribs. “Did...did you? You sound…” What was the word? Forlorn? Regretful? Germany’s anxiety over his scent and his cluelessness in bed and seeing someone else with his horrible omega body fluid all over their lips was about to come crashing down upon him.

“I loved it so much, Germany. It was so hard to stop.”

“I don’t understand why you did. You are an alpha. And I’m…”

“You are more to me than a piece of meat to be mounted. You are my friend. My very good friend. You are a thinker, Germany, and if you don’t think about what it means beforehand, then your thoughts about what it meant will torment you afterwards.”

“I have thought about it enough. I am prepared.”

Italy gave him a doubtful look. “I don’t think you have enough fear right now.”

Germany felt his cheeks flare up. “Italy, I have tried to hide it since the first time I found out about myself. But I am fearful so often. Almost all the time. The only way to move forward is to push through it.”

“And the only way to hide it is to yell the loudest, train the hardest, and show everybody that you are in control” Italy finished. “Going all the way would take the control away from you, Germany.”

“I...I would not hate it. If...if it were you.”

Italy’s eyebrows went up, and then fell down again as he shook his head, looking more distressed than before. “It might hurt you though. For virgin omegas it can hurt.”

“I do not care.” He’d been the loser of two world wars. How hard could having sex be?

“You might get pregnant. And don’t even try to tell me you are old enough for that.”

“I can take contraceptives” Germany said quickly.

“Germany…” Italy stared down at his coffee and sighed. “I am not the strongest alpha. I am probably the least alpha alpha in the world.” He gave a sad little chuckle, and then quietly swirled his cup. “If I knot you tonight, everyone will know by tomorrow. Your scent will completely change.”

“Spain said I should mate as soon as I can--”

“--With someone strong and músculo. Aggresivo. Yes, I know, I was listening. I should have been thinking about this before I seduced you last night. If you mate with me,” he said, looking up
sadly, "Everyone will know you were bred by the weakest alpha in the world."

The memory of every humiliation he had experienced, from being rolled over in the bathroom to being laughed at in meetings, attacked on the street, harassed in the park, teased at the bar and sneered at by the clerk, to looking at himself in the mirror and knowing what his DNA coded for, and knowing that everybody else in the world knew it too, flicked across his mind’s eye. “But Italia” Germany quickly rubbed his nose and ran a hand underneath his eye. Oh Gott no, the hormones, yes the hormones, he told himself, were messing with his emotions again. “That is why you are one of the only alphas I will ever trust.”

“Can you trust me if I am the only alpha to ever make you beg like this?” Italy pressed his hand against his forehead and sniffed. “I’m sorry, but I feel awful for taking advantage of you like that. I think I should go.”

Germany could feel his eyes starting to burn, so he looked away from Italy and stared out the window at the dewy lawn and the two cars parked alongside each other in the drive.

Wait.

Two cars?

“You must!” Germany said, as panic jolted him out of his chair.

Standing up slowly, Italy nodded, looking downcast as he apparently interpreted Germany’s reaction as an agreement to his guilt.

And then Prussia exploded into the room, looking like a wild, red-eyed beast as he fixed upon Italy.

“How dare you breed my little brother, you cowardly excuse of an alpha!”

Italy screamed. Germany shouted “Brother stop!” and Prussia pounced; Italy leapt away quickly and fled to the opposite end of the table. Prussia snarled as each time he began to circle round, Italy circled the opposite way. Then the room screeched as he shoved the table out of the way, causing the things on it to smash to the floor.

“How dare you breed my little brother, you cowardly excuse of an alpha!”

Italy gave a cry as Prussia caught him. Germany felt a sense of horror as the sounds of terror and fury filled the kitchen, and he immediately wedged himself between the two sources, feeling all his muscles straining as he tried to get Prussia away from Italy. “Stop! Stop it!” he said, gritting his teeth from the effort of pinning back Prussia’s arms, allowing Italy to stumble away. “Italy, run. Get out of here!”

He didn’t need to tell him twice. In a blink, Italy was out of the room.

“Get off” Prussia demanded as he fought against Germany’s hold “Get offa me! Let me get him, let me go!”

The rev of Italy’s car preceded a sharp squeal of rubber, and he was gone. Prussia gave one last mighty shove and finally broke free; Germany winced as he tripped over one of the chairs and felt the world flip, before his hip and shoulder blade smashed heavily against the floor. He opened his eyes and saw the ceiling first, and then his brother.

“Shiesse–West, are you okay? Sorry, I didn’t mean to make you fall.”

Germany slapped away his brother’s helping hand. “Are you insane?!” He said, scrambling to his
feet on his own. “You could have hurt him!”

“And he could have hurt you” Prussia growled. “What did he do to you? Did he touch you?”

The memory of sunbrowned hand splaying gently across his skin, and the alpha’s lips working their way slowly down his pelvis flashed momentarily into Germany’s vision. He went rigid, and then said, “I invited him over.”

“With the intention of him staying the night?”

“No” Germany stuttered “I mean I didn’t expect it to happen--I mean, he didn’t even--we didn’t--” As soon as he started explaining the situation to his brother, Germany felt like a convict on trial. “I invited him in, and he…he came into my bedroom...” he remembered Italy’s silhouette in the doorway, the fear that had caused him to back deeper into his bedroom like a cornered animal, and he pushed the memory out of his mind, and tried to get his brother to see the truth. “...and then he showed me that it doesn’t have to be bad, and I don’t have to be afraid; and I would have had him, brother, but--” He wouldn’t have me.

Prussia looked unimpressed. “So he played with you for the night, and then dumped you and ran.”

He remembered his heart pounding with confusion as he looked up and saw Italy's face between his legs, eyes dilated and satisfied grin on his face as his tongue ran over his teeth. He remembered feeling as if his entire body would catch on fire if he didn't beg Italy to please do it, please, please do it, and Italy's fingers momentarily digging into his sides, as if he were about to pull him apart and finish it, and then the fear... “No” Germany croaked, blinking furiously as his words began to become choppy and choked. “Stop saying like that, it’s not like that...”

“Sh, kleiner,” Prussia said gently. “Don’t cry; it’s his fault for taking advantage of you like that.”

“I’m not crying!” Germany shouted, feeling tears stream down his cheeks and drip off of his chin. “And it wasn’t…it wasn’t advantage…He didn’t take...” He covered his face from his brother as it all hit him: the embarrassment of being so vulnerable and needy in front of Italy the night before, the confusion of having Italy try to walk out on him after he admitted his feelings, the shock of watching his brother rampage through the kitchen, the shame of admitting he would have bred, and now the doubt that maybe he didn’t understand as much as the alphas did, that maybe he had been taken advantage of and he was too stupid to see it.

“Are you sure he didn’t?” Prussia said, watching as Germany broke down in front of him. “Because you seem an awful lot hurt. And he seemed an awful lot guilty.”

Germany let out one small, breathless sob, and then hurried out of the room, kicking the chair out of his way as he went. Grabbing the keys off the hook, he went straight to the car and decided that he needed to get away, maybe to find Italy, maybe to try to convince him: it’s okay, you haven’t done anything wrong, maybe to convince himself that it was okay, that Italy hadn’t done anything wrong--

But he ended up just driving, not thinking about much but how dirty, weak, shameful, and stupid he was, and about how much it hurt.

Maybe it was because half of him expected to find Italy there, maybe it was because he didn’t know where else to go. But he ended up at the church.

Germany knelt in the pew closest to the back, and thanked God that the only people there for the monday mass were a few seniors who were near the front and probably half deaf anyways.
His weak, sniffly hiccups were pathetic.

As the Priest began speaking: “Hello, Brothers and Sisters, today we gather to…”

Germany bowed his head and prayed: *Please make me an alpha.*

He prayed the same thing even as the Priest began the Liturgy. “The Phillipians tell us, ‘Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.’ This advice is good, and based on the faith that, for the Lord, no miracle is impossible…”

*Please make me an alpha.*

“And yet it can lead to our faith being shaken; when we ask Him, ‘Why haven’t You answered my prayers, God?’”

*Please make me an alpha.*

“Why is there still suffering? Why is there still War? Why do our loved ones still leave us, or hurt us, or die?”

*Please make me an alpha.*

“And we hear nothing. In these moments, we must remember that it is not our will that He bends to, but that we are small, and He is great…”

*Please, please, PLEASE make me an alpha.*

“So pray, Brothers and Sisters. But remember that God has a plan for all of us, and that he answers our questions in mysterious ways.”

*But if that’s impossible, please make it less awful to be me.*

Chapter End Notes

mi dispiace: I'm sorry (Italian)
Bitte: Please (German)
per favore: Please (Italian)
Bello: Beautiful/Handsome person (Italian)
“West, you’re losing weight. I’m worried.”

“Stop thinking about how much I weigh.”

“What happened to going out and training?”

“There is no war to train for.”

“There might be! If you don’t get yourself ready for that big meeting that’s coming up!”

“I don’t...care.”

“Listen, if this is about Ita--”

“Don’t” Germany’s voice was like a chip of beach glass. Soft and broken. “Talk about it.” He hadn’t talked to Italy in four days. He had barely gotten out of bed either. Barely eaten, and barely spoke.

He curled himself tighter as he heard his brother’s footsteps on his floor, and he felt the bed creak as another alpha sat down on it.

“West. I’ve only seen you act like this once before, and it was after that war. Something’s really wrong, and if it’s because of what Italy did to you, then I’ll--”

“No” Germany croaked. “I just don’t feel well, okay?”

“Hm” Prussia said, stroking his chin thoughtfully. “Okay. Turn off your brain for a moment. Just follow my orders.”

“No, that’s bad.”

“Okay, good. You’ve passed the first test. Now, actually do what I say. I need to check something.” Prussia pulled the blanket away from Germany’s face. “Turn onto your back.”

“I’m not sick” Germany trailed off, as he obeyed and felt his brother’s hand move to his forehead.

“How does your chest feel?”

Empty. “Fine.”

“Any softness?”

“No.”

“Okay” Prussia muttered, pulling the blanket down some more. He pressed his hand along Germany’s belly, and stared at him for a reaction. “How does it feel when I do this? Tender? Bloated? Any nausea?”

“No.”
Germany’s eyes widened as he watched Prussia lowered his head and press an ear to his belly, and he realized that his brother was trying to check if he was pregnant. “Brother, stop! That’s impossible. Anyone would be able to tell if we had--” His voice died and he yanked the blanket back over his torso. “You’re crazy.”

Prussia pursed his lips. “You’ve fooled the world for less obvious things before, West. Can’t blame me for checking.”

“Get out of my room” Germany growled, turning to face the opposite wall.

“No, you get out of your room. If you’re so fine then prove it.”

“I don’t want to. Leave me alone.”

“No” Prussia said, punching him in the arm. “Go outside and give me fifty laps. That’s an order.”

“You’re not my boss.”

“Yeah? Well you know what I’m gonna do then? I’m gonna call your boss, and tell him that you’re in no fit state to work, that you ‘don’t care’ about going to that big meeting, that you ‘don’t want’ to do your duty and prepare for it, and that you’re acting like a heartbroken little schoolgirl.”

“Shut up!” Germany snarled, sitting up.

“Good. Channel your anger into productivity, West. Go on. Go.”

And so Germany went outside. He went to the park, and did not do fifty laps, but sixty. He did not do a few chin ups, he did many. He did not do fifty pushups, but he did pushups until the sun was in a different position in the sky, and his arms literally collapsed out from underneath him.

His muscles twitched and trembled as he lay with his face half buried in the grass, the evening sky tingeing his already flushed face with a glow of red. I don’t want to get up. I don’t want to go anymore.

He felt something sharp poke him in the side.

Germany looked up, and saw the little girl from before, standing some distance away, holding a very long stick, ready to prod him again. “Are you okay, Sir?” She asked.

“Yes” he said, automatically. “I’m fine. Thank you.” And with that he staggered up, and decided to run another ten laps. It wouldn’t do to have anyone thinking that he couldn’t.

Over the course of the next five days, Germany followed this routine and used looking at his calendar, and crossing off the days until the friday of the big meeting, the day of the end of the world, as a way to distract himself from the ache of missing Italy. He used every tear and strain and pain in his body as a way to punish himself for the self disgust he felt every time he remembered that he was dirty, weak, stupid, shameful, desperate, naive, weak, weak, stupid, stupid, stupid... for still thinking about Italy, and for not being an alpha..

On the night before the end of the world, Germany took one last shower, to clean off the dust and sweat and grime of the day. He glanced at his body in the bathroom mirror, and saw that he had gained back some of the weight he had lost pining for Italy, and that his muscles were toned and hard, giving him a strong and dominant appearance.

He stared at his reflection bleakly, and then shuffled out of the room. What did it matter, anyways?
If there was going to be some kind of war, he didn’t care to participate. And no matter how many layers of brawn he grew, it would never be enough to disguise what he was underneath.

***

The next morning, Germany could tell his brother was nervous, because he was doing that thing where he tried to be cautionary and comforting at the same time, but ended up flitting around Germany the entire morning, giving him a vast swatch of conflicting messages.

“Remember, don’t let any of them push you around, West. But don’t go against any direct orders. West, don’t try going to any bars afterwards, but if they invite you, don’t be an asocial prick and tell them you don’t want to go. We need as many allies as we can. But don’t get too friendly with any of them; they’re not trustworthy. Here, let me fix your tie, West. West, you know how to fix a tie, why am I the one doing this? Okay, remember; if you go outside, or go inside, you should put on some of the cologne. Here, take it. Use as much as you need. But don’t be greedy with it, we need to conserve it, because this stuff is expensive. Well, maybe not for you, Mr. Miracle economic recovery. Your heat starts in what, one, two days? If you feel like it’s going to come early, you sprint to the nearest omega bathroom, do you hear me? You sprint. But don’t run too fast, I’ve heard that exercise can make it hit sooner. West, if any of them tries anything funny with you, you tell me and I’ll beat the living tar out of them, no questions asked. But I’m not in my prime anymore, Kliener, so if it’s one of those pumped up superpowers, there’s not much I can do. Remember, West, it’s going to be okay. You can take ‘em. Just be firm. But don’t do anything to piss either of them off. Be flexible. Be firm but flexible. And West—”

“What?” Germany groaned, his foot halfway out the door already.

His older brother grabbed his hand, and then pulled him into a hug. “Take care of yourself.” He said, dropping the crisp voice he used to order people around. “You’re my brother, and I love you no matter what.”

Germany sighed, and let his chin fall against Prussia’s shoulder. Prussia held onto him for a moment, and then shoved him out the door. "Alright, enough of the sappy stuff. See you on the other side of the nuclear apocalypse, Kliener."

When Germany entered the meeting room, he was barely spared a glance by the other nations. All anyone had eyes for were the two alphas who were glaring daggers--or rather, nuclear missiles--at each other from across the table. He scanned the room. In attendance were quite a few members of NATO, who all seemed to be clustering around America’s side of the table, looking as if every time their nerves got the better of them, the best therapy was to glance at the springy strength radiating from America, who was leaning against his chair, legs crossed and dark sunglasses pushed up in front of his eyes, giving him a look of cocky confidence. Probably good for not betraying his emotions to the opponent. Germany thought, realizing this must’ve been the reason America had started wearing them. Like in a high stakes poker game.

Russia, on the other hand, didn’t seem to feel the need for shades. His eyes were closed as he smiled and hummed lightly to himself, the rest of his satellite states huddled anxiously behind him, and an annoyed looking Cuba at his right hand. Germany’s eyes went from one side of the table to the other, and the small amount of hope that had been fluttering in his chest died. Like Italy had said before, he had decided to stay home. It’s better this way Germany thought, already feeling bitterly disgusted with himself. He remembered how his brother had told him that his scent was the most omega when he was around Italy. Better not to remind them all.

Austria came up to him, looking flustered and already ready to hand the reins over to somebody else. “Oh good, Germany. You’re finally here. We shall be starting soon, as I wish to get this over
with as soon as possible. Will you sit on my side of the table? I won’t have it any other way. These hooligans make me feel absolutely uncomfortable.”

As he took his seat Italy’s brother decided to take notice of Germany and leaned over to him, hissing, "Have you come to see which half of you of these crazy-head bastardos decide to fuck first?"

Germany clenched his jaw and closed his eyes for a moment, deciding to ignore the comment and carry on talking to Austria.

"Right" he said. "Uncomfortable, Austria, do you have a plan for how you’re going to run the mediation? I was sent no briefing. How much time for each turn? Do their allies get any say? And how are you going to decide who goes first?"

“They get as much time as appropriate” Austria began vaguely. "I’m assuming their allies came to have some sort of say, so yes, they may speak as well. Regarding who goes first--look. They are already deciding.”

Germany’s eyes swiveled back to America and Russia, and for a moment he thought they were holding hands, before he realized that they were locked in growly, aggressive arm wrestle, grinning at each other like two devious schoolboys as all the other nations began shouting support and dissuasion from all sides.

He could already tell this was going to be a hot mess.

After about five minutes of a muscle-spasming draw, the back of Russia's hand slammed down over the table.

"Ha! Suck that, loser!" America shouted.

"I let you win, because we were wasting time. You really are quite a child, aren't you, America?" Russia responded indulgently.

"These insults are unnecessary” Austria cut in. "If you could please proceed with the proper etiquette then--"

"Right, sorry" America said, waving away the rest of Austria's sentence. "My turn now!"

"Alright, Mr. United States of America, please state your reason for complaint against Mr. Russia, or, as he is otherwise known, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”

"Sure, much obliged.” America said, tipping an imaginary cowboy hat. Then he cleared his throat, and addressed the room at large. “As we all know, me and Mr. Russia have been...on unfriendly terms lately.” The room nodded. They knew. Oh, did they know. “I would” America continued, “in fact, not feel too stretched to label it a ‘cold’ form of war. Or (keeping in mind not to go jump to extremes, here) a perilous and totally fear-inspiring standoff of good against evil...” Though England rolled his eyes, the other members of NATO all looked to America nervously, as he seemed to gain enthusiasm from his own narrative, and continued in an increasingly dramatic tone. “...where he, as anyone with eyes and a brain and a heart for freedom would see, is completely, on every count, the villain, who plans to spread his sneaky tendrils of corruption throughout Europe, nay, the world, through the means of force, coercion, and insurrection.”

"Those are some big words for you, America. Are you sure you know what you’re talking about?” Russia asked, cocking his head.
America continued as if he hadn’t heard the jab. "He's already muscled his reign over the baltic states--"

“And Kazakhstan! Don’t forget Kazakhstan!” Someone from the back shouted.

“And over Ka-” a frown “Kazakaka...the Stans” America continued, "And now, he's trying to threaten me, my allies, and the security of the entire world, by shoving nuclear weapons onto the shoulders of one of my poor, misled, caribbean neighbors.”

"Fuck you" Cuba spat.

“America, your Imperialism is showing.” Russia sang softly.

“Shut up, Ruski” America said, leaning back in his chair and recrossing his legs. “I’m no empire.”

“There he goes, playing the victim again. There is a reason Cuba has agreed to be my friend, and not yours.”

“With this in mind” America said, raising his voice, “I humbly request that Mr. Russia remove his missiles from Cuba, and then go crawl into a hole and get eaten alive by spiders.”

“Unnecessary passive aggression” Austria announced, passive aggressively. “Mr. America, if you would please refrain from--”

“Oh, not to worry” Russia interrupted, causing the room to hush audibly. “I believe his attitude speaks volumes to the biased and one-dimensional vision of my opponent. America is, as we can all plainly see, acting out as a threatened elk does upon catching sight of a man. Though he himself has weapons to defend himself with, he knows that testing them could result in his destruction.”

“It would mean destruction for you too” America cut in. “And the rest of the world. Of course I care enough to not want to test them, you crazy son of a bitch.”

“Poor Japan” Russia sighed. “If only you had cared enough not to test them on him.”

“Watch it” America growled. “I did what seemed best at the time, and I’ll do it again if you get another inch closer to me with those things.”

“You were curious about what they would do” Russia giggled, in Germany’s opinion, quite unsettlingly. “But you came around to guilt eventually. I wondered if it was enough guilt to curb you from using them again. Apparently not. Unless, of course,” Russia leaned forward, lacing his fingers together and weighing the air with the most ominous alpha scent that Germany had ever encountered. “...you’re bluffing.”

Germany’s guts shivered disharmoniously and he felt his nails scape against his knees as he resisted the instinct to duck and cover. He glanced down the table and noticed omegas such as France and Finland reacting in a similar manner, and even many of the alphas becoming tense. With the sunglasses blocking his eyes, the only thing that could be seen of America’s reaction was the upward movement of a single eyebrow. Is he really unaffected by it? Germany wondered.

“You wish, Commie. But if I was going to nuke anyone in the world, it would totally be you, and you know it.”

This is bad. They’re already insinuating bomb threats. Is Austria going to stop it? Germany prayed to God that Austria would. He felt that he should help, but the strength of the alpha scent was causing his pulse to squirm sickeningly in his throat, and his knees to feel weak. At the same time,
he now realized how uncomfortable he was at the idea of jumping in and undermining the authority of a beta, and, by extension, the alphas.

“Be quiet, both of you.” Austria snapped. “These threats aren’t doing either of you any favors.”

He was ignored.

"What, are you scared of me, America? I thought you were supposed to be the hero.” Russia gushed, twisting his finger playfully around the end of his scarf. “Or are you worried I might come out on top?"

At that, America’s face flushed a deep, angry shade of red. "No! If anything I'm scared for you, because if you make one more move with those missiles in Cuba, I might slip my finger and tear you another Siberian crater, you jerk.”

"And that scares you because if you should do that and your finger should slip, my finger would also slip and I would add a brand new expansion to the Grand Canyon."

Some of the Satellite states cringed and hid their faces. America uncrossed and recrossed his legs, causing his foot to smack Russia's leg underneath the table.

"Oops, Sorry" he said, not sounding sorry at all.

Russia stretched, placing his hands on the table and jamming it forward so it jabbed into America’s belly.

“Watch it!” America repeated, louder. *This is about to get out of hand* Germany realized, feeling his body tense up.

Austria interjected pleadingly. “Russia, America, stop. Think about your allies.” *It’s okay* Germany told himself *Austria is doing okay.*

Russia and America glared at each other for a moment. And then America turned to Cuba instead.

“Can’t you see he’s just using you to knock me out of the way for his little commie world domination scheme?”

“Not everything is about you, you damn asshole yuma gringo.”

“Actually” England said, seeming to perceive that a more leveled voice was necessary from the NATO side, “Having those missiles so close to him does seem rather blatant provocation. What, you want them close enough to stick up his arsehole?”

“Oui” France said, taking courage from England and joining in. “For once I agree. They make the rest of us feel nervous too.”

Germany felt a sense of dread as Russia cocked his head, a stiff smile pushing the corners of his mouth. “Does it not make you nervous for him to be the only one with a decent nuclear arsenal? If I remove my missiles from Cuba, he should take his out of Turkey. Are you so easy to play favorites? Or does the world roll over on its belly so easily?”

“Yeah, well maybe it’s because I’m not some satellite snatching snow blowing soul sucking psychopath!” America said, slamming his hand on the table violently.

“You are another breed of evil, you greedy obnoxious dishonest capitalist pig” Russia hissed, somehow managing to grit his teeth and smile threateningly at the same time.
The table screeched as America stood up, with an aggressive grin of his own. “You sure say a lot for a loser without any right to free speech.”

“And you are a brute for someone who is supposed to be democratic” Russia growled, shoving the table out of the way. “Do you wish to argue with your fists instead? Very well, little one. Let us see what color your gums bleed.”

Austria’s tinny, dry voice interrupted weakly “Will you two please refrain from--”

“As if a starving son of a bitch like you could ever win in a fight.” America snarled. They both swung.

“Stop it!” Germany barked, stepping in between and shoving them apart. “I, much like the rest of the world, am tired of being caught in the middle of you two. If you can’t resolve this today, the rest of this meeting is futile, if not damaging. I call for an adjournment until tomorrow.”

All the other nations nodded vigorously. “Yes, I agree, listen to him” they all said.

Russia and America glared at each other for a moment, the air thick with the thrumming energy of two alphas about to butt heads. Germany stood between them, arms outstretched.

And then they stood down. “Until next time, Amerika” Russia said, turning away.

America nodded. “Looking forward to it, Ruski.”

The room began to empty. Germany sighed, letting his hands fall limply to his sides. That had been a close one. All this arms race stuff really was stressful. Part of him was glad he would never be allowed to participate in something like that. World War Two had been horrible enough. He went back to his spot, and began gathering up his stuff. Feeling that the room was empty, he dug around for Prussia’s bottle of cologne, and applied a little to his wrists and neck. Just to make sure getting home wouldn’t be an issue.

“That your brother’s?”

Germany started a little, not having realized that America was still in the room. “Yes” he said.

“Can I see?”

He handed it over, feeling uneasy. His back was to the table, the door on the other side of the room. But America was supposedly his ally now, so he wouldn’t try anything, right? Unless he was upset with him for interrupting the meeting.

“Thanks for getting in the middle of that, by the way” America said, as he took the bottle. “Probably would've ended badly for both of us.”

“Ja. No problem” Germany said, shifting his weight from one foot to another. He glanced uneasily to America’s sunglassed eyes, wondering what was going on behind them.

“‘Blackforest Musk,’” America announced, reading the label with a shadow of a laugh under his voice. “Very alpha.”

Sensing he was being made fun of, Germany looked away. “Ja. To reiterate, it is my brother’s. He gave it to me for security purposes.”

“Mind if I borrow some?”
“Go... go ahead” Germany, said, trailing off as his brain began cartwheeling.

“That’s the stuff” America said, rubbing his wrists together and handing it back. “It’ll help the both of us to get home tonight, right?” Lowering his sunglasses, he gave a wink.

Germany blinked, not daring to think of what he thought that wink might’ve meant. “America, you’re not telling me that you’re…”

America’s usually loud voice was miraculously lowered. “I’m an omega too” he said, eyes wide. Without sunglasses, his eyes looked remarkably round and innocent. Very omega. “But nobody knows. Not even England.”

Germany was floored. “Why... why are you telling me?”

America dropped his face briefly, letting out a short, dry chuckle. “Jeez, I don’t know. I guess because it sucks so hard. The weird feelings when you don’t want them, the secrecy. The fear. Sometimes I just imagine if Russia ever found out and…” Staring off into the distance, he let out a low whistle and shook his head. “It’d probably be the end of the world.”

Germany could hardly believe what he was hearing. The United States of America, one of the largest superpowers in the world, was an omega. “But you are such a powerful nation, America. Do you have anything to fear?”

“To be honest” America dropped his voice, as if the walls were bugged. “Sometimes I think I have the most. And the shame...I don’t know if I’d ever let them know.”

Germany’s spirits sank. “Like I did” he said dully.

“Yeah but--” America chewed his bottom lip for a moment. “When I see the way you just keep pushing on, sometimes I think that maybe...well, maybe it’s not such a shameful thing after all. I guess my point is just... rock on, dude. Rock on.”

Germany watch him get up, push his shades back up the bridge of his nose, and stride confidently to the exit.

“Oh, and Germany?”

“Ja?”

A slight smile curved the edge of America’s lip. “Don’t tell anyone, or I’ll nuke you.”

Germany couldn’t help it. “Understood.” For some reason, he was smiling too.

Chapter End Notes

*Notes*

SCIENCE DISCLAIMER: If Germany had been impregnated by Italy on the previous Sunday night, the symptoms Prussia is checking for would not have been apparent (since he is checking only four days after that Sunday). This is by normal human standards; however, I feel that in this case, the biology could function differently (not only is Germany not a normal human, he also is part of the omegaverse). Alternatively, Prussia's actions could be attributed to:
A) Prussia suspecting that Italy and Germany might have had sex before (And him believing that Germany had somehow covered up the change in his scent)
B) Prussia not knowing that much about pregnancy to begin with.

If you need a logical explanation, take your pick!

But so anyways guys, there's another big reveal. Throughout the story, I've been dropping small hints that America was an omega, but I also didn't want it to be too obvious. I'm curious though...did anybody see it coming?

As always, thank you all for your support! I'm already working on the next chapter, so hopefully I will have it done soon!
He’s an omega. He’s an omega. He’s an omega. And if he can be an omega…

Germany’s thoughts flew as he raced out the conference room; it had started with a smile, but now, the enormity of his recent discovery was causing his heart to sail and his steps to bounce. Why was America’s secret making him feel so light? He didn’t stop to assess it. He had something to do.

He stopped in the doorway, feeling the bright sunlight attack his face as he tried to organize his thoughts.

*Am I being impulsive? Yes. No. I don’t care. Step one: Find a phone.* There was one right on the side of the building.

Quickly punching in a +39, he stared adamantly at the dial and waited for the response.

“Ciao?”

“Italy” He said, voice rushed “I’m going to come and get you.”

“G-Germany? Did you just finish that meeting? Oh no, they’re going to blow us all up now, aren’t they!? I knew it, I knew this was going to happen; oh, Germany, save me, I don’t have a bomb shelter under my house! Well I do, but it’s completely filled with vacuum packed ravioli, and there isn’t room for two! And my brother--he’ll need a spot with us, oh, Dio Mio, what am I going to do about the cat? Germany, before we die, I wanted to let you know that I--”

“Italy, calm down, that’s not what this is about” Germany interrupted. “The meeting went fine” *Fine? Well, it could have gone worse… “and we’re not about to be bombed” Not yet, at least. “And I’m coming to get you because…”* Germany glanced around the empty lot and took a shaky breath, trying to swallow the self consciousness he felt at the implications of his next words. “Because my heat starts tomorrow and I want you to be there.”

Before Italy could question it, or gasp, or do anything that might shake Germany’s resolve, he gave a curt “Be ready” and hung up the phone.

He had the entire drive to think about what he was doing. He perhaps should have thought about it in more detail; but it seemed there were only three facts that mattered: *The end of the world has been postponed until tomorrow; this is what I want; and He’s one too; HE’S one too.*

It was, of course, a gorgeous, temperate day in Italy. The sun was setting, staining the sky pink as Germany pulled into his friend's driveway.

As he walked up to the front door, he wondered briefly if he was going to have to ring the doorbell and risk Romano answering instead--*What the fuck are you doing here? Oh wait, you smell like a thirsty bitch, have you come for my brother? Ha!*-- but luckily he wasn’t even up the steps before the door opened and Italy slipped through.

Italy stood on the first step, staring at Germany for a moment. Then he pulled a bundle of petals and greenery from behind his back. “I got… I got you flowers.” He said, sounding like half of him was frightened about what would happen if he actually handed them over.
The fragrance of the beautiful plants meshed with Italy's scent and Germany felt all of his insides melt like butter in the sun.

The tight voice he had used to command Italy over the phone dropped. “They are very pretty” he said, feeling breathless as he stepped forward and accepted them.

Italy moved a little closer. The two of them eyed each other for a moment, before slowly coming together and hugging.

Germany eyes lolled closed as he let his cheek brush against Italy’s ear and he breathed in the scent of Italy’s hair. He had missed that scent. He felt the tip of Italy’s nose touch his neck.

“You’re almost ready” Italy murmured, a strain of something...something almost like desire in his voice.

Then Italy withdrew. “And you’re sure you’re sure about this, Germany? Are you sure after what happened...last time?”

“Yes” Germany answered. “I’m sure.” He didn't want to be questioned. If he examined his feelings too closely, he would have found that nearly ninety nine percent of him was completely on board with the plan. But there was always that bit of him that would be frightened, and whisper shame, shame, shame...

But he didn't want to listen to that part. As of late, it had been ruining his life.

“My brother is in his bedroom.” Italy said, eyeing Germany cautiously. “He will wake up if he hears us.”

“My brother is at home” Germany said. “He will kill us if he hears us. But I can change that. Get in the car.”

He and Italy drove off, back the way Germany had came. When they were passing back through Austria, Germany pulled over at a payphone outside of a 24 hour drug store. “It’s dark out here, Germany” Italy said, giving a nervous chuckle. “You’re not planning on murdering me, are you?”

Before he dialed, Germany gave Italy a withering stare. “No. But if you laugh at me for this, I will choke you.”

Italy nodded his head vigorously, slapping a hand over his mouth for good measure.

“Hallo?” Prussia answered on the other end.

Germany adjusted his voice so that it was strained and breathy. “B-Bruder? My heat-ah-It came early.”

“Oh mein Gott. West, are you okay? Where are you?”

Germany gritted his teeth and panted for a moment, before continuing. “I’m okay, I’m at-mnh-Austria’s place, he said I could stay the night. B-But Bruder, the meeting was adjourned until tomorrow. Russia and Ah-America were too tense” he gasped. “I’m not going to be able to attend it, and I n-need you to come in my place. I’ll pay you back for the ta...ah!..the taxi, I promise. It starts at 10:30 in the morning, so you should leave as soon as possible.” The next part he whimpered. “P-Please Bruder. They need as much help as they can get.”

“Alright West, calm down” Prussia said quickly. “I’ll leave right away so that I can fill in. And
then tomorrow I can drive us both home. Sound like a plan?"


"Bitte schon, Kleiner. Sit tight."

He hung up.

"Wait a minute" Italy said, blinking slowly. "Are Russia and America really still fighting?"

"Ja" Germany affirmed. "Everything I told him is true. Except that my heat came early and that I am staying with Austria."

"W-Wait, so the world might still blow up? And, if it doesn't, Prussia's going to realize that you lied to him about being with Austria? And then he's going to come back home? And then he's going to find us?"

Germany took Italy by the hand. "Italia" he said, in a low voice. "Don't worry. I will protect you." His nesting area was a bomb shelter, after all. If something did go horribly wrong at the meeting, his brother and everybody else would have to take shelter with Austria. And if the meeting went fine, and Prussia came home? Well, he and Italy would be locked safely away, and he had himself to use as a bartering chip if Prussia tried to wait and ambush Italy outside the door. That, or he could perform some sort of mad dash for the exit, Italy slung over his shoulder.

He would figure something out. He was sure.

Italy observed his steady gaze. He held his breath for a moment, and then exhaled. "Okay."

Then Germany dropped his eyes. "Can you...um, come with me into the drugstore?" He focused on his shoes, and felt his forehead redden. "I need to get something but I don't want to go up to the counter alone and have them...say anything."

"Sure, Germania" Italy said, breaking into a smile. "I will protect you too."

Germany hurried to the omega aisle and grabbed the contraceptives. Italy came with him to the counter, which was, luckily, manned by a bored looking beta who didn't care about anything but the clock on the opposite wall. "Have a nice night" she said, without even a shadow of an innuendo in her voice.

The only other time they stopped on the way back was to get gas. The sun was just starting to rise, and they were almost at the end of their journey, when Germany started getting cramps.

Keeping one hand on the wheel, he hissed and clenched his stomach with the other.

"Do you think you can make it, Germany?" Italy asked quickly. "If you want, we could get out and switch."

"No" Germany panted, feeling the sweat start to form along his hairline. "I can do it, we're almost there."

But within the next mile, the first wave hit him and he let out a strained moan-- "Ah~AH!"--that turned into a scream. It was the hardest his heat had ever hit him--probably because Italy was there--and the feelings of fever and of need were so intense that his vision started clouding and his knees banged against the bottom of the steering wheel, just as his hands left it and he started clawing at the fabric between his legs as if it were burning him.
“Germany, watch out!” Italy cried, grabbing the wheel and steering them back on course. “Use your foot on the break, and I’ll pull us over. Can you hear me? Foot!”

Foot? Foot. Foot now.

“Okay, let’s switch” Italy was saying, as Germany’s face contorted and his closed his eyes against the outside world.

“Wha-What? N-no, I can…I don’t need…” Germany’s head rolled against the seat deliriously.

“Germany, let me help you” Italy said, his voice high as he took Germany by the arm and helped him out of the driver’s seat.

Germany’s face was tilted against Italy’s shoulder as Italy helped him stumble back into the car. He inhaled and—Gott, Gott, I need him, I need him—

But he was already slouched over in the back seat, by himself. He opened his eyes a sliver to see Italy outside, about to shut the door. “Take care of yourself however you need, Germany.” Italy said. Germany could see that Italy’s face was flushed too, his eyes dilated as he stared at Germany’s disheveled form in the back seat.

As Italy started driving, Germany rolled onto his stomach, whimpering as he pushed a finger into himself and felt the fluid soak into his clothing. Germany could hear Italy breathing shallowly. Blearily, he saw Italy kneading his knuckles over the steering wheel—occasionally glancing in the mirror, biting his lip, before appearing to become abashed and forncing his attention forward.

By the time they pulled into the drive, Germany felt weak and shaky, but the slick had stopped running and the first wave seemed to have subsided. He mumbled Italy’s name as he heard the door open and felt a hand on his shoulder.

“Germany, let’s go inside, please, I-I don’t know if I’ll last much longer. Can you walk? I can’t carry you that far.”

“Ja, I can do it” Germany said, curling upwards and bracing his hands against the door of the car. His pants were half unfastened and wet; his hair was loose and laced with sweat; his knees shook; but he still managed to make it to the front door. When he looked back, he saw that Italy was still on the other side of the lawn, his hands clenched tightly over the roof of the car as he leaned into it, breathing heavily, and moving his lips as if he were whispering a string of silent prayers.

“Come on Italia, I need your help for the basement stairs” Germany roared across the lawn.

“Aye Aye, Captain!” Italy gasped, before slamming the car door and bolting to Germany’s side. They both hurried inside and Italy buried himself under Germany’s arm so they could take the stairs into the basement together.

Finally, Germany opened the shelter door. The privacy of the cement walls and softness of the pillows he had there looked about the most inviting thing on earth at the moment: the room seemed to sing to him as he made to go inside.

“Wait” Italy said suddenly.

“What is it?” Germany moaned. Hadn’t he waited enough already?

“There’s food in the shelter, right?” Italy asked, completely seriously.
“Of course there is dummkopf, you think I let myself starve every month?”

“Okay! Okay! I just wanted to make sure. Don’t--ah, okay, I’m coming!”

The door shut behind them.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is kind of short--the reason is because I originally wanted to combine it with the next section, so I speant a lot of time trying to get that done too. I guess the plus side is that most of the next part is already done! As always, thank you all for your wonderful patience and support :)}
It was dark. It was quiet. Germany immediately buried himself into the pillows, so that he could fluff them and arrange them and rearrange them, because they had to be right. That was all that mattered right now, even more than sex. There was no more fluid coming out between his legs. Since the first wave of his heat had whittled away, at the moment his chief responsibility was to ensure that his nest was perfectly prepared for the second wave.

“Germany? It’s so dark in here. Are the lights on the wall? Oh--” There was a light, glassy plink, and a dim light bulb fluttered into existence. “Found it.”

In the sudden light, Germany crouched amongst his pillows, clutching one tightly to his chest and staring over the top of it at the alpha that was in his territory.

“Wow, your pupils are so wide, Germany” Italy said, stepping closer, and beginning to unbutton his shirt. “Are you ready?”

“No.”

“Wait, what?” Italy’s shoulders sagged, and he looked the epitome of confused.

Germany realized he had just taken Italy on a wild ride across a quarter of Europe, all so that they
could mate, together, here. He really wanted to do it. He did. A minute ago, he had really wanted to do it too. But not exactly now. Upon entering the room, every single instinct had switched to this. Germany kept the pillow in front of his mouth. His lips were beginning to shake. “Not yet. I need to fix this. I’m...I’m sorry. Soon.”

Italy dropped to his knees, and began crawling forward. “Really? Is that the truth?” If Germany had ever seen Italy look like a tiger, flicking its tail as it fixated upon its prey, the moment was now.

“Y-yes” Germany said, hearing is voice waver. He realized how unreasonable he was being. He had just forced an alpha come into his nest, after seeing him in heat, and now he expected that alpha to wait for him? “I mean, if you think not, maybe it’s not important; you’re the–the alpha, after all, so it’s up to you.” Letting the pillow fall, he slipped his pants the rest of the way off; looking down, he blushed at the wet stain in his underwear, and winced as he started to take those away too.

Then Italy’s hands shot out and stopped him. “No, I think you’re right.” Italy said.

Germany looked up and saw that Italy was kneeling within the ring of pillows, his pants looking tight against his crotch, his muscles twitching tensely, but still that peaceful, dopey smile on his face. It almost looked comical.

“I think these pillows do need to be fixed.” Italy continued. “Ooh! I know, we can make a fort!” He picked one up, and began fluffing it. “Is this the right way, Germany? I don’t know if I am doing it the right way.”

Germany picked up the pillow he had let fall. “Well, it should actually be more of a-” he showed with his own pillow “-a pulling motion. Yes. That is better. If you do it like that then you may help. Let’s...build a fort.”

And so they did. It was a pretty decent size, too; but not exactly structurally sound. Italy giggled as the roof caved in on him.

“Help me, Germany, help me!”

“Always you are getting yourself into trouble, Italia” Germany chided, doing a perfect impression of himself from a few years ago. “Fine, I will rescue you, one more time.”

He began army crawling through the tunnel, feeling a great satisfaction from the way the pillows cradled him from all sides. He army crawled until he found Italy’s head, sticking out from one of the bigger cushions, and half covered by a fluttery white sheet.

“Take cover, Germany, they’re still after us!” With a big flourish, Italy billowed the sheet into the air, and it lightly settled over the two of them, making a little cloth bubble. A tent for the wounded.

“I’m hit, Germany, they got me right in the head.”

“You would be dead if they hit you in the head.”

“No” Italy denied, scooping away the place where the sheet sagged in front of his eyes. “It was France, and he has terrible aim, so it just hurts. Do you have a medic?”

“I am the medic. Show me where it hurts.”

“Right here.” Italy said, pointing to his forehead.
“Is that so? Then I will have to perform a lobotomy.”

“Ah! I meant right here!” Italy said, moving his finger down to his cheek.

Germany considered him for a moment. “Okay, then I will fix it the way you taught me” he said, kissing Italy once on the cheek.

“This side hurts too.” Italy said, pointing to his other cheek.

Germany kissed him on the other side. Italy watched him for a moment, waiting.

Still, he’s waiting for me. Germany leaned forward, and hesitated. Then he touched their lips together too.

They stayed like that for a moment. Then Germany hesitated, again, before parting his lips.

Italy’s tongue traced along the inner edge of his lip. Germany let it happen. After that, Italy’s entire tongue slipped into his mouth.

Bang. Germany responded to Italy’s kiss like a starved dog. Throwing his arms over the alpha’s shoulders, Germany pulled closer, teeth scraping against the corners of Italy’s mouth as he turned his head to make it easier to press himself flush. The sheet bubble popped as he broke off to haul in a breath of air, and then latched onto Italy again; his hands scrabbling against his own neck as he loosened the tie his brother had adjusted for him the morning before, and hurled it across the room.

"Okay" Germany panted, breaking the kiss. "Should we start?" He was still terrified that his own inhibitions might stop him. Before he could hesitate more, he undid his shirt and removed his underwear.

Rubbing at the corner of his lip, Italy followed his lead and undressed himself the rest of the way too.

Being completely naked, and seeing Italy completely naked made Germany’s pulse zing into his throat. This was real. This was happening. His blood pounded through his chest as he pulled Italy close again and the two of them toppled into the pile of pillows together.

Just do it, just do it, just do it–he rolled swiftly onto his back and spread his legs. His movements were crisp and stiff, like a soldier following orders. Just do it, just do it...

“Are you sure you want me to, Germany?” Italy asked, eyeing him dubiously.

He realized he had been reciting the mantra out loud.

“Yes” he said, pulling Italy into the dominant position. “I’m ready.”

Ready? Well, the second wave of his heat hadn’t quite started yet, but what did that matter? Like everything else he had needed to surmount in life, the best course of action was to forge stalwartly ahead, and get what needed to be done, done. He had already put it off enough with his nesting. “Start now.”

Italy obeyed. Grasping onto each of Germany’s legs, he pushed Germany’s thighs slightly up and slightly back, so that Germany’s pelvis was tilted at an easier, more exposed angle. Germany felt a feverish warmth beginning to fry his face as he thought about how Italy could see everything.

And then he felt it. The thing. Italy, the alpha.
It began to nudge its way inside. He began to breathe faster as he felt how hard it was. How strange it felt, the pressure of his little area of flesh being opened that way. Sure, he had used sex toys before, but those had been slimmer, cooler, and completely within his control. *This is natural, this is natural, it won’t hurt me, it shouldn’t hurt me--Oh God, what if I rip? It feels--It feels like I might--*

Germany felt himself twitch and tense and start to panic as Italy began to penetrate him. “A--Ah--Bruder!” He yelped, as if he were a child again, frightened and calling for his brother to rescue him from the dark.

Halfway in, Italy pulled out. “Germany, I’m sorry! If you’re scared, just tell me and we don’t have to do this.”

Germany opened his eyes, and shook his head frantically. “I want you” he said quickly. “And I am scared, but I don’t want it to get in the way of getting what I want.”

Italy’s voice shook. “I am scared too. I don’t want to hurt you. You are very tight down there, Germany.”

“Then please just...help me.” Germany whispered, hearing his own words tremble. “Don’t leave me. Don’t stop. I need you.”

Italy responded to Germany’s intensely imploring gaze with a blush of his own. “O-Okay Germany. But let me try it...my way.”

Germany wondered what that might mean. Perhaps a position switch? Something involving food? He wondered. Would it demean him? Would it hurt? Part of him became more afraid. But then he remembered…

This was Italy.

Just...Italy.

He would never trust Italy to win a war, stand up to torture, craft a good weapon, or figure out a battle strategy. But for this?

“Please.” He affirmed. “Please do.”

Italy’s curl bounced as he gave a determined little nod. “Alright, but first I want to tell you something. I want to make sure your head is in the right spot. Okay?”

“Okay” Germany said, eyes widening at the anxiety that he might answer the question wrong.

“Whatever you do here, it is separate from what you do at meetings, or when you're training, or if you ever go to war again. Alright?”

Feeling a sense of relief, Germany nodded, accepting this form of permission gladly. He understood. There was no need to compensate for the role he was about to take. Who he was didn’t hinge on a little thing like sex.

“Alright” he agreed, keeping his eyes steady on Italy’s face above him. “Except I don’t ever want to go to war again.”

“I like that.” Italy said, smiling encouragingly.
Alright, we have spoken. What is he going to do next?

Italy laid on his side, facing Germany. He watched Germany for a moment, and then reached out and ran a hand through Germany’s loose, ungelled hair. “I like this too.” Italy said, his voice deepening slightly.

Germany shivered as he felt Italy’s fingers groom over his scalp. Will he pull it? Part of him wanted Italy to. But then Italy’s fingers traced softly down to his cheek. “You are such a very beautiful sight, Germania.”

Germany stared at Italy, almost starstruck, as he thought about how long he had wanted him and how No, he’s such a beautiful sight.

“Germany” Italy said, picking up Germany’s hand and placing it on his side “It’s okay for you to touch me too.”

Germany’s eyelashes fluttered in a brief exposure of his surprise at how Italy seemed able to read his mind. “Where can I touch you?” He asked, wary of stepping past his place.

“Anywhere you want.”

Anywhere? Germany shifted closer, eyeing Italy for a change in heart, before lowering his position so that he could nuzzle his nose against Italy’s neck, and feel the warmth of the mediterranean nation’s entire body pressing up against his skin. He ran the hand Italy had placed along Italy’s side, before wrapping back up and in between them so that he could feel Italy’s chest. He felt Italy’s hands move to cup the back of his head, before tracing down to his neck, and then down his spine, and settling at the small of his back.

He felt the second wave of his heat creep closer as Italy began massaging him there. Groaning slightly, he shuddered and turned instinctually onto his back. Italy followed after him, so that the distance between them stayed minimal.

Italy rested his elbow next to Germany’s face and began kissing him...slowly. So slowly. Germany’s knowledge about everything that had ever happened in time and space narrowed to one shivering pinpoint; and that was the fact of Italy’s mouth above me, on top of me, inside me, and the way Italy’s mouth felt so soft and hard at the same time, and the way he was just laying there, the sheet beneath him and Italy on top of him. Then he felt Italy’s fingertips touching lightly, almost tickling at his ears…

And for some odd reason, that just did it.

Something a mix between a moan and a sigh slipped passed his lips, and his knees drew together as the second wave of his heat hit him and slick began to slip all between and down and over everything.

Italy gave a victorious hum, and Germany began to squirm and pant as he felt Italy’s hand slide up his thigh and between his cheeks, as if he were trying to collect as much of the fluid as possible. Germany watched with dilated, half hazy eyes as he raised his head and could see Italy rubbing the fluid over his own body part, coating it until it glistened in the faint light. Germany could see how hard and achy and flushed it looked, and he realized the restraint that it must have taken for Italy to pull out of him and bother to lubricate himself to begin with.

His own restraint was wearing thin. The blood was searing hot against the inside of his face, and the feeling that he needed something inside him now caused him to gasp for air and spread his legs,
muttering “Please, please, please, please…”

Italy silenced his begging by pressing their mouths together; Germany’s whimpers turned into faintly high pitched breaths out of his nose. He could feel the pressure of Italy about to go in, Italy going in—oh God Italy’s mouth was at his ear again—he arched his back and felt the base of both his thighs bump against Italy's hips—Italy was in.

“Is it okay, Germany? Do you like it?”

Germany didn’t speak, but exhaled shakily and gave his head a series of quick nods, knowing his face was glowing red and his eyes shut, which he didn’t want Italy to interpret as a signal of pain.

It didn’t hurt, not really; though he could feel the pressure of his insides clenching around Italy, and his entire body was standing on the edge of its nerves to figure out how the thing inside him was going to move. When Italy began moving, it was slow, but still with enough force to cause Germany’s hips, and everything that was connected to them and everything connected to that, to inch backwards and forwards. It was strange to feel his entire body swat at the motions of someone else. Germany understood why Italy had been worried about him feeling disconcerted by his own lack of control. The comparison that popped first into his mind was the feeling of being shot on the battlefield, and the way his body, really such a soft thing, would jolt back, seize up, and stumble, before the realization of pain even arrived.

Then he heard a string of soft noise, and a sliver of his eyes cracked through to see his ally, his friend, holding him, brushing his lips against his skin, and whispering breathless little phrases in Italian—“...cosi bello, che carino, che cariiiiino...non aver paura...amore, mi amore... cosi buono...sei cosi buono...amore...” --And he decided that this was in no way the same as being shot. This wasn't so bad...in fact, it actually felt kind of--

Oh

Germany's lips parted and he let out a faint mewl. When he heard it his eyes flew open and he blushed furiously, realizing that he had made the exact same sound as a kitten.

As if playing along with the joke, Italy purred and licked the tip of Germany’s nose like a cat.

Germany raised his head and bit Italy on the nose.

“Aiya, we have a Sadist here!” Italy squeaked, as Germany let go of his nose and began chuckling.

Brown hair brushed against Germany’s jaw and he felt Italy’s teeth clamp onto his neck. “Ah~” His head tossed back and he made the noise automatically.

Italy giggled. “Or a masochist, maybe.”

“I didn’t know you had that in you” Germany breathed, each word coming out with a hitch as Italy pumped.

Italy cocked his head “You know I like to eat” he said, a faint laugh behind his voice.

“Pasta, not people, dummmkomm-ha” Germany’s lungs caught as Italy found a different angle. Groaning, he arched his back and tipped his head so that he could feel his teeth scraping against his own shoulder.

“Is it good? Do you like that Germany?”
He nodded quickly and felt the air of his nose letting out a brief whine.

“Germany” Italy panted “Can I please go faster and deeper?”


Italy’s hands moved to the area where Germany’s sides met his hips. In one rough motion, he pulled Germany further up along his–and oh, God~

Germany threw his hands up and grabbed Italy by the head, kissing him feverishly and feeling rush of satisfaction at the way Italy’s hair caught against his fingers. In the process that funny little curl twisted around his pinkie finger and–

“Mama mia” Italy moaned, making a face, such a face that Germany tossed his head back and let fly a panting, airy, carefree laugh. When his head tipped forward again his eyes were closed and he was grinning, as he felt his body get rocked and his ungelled hair turn sweaty and messy and tangled against the sheets.

“Germany” Italy gasped, “I am going to knot you soon and it’s going to feel different but you should be okay as long as you don’t try to get out of it. Okay?”

Germany gazed up at Italy, eyes wide again. “What happens if I try to get out of it?” He asked.

Italy wiped away some of the sweaty hair that was contouring the edge of his jaw. “I think it would hurt” he said, speculatively. “I think it would hurt for both of us. So… please don’t…?”

“Ja, ja. Mach schon. Mach weiter und mach es” Germany breathed, his mouth weaving into his mother tongue unconsciously.

The motions of Italy’s hips picked up speed–Germany’s moans began to become choppy and he opened his mouth to breathe–hah, hah–as Italy’s gasping mouth whimpered broken Italian against his tongue and they both embraced each other tightly–so tightly it felt as if they were about to merge into one nation. Each breath Germany drew was attached to a shadow of a high, euphoric bleat–it was so fast so full so good–all of the atoms of the parts of him he never gave to anyone else were zinging with electricity, swollen, hungry–Italy grabbed his head and pushed their foreheads together so their sweaty hair mingled, noses touching as they breathed the same breaths, mouths crying out to each other.

And then it happened.

In one rapid burst, the warmth and the wet and the hard and the long expanded, as the roots of a potted plant extend to fill every crevice of their container. Germany writhed for a second, and then stilled. They were knotted.

He took a sharp intake of breath, and immediately Italy’s hand was at his cheek.

“How are you, Germania?” Italy’s voice was ragged and drenched in lust, but he still managed to sound soft and concerned.

“I am good.”

“Does it hurt?”

Germany squirmed slightly around the thing inside of him. It followed his motions as if a part of
his own body. “No. Just very full.”

Italy’s breath was against his neck. “Benne. That’s the way it’s supposed to be.”

He looked down and he saw a faint strip of something bridging the gap between Italy’s pelvis and his own. He looked up and he saw Italy’s eyes right above him, soft, brown, and affectionate as Italy leaned against his chest. “Now comes the slow part” Italy sighed.

Germany’s legs were wide apart, knees hovering somewhere above his naval. As Italy’s mouth worked slowly against his neck, Germany hooked his ankles over Italy’s back, and hugged him softly with his legs. Italy moved like a gentle ocean wave, pressing forward, easing up, pressing forward, easing up. Germany could feel Italy’s pulse inside of him. He could feel his own slow down to match.

He closed his eyes. “I feel good, Italy.”

Italy moved upwards and smiled against his mouth. “Benne” he said. “That’s the way it’s supposed to be.”

Chapter End Notes

translations:

“...così bello, che carino, che cariiiino...non aver paura...amore, mi amore... cosi buono...sei così buono...amore...” : "So beautiful, how cute, how cuuuute...don't be afraid...love, my love...so good...you're so good...love..." (Italian)

"dummkomm~ha": "Dummy~mm~ha" (German)

"Ja, ja. Mach schon. Mach weiter und mach es." : "Yes, yes. Go ahead. Go ahead and do it." (German)

"Benne": "Good" (Italian)

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter as much as Germany and Italy did! And I just wanted to say that there is a glitch or something that is making it so that I can't reply to comments on the previous chapter. Hopefully it will get fixed, but in the meantime, I just wanted to address it and say that I appreciate those comments even though I have not been able to reply.

*update* glitch was fixed!
Prussia arrived more than punctually to the meeting. In fact, he was early. It was, after all, one of the few times he had been needed to attend one of these, since becoming an ex nation.

He decided to use his extra time to go to the bathroom. Passing through the door marked with a bold letter A, he grinned at himself in the mirror and stuck a few cool diplomatic poses.

_Yup. Still got it._

But still...He remembered when he was stronger.

No, no time to sigh and groan about being an old man. He was awesome. How old was he now? Including the Teutonic Knights, 700, plus or minus? And he still looked like he was 27. Well, minus the silver hair. That maybe made him look older. But that wasn’t important. _Kleiner needs me._ He felt a purposeful and passionate sense of importance. And exhaustion. But that didn't matter, because his brother needed him.

Squaring his shoulders, he strode out of the bathroom and down the hall to the conference room.

When he stepped inside, his first perception was of _tension_. Everybody was so stiff. Yeesh.

Deciding to lighten the mood he inserted himself amongst them and announced: “Hey everybody, the Awesome has arrived. Brother’s orders.”

Hungary was standing closest. “You’re coming in place of Germany?” She asked, eyes widening.

“Of course. Who else?”

“My God, we’re doomed” she groaned. She grabbed Austria, who was passing by with a handbook labeled “The beginner’s guide to conflict management” in his hand, and a frazzled, distracted look on his face. “Are you okay with this?” She asked him.

Pulling his collar straight again, Austria shot them both an annoyed glare and snapped, “It’s out of my power. Let me read.”

_Well, he’s not going to fill me in on yesterday…_ Prussia turned to find someone else. Someone mature and responsible enough to let him know what needed to—Oh, there was England getting poked incessantly in the head by France. England was responsible, right? “Hey, England.”

England finished shouting something about public nudity and time travel, before extricating himself from France and turning to Prussia. "Oh, hello there, East Germany. Fancy seeing you here."

"Ja." Prussia said, deciding to ignore the use of his less awesome title. “Tell me about what went down yesterday. I’m filling in for my little brother.”

"Ah, right. How is he?"

Prussia thought of his poor baby brother, holed up probably somewhere in Austria’s basement, hating himself for being unable to attend the meeting, and worried sick about what was going to
happen to the world in his absence.

Well, at least he was safe.

"He's hanging in there" Prussia replied. He supposed everybody was already privy to the embarrassing details.

"There’s a good chap." England said, nodding approvingly. "You know, I used to think he was the biggest arse over land and sea. But he’s been a lot more subdued lately. It’s almost sad to watch. When you get the chance, let him know that he did well yesterday."

"Speaking of" Prussia said, taking this as the perfect way to direct the conversation back toward the information he wanted (and also thinking he would never pass along such a patronizing, substanceless message of encouragement onto Germany, as it would only make him feel worse), "What do I need to know for today?"

England let out a huffy breath. “To put it simply, they both are using proxies to aim missiles at each other and we could fix things easily if they just took a moment to stop acting like children!”

The last part, he said rather loudly; so loudly that both Russia and America took a moment to shoot over a quick glare.

“Angleterre, shut your énorme trumpeting sconehole, you are going to get us all blown up!” France interrupted, pulling the alpha by the ear.

“Ow, getoffa me you dumpty poofing cheese monkey!” And with that the two quickly descended into scuffling.

Prussia edged away, deciding it was time to chat with someone else.

“Romano” He said, taking the unoccupied seat next to North Italy’s brother. “My favorite Italian. How’s it going?” He used to like North Italy a hell of a lot too; perhaps even a hell of a lot better. But circumstances change…

“Hmf. My idiota twin brother is driving me up the wall.”

“Pshh. Brothers. What’d he do?” Other than try to fuck my little brother…

“Yesterday he chickened out and didn’t even bother coming to this big fucking shebang. And today he weaseled away too. Probably out on a beach with some bella, laughing about how I have to do all the work around here.”

“Huh” Prussia said “So you haven’t seen him since yesterday?”

“No. Bastard.”

“Ha! My brother never skirts around work. That’s because he was raised by me.”

“Yeah? Then where is he now?”

“Out…” Prussia said vaguely. He wondered why Romano didn’t already know. Hadn’t Germany’s heat come while he was at the meeting yesterday? Well, maybe Germany had been on break at the time, or on his way out of the meeting, or in the omega bathroom. Either way, he probably hadn’t gone shouting about where he was staying the night. “…For health reasons” he finished. Prussia liked the Italy brothers, but if you couldn’t trust one of them…Well. When it came to the matter of
his little brother, all cards were off the table.

“Pf. You mean he’s in heat? Don’t pretend that we don’t already know. We saw when it happened last time.”

*Poor Kleiner.* What an awful and embarrassing way to have his secret torn from him.

“He’s got grit though, my brother” Prussia said, deciding to stand up a little for him in his absence. “He’s a strong one. Stubborn as hell, too. If he wasn’t an omega, he would probably be invincible.”

“Good thing he is then” Romano said darkly. Then he crossed his arms and grumbled reluctantly. “Though I suppose he did an okay job breaking up the fight yesterday. We would’ve been toast.”

“Ja” Prussia said, nodding along smugly despite having heard about this for the first time. “Das ist mein Bruder.” Now he realized why England had asked him to pass along that message. He smiled proudly. *It seems they did need you, Kleiner. And at the same time, Why do you ALWAYS get yourself in the middle of something dangerous, you stubborn Arschloch?!!*

The meeting began, the two superpowers (especially Russia) looking scary as hell (not that Prussia was scared, no way) but still appearing to be somewhat calmer than what Prussia imagined they must have been like the day before.

Russia was resting his elbows on the table, and tapping his fingers lazily over the wood. America crossed his legs, leaning back in his chair and watching Russia with a glazed, somewhat pensive expression (from what Prussia could see, of course. Those sunglasses were new…)

“Allright.” As soon as Austria spoke, a serious hush came over the audience. “After a brief adjournment, we are now going to pick up this meeting…*not* where we left off. We’ve flipped a coin, and America had been elected to go first. Begin.”

“Hah!” Suddenly America laughed. Uncrossing his legs, he slapped both his palms flat on the table and grinned at Russia. “Did you mean to say that?!”

Russia giggled childishly. “Maybe I did.”

“What’s going on?” Austria asked immediately. Everybody else was confused too, including Prussia. And the worry—was there some sort of argument they all had missed?

“America, what is the point of me using code if you are going to shout out your responses anyways?” Russia pouted, letting his fingers fall flat on the table top.

*Oh, he had been tapping morse….*

Austria looked severe. “If you have communicated anything that is not on the record, I urge you to disclose it to the rest of us, for matters of legal discourse and international safety!”

For once Prussia agreed with that uptight snoot. If the two superpowers had been goading each other into a fight—or worse, forming some kind of secret, under the radar alliance—it was a dangerous situation for everybody else.

America's eyebrows raised with an innocent sort of incredulity. “Jeez, do we really need to? It was just a joke.”

“A ‘joke’?”
“All he said was…”—America’s mouth curled upward as he glanced to his former caretaker—“that England didn’t need an eye patch when he was a pirate because he could just flip one of his eyebrows down to block out the suck.”

"The 'sun' America" Russia corrected lightly.


“Is that code for something?” Austria asked the superpowers suspiciously.

“No” Russia said, giving one of his scarily nice little smiles “It was simply a tactic to lighten the atmosphere.”

“Alright” Austria relented tensely. “Well, then I suppose we may begin. No more secret messages!”

To Russia’s credit, it seemed like the tactic might have worked. Though there were still the occasional sticky moment, Prussia thought that the meeting went pretty well. America seemed to be less serious than he had been before. More like himself. There were no big fights or interventions, and in the end, Russia and Cuba agreed to lower their weapons if America and Turkey did the same.

“That went better than expected” Prussia announced (to all those in his general vicinity), as the conference began to dispel. “Probably because I was here.”

“Great fucking whoop” Romano sulked, standing and stretching. “Time to call my brother and see if he actually gives a shit. Maybe if he gets his act together then dinner’ll be ready when I get back.”

“Sounds like a solid plan” Prussia nodded, waving Romano off. Speaking of brothers… “Hey Austria” Before the beta could slip into the crowd, he grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him his way. “How’s my Brüderlein, huh? Where are you keeping him? I can take him home now.”

Austria raised an eyebrow. "I beg your pardon?"

"Oh mein Gott. You're stuck up and slow. Come on, cough him up, I know you let him stay over last night. He told me himself. What, are you holding him prisoner in your basement or something?”

Austria straightened his clothing pissily. “I have no idea what you are talking about. Germany left yesterday.”


It was as if the bomb had been dropped anyways.

What?!

As Austria strode away, Prussia’s slack jawed expression morphed into one of complete and utter panic. He stumbled forward numbly. “Austria, wait! If he’s not here and he’s not at your place, then—where is my little brother?!”

“That” Austria said, stepping delicately out into the hall “Sounds like your responsibility. Or much rather…his.” And he left.
Images of a lost and mangled body began flying through Prussia’s mind. Had Germany been abducted by strangers? Intercepted on his way home? Was his body lying in a ditch somewhere? Obviously he had lied on the phone—perhaps at gunpoint? But no, they had a code word for that sort of scenario...Prussia bolted out of the conference room, each step infused with a barely contained sense of hysteria, and thinking that maybe he could make a call, but to where? For a moment, The daylight of the area outside the lobby had him blinded. He saw Romano, at the payphone, waiting to call the other brother that never showed up.

And then, the pieces started to come together. *If my brother isn’t here, and he isn’t there, then he must be—*”

Romano was grumbling as he hung up the unanswered phone. “Fucking Italia…” he swore, scuffing his shoe against the pavement.

Chapter End Notes

Translations:
Das ist mein Bruder: That's my brother
Arschloch: Asshole

*Morse code: code used to transfer messages using a series of short and long beeps (dot/dash). It was used mostly during WW2, the Korean War, and Vietnam. It originally worked by sending electrical pulses over telegraph (but you could also tap it, like Russia did).*
Chapter 15

When Italy woke up the first thing he saw was Germany.

Germany: his friend, his ally, and now, his mate.

Mate?

Italy shifted onto his side, and rested his head in the crook of his elbow so that he could observe Germany as he contemplated that word.

He didn’t particularly like the word “mate”. It always sounded to him like either something England would say, or something you would read in a book about animals. A better word? He would have to wait and see if it came to him. In the meantime....

He took a secret delight in the fact that he had woken up first. It was a rare occurrence whenever he and Germany had shared a bed in the past. He watched the way Germany slept, with his hands curled neatly in front of his face, his broad shoulders slack, his muscles-- less defined than they had been at their peak, but still, eye catching--forming little relaxed swells underneath his pale, slightly pink skin.

At some point in the night, it seemed he and Germany had extricated themselves from each other for the convenience of sleeping. They were both still naked, which Italy, for one, had no discomfort with. He wasn’t cold. The sheet served as a suitable blanket for them in this warm, stuffy bunker. It created a bridge between their two skeletons, draping over them both like a Roman toga, gone undone. Italy watched the way Germany’s hip pushed a sturdy hill against the fabric. He fought the impulse to reach out and cup that hill, run his hand down its slope. Surely, that would startle Germany, to be touched in his sleep... Instead, Italy gazed, and thought about how, just a few hours ago, he had been the alpha chosen to open up those hips, to pour himself into them...

Oh, he hoped Germany had really liked it. Germany had said he had felt good but...Italy thought about Germany trembling as he waited to be penetrated, Germany crying out for his older brother as it happened. Italy crushed his face against the pillow, breathing out shakily.

Ever since he had met Germany, he had thought of him as so tough, so strong, so incredibly brave. Someone to turn to when he himself was scared shitless. On the day that Germany’s secret had been discovered, Italy had, like all the other alphas, rushed into the bathroom and felt a ravenous, nearly overwhelming desire for whatever it was that scent was coming from. ‘What’? ‘It’? No, who. It had been Germany, his friend, his best friend, curled up on the floor there. Fear was something that Italy understood. He understood it well. And he understood it when he saw it piercing through Germany’s eyes from that incredibly vulnerable position.

Germany shifted in his sleep. He made a little sound out of his nose, akin to the little puff of air a kitten might expel when napping. Italy unburied one eye from the pillow, so that he could watch again.

Italy never wanted Germany to feel so scared as that. Germany had always seemed to have such a harder time than he did--Germany’s life so far seemed to be one violent, scary thing after another, and Italy felt lucky that he didn’t have the same life. Sure, he had been on the same side of loss
before, but it just wasn’t the same. Germany was stubborn. He didn’t know when to give up. He didn’t know when he was hurting himself. He could be good at being bossy and commandeering, but somehow even better was he at doing what he was told, at following orders. It was as if he had been raised to be a soldier. Italy thought of Prussia, and he became sad.

Prussia was important. He wasn't something to be swept away by a phony phone call and a few days in a bunker. He was Germany's closest family; his brother--in many ways, his parent too. And even though Italy had been starting to think that, maybe, Prussia was just as good at hurting Germany as he was at protecting him, Italy didn't want Prussia to go away. Then what would Germany have? A mate. For one human--or for one...whatever he and Germany were--That just wasn’t enough.

No, certainly, (despite however much Germany might avoid admitting it) Prussia's love, Prussia's protection, and Prussia's acceptance were important to Germany's happiness. But as far as Italy could tell, Prussia would never approve of Germany and Italy together, as mates. The thing that made him saddest about that was...well, he could see why.

Prussia was right. Italy would never be strong enough or brave enough to protect Germany from all the scary things, like a true alpha should. Like Prussia seemed to have been trying to do, in his own precautionary, fear mongering way. Italy hadn't thought that Germany seemed the type to like protecting, but…

He thought back to the day they became friends. *When I’m in a pinch, you’ll help me. And when you're in a pinch, I’ll come and help you...*  

He remembered that happy little smile that had spread across Germany’s face. *“Friends, huh?”* Maybe Germany had always liked the idea of being protected better than he had let on. Maybe Germany had needed to pretend, because at the end of the day, Italy had always been the one who needed saving. Sometimes, Italy thought about all the reasons Germany had to be disappointed in him. Sometimes it felt like a lot. Not too many years ago, he had wondered if Germany even really liked him at all, as an ally or as a friend.

And yet, out of all the alphas in the world, Germany had chosen him as a partner. His heart strained with containing a sudden, acute sense of affection. He wanted to pull Germany to his chest, kiss away his fear and tell him all the words which would explain how much he cared about him.

It dawned on him. *Amante.* That was the word. That sounded right.

By accident, he whispered it.

*

He heard a word, whispered, and it pulled him softly into consciousness. He wasn't sure what it meant, but it was in Italy's voice, so he opened his eyes.

The pillows pressed against the places where his frame created pressure points: shoulder, hips. He was lying on his side, in his nest; for the first time in his life, not alone.

Italy was lying on his side too, head resting against the crook of his elbow, watching him.

When they met eyes, Italy smiled, as if they were meeting each other again after a long journey. "Oh look,” he said. “It’s just you.”
Germany stared at how Italy looked: his bright eyes reflecting the dim light and his reddish brown hair completely mussed and snarled against the pillow.

Germany wondered if he looked the same way. “Just me” he echoed, and, after a pause, “And just you.”

Italy’s eyelids dropped for a second, his lashes thick and dark as he asked a tentative “How are you feeling, Germany?”

“Hungry.”

Italy laughed and then sat up. “Breakfast time now?”

“Ja” Germany said, curling up too. He felt a slight tenderness down below and looked down at himself, still naked from the night before. There were his normal looking male parts, and out of sight, he knew, his inconspicuous omega parts. He thought about the night before, and suddenly wondered if sex would have felt less intense if he was lacking the latter, like a beta. It was astonishing, how much sensation could come from that one source of his anatomy. And he still didn’t understand how it all worked. The bookish part of him made a mental note: *I’ll have to get ahold on another one of those pamphlets afterwards.*

Italy was already rummaging through the industrial looking shelf unit where Germany kept the food supply. Eyes abandoning himself, Germany watched Italy, who was also butt naked, giving Germany a chance to observe his narrow hips, his comparatively smaller backside.

Italy turned around, ignoring all the nakedness going on in the room, in favor of shuffling over to Germany, staring down at the package in his hands. “Germany, did you know that you have 25 packages of vacuum packed ravioli in here?”

Germany fiddled with a loose thread on one of the pillows, and gave a brief “Ja.”

“And 30 packages of linguini?”

“...Ja.”

Italy rubbed his thumb across the light coating of dust softening the surface of the plastic. He pressed his hand to his cheek, covering his mouth, as if looking at the thing made him too emotional for words.

Germany set his eyes determinedly on the floor. “They should still be good,” he said. Yes. He had, from the very start of his relationship with Italy, made sure that the bunker had at least a few things that his ally would like, should they find themselves trapped together. There was still one dusty jar of pickled daikon radish for Japan— but the rest of the stuff for him had long since been cleaned out. For some reason, even after the war, Germany had found himself buying the occasional jar of tomato sauce or box of pasta from the supermarket, to add to his stockpile. Of course, he had told himself it was because Italy was his friend, and because Italy would surely panic and run to him if there ever was a true need to use a bunker. Every shopping trip, he had told himself that this was surely, completely, and utterly, the only reason.

So why did his face feel like a waffle iron? Italy swooped down and kissed Germany on the cheek. "You really do like me, don't you?"

Well, no use lying. “Yes” he muttered. “You know I do. I have for a while.”

"Dulce" Italy murmured, apparently to himself. "Che dulce."
Germany decided to change the topic. "Italy, I am going to the toilet. There is a metal pot and 18 canisters of water in the box in the corner; you may use approximately .3 of one canister for cooking. If you have any questions on how to operate the electric burner, knock. Okay?"

"Okay!"

Germany got up, grabbing the little plastic bag from the drugstore as he went.

The bathroom was small; barely as big as a porta potty, its cement walls stocked with all manner of toothpaste and floss and hygiene products that one could possibly need if waiting out the indefinite end of a war—or a heat cycle.

The first thing Germany did was pee; then, wash: hands, face—if there was actually a nuclear war, the water from this sink would be contaminated, if the infrastructure even held up at all… Maybe it was best to use the tap sparingly, he thought, wiping his face dry. Afterall, he still didn't know how that second world meeting had gone.

He took out the pills and examined them.

The back of the box informed him that he was taking the medication at the right time. According to this little panel of cardboard, as long as he was a male omega, taking this pill within 24 hours after having sex, he should not have to worry about taking any additional medication to prevent a pregnancy.

He wondered who the hell had figured out all that. He imagined, for a moment, the consequences of the many loopholes that might crumble into existence around the word should, and the dizzying image of himself—round belly, swollen chest—popped into his mind.

He downed the pill, and hoped the scientists knew what they were doing. Not that he hated the idea of being a parent, but…

No. That sort of thing took extensive planning. He would want to get Italy’s input on the idea first and secure a marital status with him and achieve financial stability and make sure his brother had time to accept the reality of—

Too much. Germany ditched the spiral of big thoughts and left the bathroom.

“Ooh, Germany good.” Italy said when he came back over. “I could only find a package of little wursts so they're probably going to cook kind of fast and the pasta is going to boil soon but I just realized I need to pee! Can you please please watch the stove?”

“Ja. Sorry for taking so long in the bathroom.”

“Non c'è problema!” The door shut behind him.

Germany was left alone with the light sizzling of the meat pieces as they sat in a small pan, greased with a thin puddle of extra virgin olive oil, next to the bubbling pot of water and pasta.

It really was nice of Italy to make both.

He turned down the heat to keep the water from boiling over. He picked up a fork, and began stirring the pasta around its miniature lake, to make sure the pieces didn’t end up sticking together. He wondered if this was how Italy did most of his thinking. Staring at the cooking…it made him feel the same way he did staring into a campfire.
Like the rapid, white-hot bubbles shooting through the surface of the water, recent memories began floating to the surface of his mind. The image of Italy's face, hair hanging over the edges, some of it plastered to his cheek, the quiet sound of his breath, was the first. It made that hot, tight, good feeling tingle in his lower belly. It made him clutch his free arm around his legs and use his knees to hide that smile—that little smile his brother would rage over if he saw.

The moist heat of the boiling water crawled up the metal of the fork, like a warm breath, ever closer to his fingertips.

Then he remembered Italy, scooping the roof of their pillow fort from his eyes; Italy, his hands reaching out to stop him from taking off the last of his clothes; Italy, doodling a little flower on every single one of his damn sticky notes. The memories slipped through his mind, the same way the pasta ran freely between the prongs of the fork…

*Comparing things to pasta? He's really getting to me, isn't he…*

He felt an odd emotion. Warm. Fragile. Like the inside of his chest were melting and seeping between his ribs, spreading to everywhere in his body. But still acutely epicentered at his heart. It was so intense, he wondered if it was hormonal.

Then he thought about the way he had felt that day in the bathroom at that conference. He thought about the way he must have looked to the other nations, including Italy. He thought about the danger he had been in.

Turning down the stove, rested his forehead against his knees, and scooted away from the cooling pot of water. The warmth was too much for him.

He heard the click of a closing door. Italy was back. “Oh good, the pasta is—Germany?”

Germany took his forehead off of his arms—he didn’t want Italy think he was crying. He wasn’t, after all. Still, Italy knelt down beside him and touched his arm, sounding scared. “Is something the matter, Germany? Are you feeling okay? Does something hurt?”

“No, Italy, I...I just wanted to thank you.”

“Thank me?”

“Yes.” he said. “Thank you for your patience, Italia.” Determined to prove it, he set his eyes determinedly on his mate.

“Patience with what, Germania?” Italy asked, looking, as he was always so good at looking, genuinely confused.

“For waiting until I was ready. And for... not hurting me when you could have.” Germany turned warm, thinking not only of the night before but remembering all the times Italy had seen him at his most weak and animalistic: clutching at a pillow in his nest, impaling himself with his own fingers in the back of the car, trembling uncontrollably on Italy’s lap, reduced to dirty sex object by the words of the clerk, writhing on the bathroom floor at the conference.

He leaned in, and tipped his forehead against Italy’s chest—partially because he was embarrassed, but mostly because he liked the way it felt to lay his head there, and because it was the most comforting and non-judgemental motion when Italy wrapped his arm around him, sunk down into the pillows with him, and cradled him against his side. It was nice to feel like he didn’t have to act tough. It was nice to feel nurtured.
He could feel the response vibrating against his cheek when Italy spoke. “I would wait for you forever, Germania.”

Chapter End Notes

Translation:
Amante: Lover
Dulce...che dulce: sweet...so sweet
Non c’è problema!: No problem!

And thank you for your patience too! I’m sorry it took so long...

This chapter was originally going to be a lot longer, but I decided to use what I was originally going to have here in the next chapter, to get it out sooner. I realized part of the way through that I would rather have some parts written in Italy’s perspective, so I ended up re writing a lot, here, and in the next chapter. The good news is that I have more already written for the next chapter, and I am going to make it a goal to put it out within the next week or so.

I thank you all for your wonderful and encouraging comments! I often look back at them when I am in a slump, and they motivate me to keep writing, and even give me ideas for what to focus on the most. For this chapter, I decided to place that focus on Germany and Italy’s friendship, and how their past is influencing their developing relationship. I hope that you enjoyed it! And if it feels like more development needs to occur, you are right. More is yet to come!

*also: virtual high five to anyone who finds the HRE=Germany allusions in this chapter ;)
“Thank you for your patience, Italia” Germany said, giving Italy a dose of piercingly blue eye contact.

“Patience with what, Germania?” Italy asked, genuinely confused. He hadn’t had to wait that long for the bathroom.

Germany fidgeted in his place. Italy saw his hands unconsciously wander to his lower belly, where his omega parts were stored. “For waiting until I was ready.” Germany swallowed, and then reclaimed a shakier voice. “And for not...not hurting me when you could have.” His cheeks were the same color of the little cap that a hospital staff puts on a newborn girl. Italy blinked, remembering all the times he had seen Germany at his most vulnerable and afraid: clutching at a pillow in his nest, impaling himself with his own fingers in the back of the car, trembling uncontrollably on his lap, reduced to dirty sex object by the words of the clerk, writhing on the bathroom floor at the conference.

Before Italy could think of a response, Germany buried his face against Italy’s chest. Italy’s heart melted. This was rare. This was special.

He prayed it wasn’t because Germany was still feeling ashamed or afraid and wanting to hide. But he noticed, the feeling of Germany’s forehead against his chest—not hot with embarrassment, not trembling like it seemed he did when he felt genuinely scared and helpless.

Germany was asking for a feeling of comfort, and contact. He was letting himself drop his projection of toughness and invincibility because, for once in his life--Italy was nearly lightheaded from the realization--Germany was willing to reveal his softness. He was ready to reveal it so that he could get something that he finally wasn’t too ashamed to want. Italy wondered if this was how Germany had been as a child. Before he had been trained to act so tough.

Italy had, once or twice in his life, cupped a baby bird in his hands. He felt the same sort of tenderness seeping into his chest, his muscular system, as he took Germany into his arms, and cradled him against his side.

He remembered that he still hadn’t said anything. He said what bubbled up naturally. “I would wait for you forever, Germania.”

He felt Germany's cheek smile.

As Italy lay there, holding Germany, enjoying this moment of Germany’s complete honesty, he thought about maybe mentioning the thing that was starting to weigh on his mind.

After a while, he unlatched his arm from Germany’s shoulder and shifted onto his side, so that he and Germany could lay facing each other. He stared at Germany’s face for a moment, taking in his young looking skin, his small mouth, his unique eyes.

“Did you enjoy it, Germany?”

Germany nodded, his cheek rubbing against the pillow and his hair on that side of his head becoming even more tangled.
Italy chewed his lip uneasily. "Do you feel we went a little quick?"

"Did...Did I do something wrong?" Germany asked falteringly.

“No! No, Germany, you were...so good. I just mention it because of--” Because you decided this in a hurry and you were shaking when we got here and you cried out when we tried the first time and even though all these things happened to you I still went ahead and-- “Well, I thought you still seemed scared.”

Germany sat up in a quick, agitated way. “Of course I was, Italy, it was my first time!”

Italy sat up slowly. “Were you ready for your first time?”

"Italy." Germany crossed his arms and frowned broodily. "It was my decision. And that's what matters to me. It would not matter if I did this now or a hundred years from now. I would still have been nervous.”

"That's true." Italy said. But Italy thought he heard the shadow of another message: please don't make me doubt myself.

"And you were nervous too, right?" Germany said, holding fast to his eyes. Please, please don’t make me doubt myself.

"Super nervous."

“So it’s normal.”

“Okay” Italy said. His eyes lifted to Germany hesitantly. “I think you are the best one at knowing what is the best thing for you to do.”

“Thank you. You…” Germany paused and gave a short sigh. “...You don’t know how hard it is to find people who would think that.”

Italy squirmed. He hoped what he was about to say wouldn’t undo the one bit of relief he had just given Germany. “But Germany, can you please agree to something? For me?”

“What is it?”

“If…” He paused, trying to think hard about how to say it. “If you are ever with somebody, and they make you feel scared or worried or hurt, let yourself stop. Even if you really like them. I think you are so so strong, Germany. But that doesn’t mean you have to endure everything.”

Germany’s eyebrows jumped up anxiously. “Italy. We are mates now, right?”

“I suppose that is the word.”

“You’re not going to leave me, are you? You spoke as if that somebody might not be you.”

“What? Oh no! Talking about serious things is so hard to do Germany. I’m sorry to make it sound that way.” Italy fought a sense of distraught with himself. Why am I so bad at reading the atmosphere? Why can I never say the right thing? “Please” he continued “I hope that it is always me. But it would make me feel so much better if you would just agree as something for you. Because no matter what happens, I want you to be…” what did he want Germany to be? Unyeilding to sex? Forever on guard? No, just... "Safe" Italy said. "And happy.”

Germany nodded once. “Alright then. I will.”
Italy wasn't done. “And you would let me know if I was hurting you, or doing something scary, right?” Germany was no less strong and tough for being an omega. But he did have a lot more likelihood of being hurt during his life. Italy imagined him for a moment in the arms of some stranger: some strong, swarthy alpha who didn’t care if the omega was clutching a pillow fearfully to his chest, if the omega was feeling embarrassed about taking off his underwear, if the omega was crying out for his brother as he was being--

Italy closed his eyes and shook his head, thinking about how he might have been that alpha, the night before.

Germany sounded alarmed. “Italy, calm down. If it means this much to you, then I promise it. Okay? I will say ‘no’ if I do not want.”

“And you knew this last night, right?” Italy asked, feeling tears come to the corners of his eyes. “I just keep thinking that maybe you didn’t and maybe I’m awful because I didn’t say this before and it’s very important, this very important thing--you never have to force yourself to convince me to stay. I like you no matter what.”

He felt the a patch of body heat hovering just above his fingers, and then Germany's hand, big and cool and a little calloused, came to rest on top of his.

"I knew." Germany said simply. “I know. And I am happy to hear it now.”

Italy let out a shaky sigh and tipped his head against Germany’s chest. “Grazie, Germany. That makes me feel so much better.”

“That is good. I am glad.” To almost any romantic's ears, it would have sounded awkward, inexperienced, gruff. It was firm though. He meant it. Italy felt the corner of his mouth twitch.

That's Germany for you.

Then, Italy’s stomach decided to ruin the moment and grumble loudly.

“We will eat now.” Germany said, giving Italy a strong clasp on the shoulder.

As they settled into breakfast, with Germany sitting on one side of the patch of floor they had chosen as a table, Italy on the other, and nothing but a pot and a pan and two spoons between them, Italy thought about how familiar this all felt. It was just like being together back on the battlefield. No plates, no fancy silverware, no fancy clothes (well, no clothes at all, at the moment). Just two bodies in one small, shared space, using what little time they had to shovel more sustenance so that they could simply keep surviving...and also using that little moment to feel human, to feel normal, and to feel together.

But still, it was so completely different now.

Deciding to just focus on the little things, Italy lifted some pasta up to his face and examined it. “It’s funny eating pasta for breakfast. Lately I’ve just been having coffee.”

Germany lifted an eyebrow at him. “Just coffee? No bread?” During the war, Germany had always made sure Italy, and Japan too, were making good food choices. Well, as good as you could get on military rations. Afterwards, though, Italy had started getting lazy. To him, breakfast was just one of the many obstacles between waking up and dinner time. Why bother with that when he could be sleeping?

Hopefully Germany wouldn’t be too tough on him. “Mm...sometimes bread” he admitted. “But usually just coffee.”
Germany shook his head mildly. “No wonder you are always so eager for lunchtime.”

Italy laughed. “And it’s why I’m hungry enough to eat all this pasta now!”

“Did I really sleep that late?”

"You slept forever."

"Don't get cocky over it, Italia."

Italy stuck his tongue out to tease him and then refocused on his food.

There was a tiny little clink as Germany put down his fork. “I am sorry I don’t have a coffee maker down here.” he said. “If your head hurts at all, there are pain medications in the bathroom.”

“I saw them.” Italy said. Indeed he had: One entire shelf, a miniature army of pill bottles. He peered cautiously at Germany for a moment, wondering if the question on his mind was too personal to ask.

Eh, to hell with it. They had already had sex, hadn’t they? “Germany?”

“Ja?”

“Your heats, what do they feel like? I’ve always wanted to know, but I’ve never known an omega I thought I could ask.” Judging by all the pain medication in the bathroom, they must have hurt, at least sometimes. But he also remembered Germany's face last night: his cheeks flushed, eyes closed and back shuddering with apparent pleasure as the body fluid stained the sheet underneath his hips. The body of an omega had always seemed like such a mystifying thing to Italy. And here his friend was, right in front of him, with all the knowledge in the world about it.

Germany looked taken aback by the question. “You...You want to know?”

“Has no one ever asked you?”

“No, actually...”

“If it makes you feel bad you don’t have to, I’ve just been thinking about it.”

“No, I will say.”

Germany finished the last of his food, and set the cooking pan aside. Italy watched bemusedly as Germany reached forward and poked him just a bit below his belly button.

“First, imagine a strange feeling here. Like someone is poking you.”

“Okay.” It wasn’t hard to imagine when someone was literally poking him. It didn’t seem so bad…

Then Germany drew back his finger, and put up three. “Now imagine I jab you.”

“Ow!” Italy winced as all his abdominal muscles contracted and he rolled back a bit from Germany’s touch.

“Now, Italy, imagine, I punch you in your lower belly.”

“No!”
“Yes, imagine that, and then imagine that even though it hurts you still feel like you want to…” instead of punching him, Germany blushed, and looked away, staring at a pillow as he teetered with a word. “Like you’re hungry. Down in your…you know. And when a wave hits it’s like your body is screaming at you, and everything is hot, and the slightest scent of an alpha makes the screaming louder, and you become completely arrested, because at the top of its lungs every cell in your body is screaming for you to let the alpha feed you, and every cell in your brain is screaming to run away and hide. That is what it feels like.”

“That’s...a lot more screaming than I expected.”

“Well, it’s not always that bad…” Germany mumbled. “Maybe if you’re in a meeting, and you didn’t expect it, and everybody sees you…” He looked like he was at risk of drifting off into a bad memory.

“Germany?”

“Ja?”

“Do you want to run away and hide from me?”

Germany dropped an exasperated sigh. “No Italy, how many different ways do I have to--” Italy watched Germany flounder for a moment with a familiar looking sort of frustration: How do I get something through Italy’s head if I can’t get it out my own? “The screaming is different when I’m with you. It is...much more pleasant.”

"Is there screaming right now?"

"No” Germany said slowly. " But there might be..soon."

“And that means you’ll want to--”

Germany’s face was branded with red as he interrupted. “Yes” he said. “I will.”

Soon after Italy had finished eating, Germany posed a question of his own.

“ITALIA?”

“Sì?”

“Has my scent changed at all?”

Italy set aside his empty pan. It was just him and Germany now, nothing between them.

Italy moved closer, and their necks fit together like pieces of a puzzle. His nose touched the tip of Germany’s ear. He closed his eyes, loving the invisible allure that came from Germany’s skin, that scent that caught his breath and made him want to sink his teeth in and bite and swallow and never let go…

He noticed the little blond hairs rise on Germany’s neck, and he wondered if an omega could tell what it did, that moment when an alpha breathed them...

“No” Italy said, withdrawing a bit, and shaking the sense back into himself. “Your scent is the same. What about me?”

Germany turned his cheek and Italy felt the tip of Germany’s nose touch his jaw. “No change.” Germany set back and Italy could see worry on his face. “Do you think that means we did it
“I don’t know” Italy said slowly. He didn’t think that they had. But he was no expert on anything, so what did he know? “But I know that I’ve never noticed my own scent before. Maybe we can’t notice it when it’s on each other either.” Really, it wasn’t such a bad thing, Italy thought. He touched Germany’s hair, smoothing it away from his face. “That’s okay though. I would rather keep smelling you anyway.”

Germany still seemed worried. “But what if we didn’t bond properly? What if people can’t tell that we’re mates?”

Italy wondered at all the reasons why Germany might be so concerned. Was it because he wanted it to stand as some sort of proof? Was it because the alpha scent would lessen unwanted advances? Was he worried that otherwise, Italy himself would feel free to flirt with other omegas? Italy squirmed at that one. He didn’t have the best track record with flirting. In fact, he used to catcall quite a lot: Anyone pretty, a girl, in most cases. He usually didn’t know if they were alpha, beta, or omega, because they were usually on the opposite side of the street. He had never really done it with a determined intention of pursuing them. He hadn’t really thought about how it might scare them, or disturb them...until that day he had seen Germany...an omega...terrified...and then the way the others spoke to him at that meeting...that man in the shop...Italy never wanted to be that kind of alpha.

“If you’re worried about it we can try again” he said. Okay, maybe not the most delicate way to respond. He was still an alpha, after all. And right now, there was something in the air. He wondered if Germany could feel it.

Germany fidgeted: his fingers scraped against his knees, his back tightened. His elbows straightened, and his weight shifted from one side of his hips to the other as he changed the way he was sitting. They were all such small, subtle motions that Italy could have easily missed; but when it combined with the way Germany looked warmly to the floor, and then abashedly at Italy, Italy began to feel quite certain that Germany’s body was getting ready.

“Italy?” Germany began, making a shy, determined sort of eye contact. “What would...what would make you feel good?” He edged a little closer, and his scent, that faint, just about to open up to me scent, made Italy’s thoughts go slippery.

Italy’s voice drifted into a dreamy tone. “Just touching you...smelling you...seeing you feel good....it’s all very good.”

“Yes but--” Germany paused. Pulling himself into a sharper state of mind, Italy wondered what Germany wanted, what exactly he was trying to ask for. Maybe he didn’t know yet. Maybe he was embarrassed by his lack of experience, and he didn’t want to admit it. So shy...

It definitely seemed that Germany wanted to do something sex related again. Italy decided to help him along. Moving closer, he touched Germany’s face, fondly, for a moment, before brushing past that hair--that adorably messy blond tangle--and tracing along the soft edge of Germany’s ear. He loved watching the way Germany reacted: his eyes lolling closed, a cute little noise pressing quietly against his adam’s apple. Italy stroked the little squishy part--what was it in English? The “earglobe,” maybe?--between his two fingers, and watched in amazement as Germany’s shoulders rolled back, his skeleton beginning to shift his weight behind, as if he were following some instinct to roll onto his back...to bare his belly to Italy...

“Waiwwaiwai…” Germany murmured, pushing himself back up. “I should do something for you first.”
Italy dropped his arms into his lap, and cocked his head curiously. “What is it that you want to do for me, Germany?”

Germany answered evasively. “I don’t know. What would you recommend? I want a clear and feasible directive.”

Italy giggled, covering his mouth with his hand. He couldn’t help it.

“What? What is funny?” Germany asked, a slight crease forming between his eyebrows.

“That was just...a very you way of asking.”

“And you liked that?”

Italy nodded. “It was... cute.”

Germany repeated the word as if he were tasting it for the first time. “Cute?”

“Don’t hurt me!” Italy said, raising his forearm in a dramatic impression of someone cowering away from a blow to the head.

“I won’t, unless that is your directive.” Germany joked darkly. At times like this, it was nice to know he had some sort of funny bone—however morbid it may be.

“Oh no, that’s okay!” Italy squeaked. “What other ideas do you have, Germany?”

Germany averted his eyes. Italy wondered if he was missing the point. It almost seemed as if Germany were looking for permission to initiate something, without having to take the responsibility of suggesting it. It could very well be that Germany just didn’t want to put forth an idea for some new sexual thing; after all, if he wasn’t confident in his ability to think of anything good enough, then even if he did have something in mind, the prospect of suggesting something which failed to work was probably embarrassing for him.

But he definitely deserved a chance to explore his own ideas. It was obvious that Germany wasn’t one to easily break through the bonds of his own sense of shame. Italy had believed it at plenty of other points in time, for other categories of life activities than this: Germany would be so much better off, so much happier, if he just took a moment to loosen up. Say what you feel, do what feels right, eat, drink, and go to bed. Don’t worry so much. Unless, of course, you find yourself in an unstoppable spiral of panic because your life might be in immediate danger or because someone is doing something scary that makes you feel like your life might be in immediate danger. Then worry.

But for these sorts of things...don’t.

Of course, Italy realized, it was probably easier not to worry, being an alpha. Italy suddenly felt something akin to guilt. He remembered exactly what that candle seller had said to Germany--such nasty things--and the way they had caused Germany to feel ashamed, probably afraid too, and start crying, actually crying, right outside the shop. He remembered, too starkly, Prussia screaming: how dare you breed my little brother...even Italy himself, he had used that word--that word that left a bitter taste, as if Germany were the sow, secured by fetters, unable to choose anything as a pig was lead in, for the purpose of meat, meat, and nothing else...

He remembered the night he had found Germany at the hotel with fingerprints across his throat, cheeks wet, and eyes still holding that jagged, shell shocked look--almost the same way Italy remembered him looking after that war.
Of course it would be harder if the entire world seemed to hold stake in whatever his sexual status was. Of course it would be harder if there were people out there who wanted to humiliate him, to hurt him, to exploit him. And who knew how many other people had said and done things to him that made him feel uncomfortable? It was so frustrating that people like that clerk, people like Prussia, and Italy prayed, people not like himself, all added up to make Germany feel so anxious about doing what he felt. This nest was supposed to be a private, special place. Those people had not been invited.

Italy spoke gently. "I think you’re thinking too much, Germany" he gave another smile, and then a joke, to try to encourage. "Just say something that comes to mind. If it’s unholy I’ll just go to confession afterwards."

Germany mumbled something.

“What was that?” Italy scooted forward, cupping Germany’s cheek with his palm. “Oh, Diletto, you’re burning up. Don’t be worried. I’ve already done so many things to you which you must have thought were strange. Go ahead.” He wondered if it was really unconventional, and that’s why Germany so embarrassed. He had once found some very questionable magazines at Germany’s house. Maybe Germany wanted to be tied up. Or maybe he wanted Italy to be tied up! Maybe he wanted to do roleplay, torture, or...something with food? Of course, Italy had never been sure which of the brothers that magazine belonged to.

Germany kept his eyes lowered. “I said...you used your mouth before. And...I have a mouth.”

Italy’s imagination calmed down. Oh, okay. But still, Germany seemed to be on edge. Italy wondered if he actually didn’t want to do it. So he asked: “Do you want to use your mouth, Germany?”

Germany turned red again. "Italia, stop asking so many questions!"

Oops. It seemed Germany was embarrassed from the idea of answering. Italy thought carefully about how to respond. He wanted to encourage Germany make the decision, while still letting him feel less responsible for the idea.

"If you don’t hate the idea, I would love for you to use your mouth, Germany.”

"Okay then." Germany said, sounding relieved. "You could have just asked me."

Italy fought the urge to giggle again.

And then his pulse quickened.

Germany had already moved down, and Italy could feel his breath, light and warm, between his legs. “Lay back” Germany ordered.

“Okay.” He felt the pillows welcome him as he obeyed. He could see the ceiling. Dangling from a single wire, that yellow light pulsed overhead.

“Should I kiss you around here at all?” he heard Germany say, the air of the voice tickling.

“Yes, kiss me.” Italy replied, propping his elbows up on the pillows behind him. He would much rather watch this.

Germany put a hand on his hip, and pressed his lips lightly to the pelvic bone. Italy watched in fascination, the soft way Germany went about it. The way his hair fell over his forehead, so strips
of his blushing skin peaked through his bangs. The kisses got closer…

Then Germany paused, looking like he had suddenly thought of some new issue. He looked up at Italy anxiously. "Italy, will you still want to kiss my mouth after I do this?"

Italy was amazed. Was Germany seriously worried about that? "Of course I will" to Italy it seemed crazy. But then he wondered. "Did you still want to kiss my mouth after I did that thing for you?"

Germany nodded once. His eyes sunk down and then went back up to Italy. Italy saw the red of his tongue and then--

A shiver ran up Italy’s core. He felt the tentative lap of Germany’s tongue again, and he let out a sigh. Germany seemed to take some courage from that, and Italy felt the silky inside of his cheek. He watched with wide eyes as Germany’s lips--little, but still sort of plump--dragged across that part of his body in that way. He saw the silvery shine of saliva against the rosy edge of Germany’s tongue--it was so raw looking, like uncooked meat. It seemed like Germany was beginning to hone in on what he was doing, beginning to get the hang of it. Italy hoped he could figure out how to pace himself.

"Is it okay, Germany? Don’t take it all at once, you have a small mouth."

Germany paused to frown up at him. "Small…? I don’t have a small mouth, Italy."

Yes, you do, bello. "Okay. I suppose that means I just have a big--"

"Okay, okay, quiet! I can’t focus."

"Yes, sir."

Germany continued. Eventually he opened his mouth all the way--Italy could see that it was difficult for him. His cheeks were stretched so they made little hollow dips, his lips shining with saliva and his mouth in a perfect “O” shape as he stared up at Italy, watching with those incredibly blue eyes, apparently checking to see if he was doing it right…

Oh, mio~

Italy made a strained sound and quickly gripped the closest part of Germany he could reach--his bangs--and jerked his head back so he could hold him at a distance.

"I’m sorry" Germany panted immediately. "Did I do something wrong? Did it hurt?"

Italy shook his head quickly, feeling horrified at the thought that he might’ve just caused Germany to feel shyer. "No” he said clearly. "I just don’t want to knot you in your mouth. I am afraid it would choke you."

"Oh. Okay."

"I’m sorry I grabbed your hair."

Germany’s eyes darted skittishly to the side. “No, it’s fine. Really. I don’t mind."

Italy rubbed his thumb absentmindedly along Germany's hairline as he pondered. I think he might like having his hair pulled…

He decided to ask. "Is there anything else you would like to do Germany?" When Germany began blushing again, Italy modified his response. "Germany, whatever you can think of, I want to do to
you. Whatever you can think of, I want you to do to me."

“Really?”

“I will tell you to stop when I want you to stop.”

“But...But what if I do something wrong?” Germany was sitting there like a deer in the headlights, paralyzed.

“Germany.”

“Yes?”

He eyed Germany with the same aristocratic air that a ruler might eye his people. “I didn’t tell you to stop.” When he said it, he felt himself exude an uncharacteristic wave of power. This was the way he had been told an alpha sounded. This was something beyond words and tone. This was the entire force of his body’s potential, put behind his voice. This was dominance.

But at the same time, it wasn’t. Do what you want to me. I didn’t tell you you couldn’t.

Germany’s eyes dilated. The scent of omega marinated the air as if the top had been popped off a perfume bottle. A minute shiver passed through him, like his body was the tight slice of wire on an instrument, about to be tuned. Italy observed this, and waited.

Then Germany scooted forward, so that he was sitting in front of Italy. Blushing--just faintly now--he lifted his ankles and placed them on the floor behind Italy's back, so that his legs crossed over Italy's. Italy noticed his knees. They were already shaking, slightly. Supporting himself by leaning back on his hands, Germany shimmied forward, so that the alpha and the omega were sitting face to face, pelvis to pelvis.

“Italy, can you help me with this?”

Holy roma. Italy felt a wave of stupefying attraction at what he was seeing in front of him:

Germany, with all his muscular strength and sharp features and beautiful body, was sitting in front of him: thighs--heavy, with the muscle creating thick swells and the fat weighing down, just a bit--those thighs open, and his hands working between them, pulling his male parts out of the way and spreading the flushed inner part of his buttcheeks so that the path to his omega parts was plain to see--all while he gazed into Italy's eyes and asked again, "please help me."

Italy fumbled into action. ~Of course of course of course bello, let me help you~ Using his own hands, he moved a little closer and positioned himself carefully where he needed to be. Germany let go of himself and put his hands behind himself. Then he shifted his hips forward and pressed closer, until Italy closed his eyes and let out a shaky “Ah Caro, Germania…” Germany’s body was so tight, so warm, but still in every way a perfect fit. Italy’s hands were shaking; he placed them on Germany’s hips-- those hips, so solid, so wide, so perfect--Che tesoro!--

“Tell me, Italy, is this okay?” Germany’s voice was somewhere bewteen shy and demanding as he made an experimental little circle motion with his hips.

Yes, yes, yesyesyes-- “y-yes…” Oh Dio...Germany started doing it more and Italy stared. He couldn't help it. He was transfixed by the way Germany’s abdominal muscles squeezed and contracted. He could feel Germany’s thighs--they were strong, but still so soft, so pliable against bones of Italy’s hips. They hugged him tightly; they trembled, they twitched. He heard the way Germany’s breath broke, saw the way his lower lip caught underneath his teeth. And his pectorals-
-they were pale and round--almost like a woman's chest, but firmer, sculpted, masculine, like those of a marble statue. They moved along with the rest of his body, everything connected to each other by sinew and skin and muscle and fat...he was, but he wasn't, unbreakably hard. He was human, so human, and completely impossible to look away from...

Italy heard a little laugh. His eyes snapped up to Germany's face.

Germany’s eyes, so so blue, Italy still could hardly get over how blue they were--they were gazing at him, shyly--no, coyly--from underneath the shadow of Germany’s eyelashes. And Italy realized that Germany was watching him. Germany wanted to see his reactions. And judging by the proud little smile pulling at the corner of his mouth, Germany was feeling good about what he saw. Feeling--in some sort of way--empowered. *He should feel that way.* Italy for one felt hypnotized, entranced, drunk, by this omega.

“Do you like this Italia?” Germany asked, his voice coming out breathy. "Is this pleasing to you?"

Italy’s mouth fell open, for a moment, lost for words. He closed it, a blush forming as he nodded, that unruly bit of hair bouncing atop his head, the tip of it coiled into a little heart shape. Without asking their owner's permission, Italy's hips jerked up, sending a crisp ripple up the flesh of Germany's butt. Germany let out something between a groan and a gasp, his eyes closing and his breath snapping as he hung his head forward, eyebrows bunching together and lips apart. It was the same face made by a man breaking the surface of the ocean and taking that first lifesaving breath. For a split second, Italy panicked, thinking that it was pain, that he had damaged Germany's body--but then Germany began rotating his hips faster, reiterating, substantially less coherently now: “Do you like--you like it? You--like?” As if the one thing he cared about was pleasing Italy, and the one thing that could get in his way was the intensity of his own enjoyment.

Italy could hardly take it anymore. He was afraid. Afraid of himself for the intensity of his own desire, and the single minded urge fighting to take over him. "Germania" he whispered--he gulped. His voice was too quiet, too dry. He doubted Germany even heard him. Germany’s back was moving in fluid, yearning motions, pulling, swaying, taking--it was all so much, the sentence was gone; he had to start over. "Germania” he repeated. “I want to eat you alive.”

Germany’s sharply shaped eyes hooked onto his. “Do it” he growled.

Italy's face collided with Germany's chest--the tongue touched his pectoral first, silky, soft; then the teeth grabbing hold of his muscle--not enough to bleed but enough to hurt--and Germany went wild for it. His back arched as the space where his and Italy’s sex organs existed together became hot with wet, fresh slick. Italy's arms latched around the small of Germany's back, yanking Germany forward belly first. His shoulders cupped Italy's jaw as he lost his balance, and lurched against Italy's chest to catch himself. Italy let the impact roll them both backwards so that Germany was on top, Germany’s waist still tightly anchored under his arms, offering a tight range of motion for Germany’s pelvis to bounce lewdly atop his own, but it still did, it still did--Italy could see the double curve of Germany’s butt, moving up and down, it was just visible, rising and disappearing from his vantage point behind Germany’s shoulder.

“Touch?” Italy gasped--

“Touch” Germany snarled.

Italy grabbed it, letting his nails dig into that warm, squishy, wide expanse of flesh--oh, he loved the way his hand couldn’t fit all the way around it--until he felt the hard muscle underneath and he let go, tracing the path up Germany’s back and then cupping the back of Germany’s head, pulling their faces together until their teeth clacked. Italy ate from Germany’s mouth, a million
disconnected thoughts in his mind, until he realized the significance of the sweaty, snarled hair pressing back against his fingertips, and he decided that Germany was strong, that Germany would be okay, and he decided to go for it.

With a mighty yank, he pulled Germany by the hair. He broke the kiss, as if he were uprooting a plant that had been comfortably and needily rooted in his own mouth. Above his eyes Germany’s pale throat was bared to him and he saw it vibrate with an ecstatic “Ah~” He gave the hair twisted into his fist another sharp tug, and Germany’s voice began rising, deep at first, but then, higher- -Ah, Aha ah, ah--

And then Italy felt his own hair, but just that one, that one curly one, get pulled by Germany, and that was it.

For the second time in the past 8 hours, they became one body, tied together between the hips. Italy let go of Germany’s hair; Germany gave his a final pinch, before letting go, as if to get in the last word.

Italy breathed in, out, still working a little as his hips moved slightly with the progress of the knot inside Germany. With his elbows on either side of Italy’s face, Germany let the spine of his upper back cave in and his head bow, so his shoulders were the highest point of his skeleton. His head was hanging next to Italy’s shoulder, his breath leaving a hot, moist patch against Italy’s neck. Italy noticed a shivering against either side of his arms, against either side of his hips. It was then he realized that Germany’s forearms and thighs were shaking with fatigue, because Germany was trying to keep himself from collapsing on top of him.

That wouldn’t do. “It’s okay Deutschland” Italy panted. “Rest against me.”

Germany’s voice was nothing but a ragged whisper. “Italia, I’m heavier than you think.”

“And I’m stronger than I look.”

“But what if I am too much?”

“You are not too much.”

“But what if it hurts you?”

“Then I will say.”

At last, Germany lowered, and let himself go limp. Italy found that he enjoyed it. He liked the way it felt, having this big, warm body completely wrapped around his; feeling the pressure against his own belly every time Germany breathed in. Germany had his cheek pressed against Italy’s collarbone. His hair was falling in sweaty ends over his forehead; his eyes were closed. And after a little bit his throat started making these light sounds: these quiet, relaxed sounding little gasps, as Italy’s fluid moved into him. It sounded so sexy, so cute...Italy was beginning to suspect that Germany knew this; that he was doing it on purpose.

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Germany listened to the thumping just below Italy’s collarbone; it was slowly losing its previous intensity, its adrenaline buzzed rhythm.

His own heartbeat was still hammering, but now that he was laying down, he could feel it starting to return to normal. He closed his eyes, enjoying the gentle way Italy moved. At the feeling of fullness, of being slowly injected with the alpha’s wet stuff, Germany let out soft, intermittent
bleats—not because he was in pain, but because it came naturally and he wasn't embarrassed by it. He wasn’t embarrassed because he was with Italy, just Italy, and he felt safe. Italy wouldn’t make fun of him; Italy wouldn’t make him feel ashamed for sounding this way. He could tell that Italy thought it was cute and sexy, and at the moment, he didn’t mind feeling that he was both of those things.

He was also exhausted. But not in a bad way. In one last expression of energy, he lifted his head and observed Italy’s face.

"Ita--ah--Italy?"

Italy was still breathless. "Yeah?"

"Do you think we did it right?"

Italy stared up at him in awe. "Germany" he said, voice quivering, "No way did we do any bit of that wrong."

Germany grinned at him, directly.

He had been thinking the exact same thing.

Chapter End Notes

translations:

Diletto: Darling/sweetheart
Bello: Beautiful
Caro: dear
Oh mio~: oh my~
Oh Dio: Oh God
Che tesoro: what treasure

Here is next chapter! I decided to play around a bit with the perspective shift, because it felt more interesting and revealing. As mentioned before, it took a bit of time and rewriting, because I originally had this all in Germany's point of view. I'm considering posting that original bit, just for shits and giggles, but I'm not sure. If anyone is interested, I can certainly do that though.

But any who, I hope you enjoyed this! As always, thank you for reading :)

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