Seven Minutes in Heaven

by orphan_account

Summary

An uplifting, heart-warming balm for the hearts that are broken more and more with every new SnK chapter every month. All happy, no drama, only cosy and comfy and adorable (and blush-making) stuff. Winter evening, vintage daily room, Édith Piaf's music, hot chocolate, cosy blankets, pillows, cushions and comfy armchairs and sofas - and all the friends. And your crush among them... and the Favourite Game. Oh yeah.

Notes

I highly recommend reading the introduction before you venture to pick your favourite character. It's very short and will get you into the mood. I think this late Autumn time of the year is perfect to dream about an evening like this.

In this AU, you, The Reader, and your friends are at the stage of studying at an university. The age of the characters is 19 and up. You will find short notes about the character you pick at the beginning of every chapter - what they are studying, what they are wearing in the story, where they are sitting and so on.
PS. Some of the terms here might seem odd. It's because I'm using terms from universities in my country and I translated them directly (and sometimes it fits ridiculously well, you'll see that in the first paragraph here).
It was the first evening after the winter session. After three weeks of exhausting cow tests and colossus exams and additional sleepless nights of studying and panicking, everyone gathered in the very vintage living room at Jean's house in a welcome winter break from the university. It was the closest and also empty at the moment, since his parents had gone to visit his great-aunt in France.

When asked about a first impression of Jean, most people replied in a similar manner: a brash jerk on a verge of being a tactless swine. The more surprising it was to see him at his house. Édith Piaf's voice floated in the air from the stylish gramophone and all the folks plopped around in comfy armchairs, on a sofa, on the pillowed windowsill, or simply on large cushions that were brought down onto the soft, thick carpet. After a common agreement, all phones were stashed in a drawer of a china closet and there was no beer nor any other alcoholic beverages. They had planned a calm, comfortable, quiet evening, and here it was. Hot chocolate was administered and there were blankets at disposition. In one word, perfection.

I snuggled up in a soft blanket and sipped on my chocolate, still marvelling at the insanely beautiful interior of Jean's house. I had been here before a couple of times and I could never get enough of it.

Sasha's raised announcement pulled me out of thought. She was standing in the middle of the cosy room with a vicious smirk, cradling a small box while she stirred the contents with her hand. Everyone glued their stares to her in anticipation. She pulled out one scrap of paper and in a dramatic gesture she moved it in front of her face.

Then she read out loud my name. Well, crap.

There was a tiny room on the side of the one we occupied. It apparently used to be a very short corridor leading straight to the kitchen – it was around three by four feet and not much more than six feet high. It usually was filled with spare parts of furniture and Christmas decorations, but Jean removed the larger items from it for the occasion.

Reiner wiggled his eyebrows and I received a collection of smirks, giggles, and eager looks. One of them even seemed flustered and I quickly averted my gaze, feeling a blush creeping up my face at the very instant.

“Well, now,” Sasha said with a theatrical shock in her voice, approaching me. “Who will be the lucky one?”

I reached my hand into the box and grasped one paper leaf. I twirled it in my fingers and peeked down.

Let me know what you think. I love feedback! <3
Armin Arlert - Galaxy

Chapter Notes

Armin is studying astronomy and astrophysics. He loves talking about the space (vast and out of reach, like the sea in the original, right?) and any mention of it turns him into a happy mess, despite his rather bashful demeanour. He is currently sitting on a cushion between Eren and Connie, wrapped in at least two blankets, and he's wearing light blue jeans and a warm blue sweater over a white shirt. His cheeks and nose are still slightly red after walking in the freezing evening outside.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I glanced again at the scrap of paper, making sure I deciphered Sasha's scribbles correctly. There was no mistake. Before I read it out loud, I peeked at Armin, who caught my gaze and turned very, very red. An almost inaudible “oh” escaped his lips.

Sasha lost her patience and tore the paper from my hand. Her eyes grew as round as saucers and she snickered.

“Amin, you're up!”

Armin gulped. He scowled when both Eren and Connie slapped his back, grinning at him. Wolf whistles rolled around the room when Armin stood up and approached me, his eyes not leaving his feet. He bit his lip and extended his hand to me. I took it and I was lead towards a small closet, beating myself in thought for not being able to control my furious blush.

“Go get 'im, Tiger!” Sasha cheered, evoking another wave of giggles.

The door was slammed after us and any trace of light disappeared. There were no cracks in the walls or anything. Pitch black darkness. I exhaled slowly and couldn't contain a nervous giggle which was picked up by Armin, and for three seconds, we were occupied.

Then, silence. An awkward silence. I could almost sense the seconds ticking away, like they were crawling under my skin.

Do something. You won't get a chance like that any time soon.

“I-I think we suck at- at this game,” I stammered, giggling again.

“Y-yeah,” Armin let out a relieved sort of a low-pitched laugh. He shuffled and something thumped loudly onto the floor. “Oops.” He stepped towards me to avoid stomping on the mysterious object. Our shoulders brushed and it felt like that little spot connecting us was on fire.

“We have five and a half minute left.”

“How the hell do you know that?” I snorted.

“Guessing.”

That gave me an idea.
“What else can you guess?” I asked quietly.

“How?” Armin was confused.

“I mean, since we're here.” I gulped, digging my fingernails into my other arm.

“Oh.” Armin took a deep breath. “O-oh. Ah. Yeah. Right. Umm... so, you...? You... too?”

“Mm.” I didn't trust my ability to speak at the moment. I cleared my throat.

“So... umm...” Armin's arm, the one pressed to mine, twitched slightly and I felt his smallest finger graze timidly over my palm. That was enough encouragement for me. I sought his hand and filled the gaps between his fingers with mine. Armin took a deep, shuddering breath and lifted his other hand to gently tilt my chin with the tips of his fingers. He leaned in and our faces inched closer...

“I-I'm really happy,” he whispered before our lips brushed ever so softly. He breathed out my name. “You are extraordinary. More complex and beautiful than any star, nebula, or galaxy I've ever seen.” My heart fluttered. I grasped the collar of Armin's shirt, pulled him forward, and I crashed my lips to his, eliciting a muffled squeak from him before he sank into the kiss with a heart-warming hum. His hand trailed from my chin to my shoulder, and down to my waist to press me closer. I let go of his collar and sneaked my hand to the nape of his neck and up to stroke his silky hair. I had always wanted to touch them, to see if they were as delicate as they looked – and damn hell they were.

Armin placed a sweet little kiss on the corner of my mouth and nuzzled my cheek. He let go of my hand and hugged me tenderly. I could feel his heart beating wildly when I turned my head and rested my cheekbone on his clavicle. I sighed. Armin murmured my name again.

“Um... will- I mean, umm... would you mind- would you l-like... um...” he stuttered, straining his voice through his throat.

I smiled and waited for Armin to compose himself.

“Umpleaseummmwouldyouumlikeummmmindbeingmyummgalaxymmmplease?” He sighed with irritation. “I'm not good at this. Okay, one m-more t-time.” He took a deep breath. “W-would you... would you like to be- to be- to be my- galaxy?”

I closed my eyes and grinned even wider despite the beetroot blush on my cheeks. That's Armin for you.

“Yeah. I w-would like that,” I mumbled, unconsciously digging my fingers into his back.

“AWWW!” A collective coo reached our ears from the living room.

We both jumped, still holding onto each other. My eyes were as big as saucers.

“They were eavesdropping?!”

The door shot open and I squeezed my eyelids at the amount of light that attacked my unaccustomed eyes. Sasha ogled us with a shit-eating grin plastered over her face. I glanced at Armin and wished to heavens that my blush wasn't THAT bad. I grabbed him under his elbow with one hand, some random blanket in the other, and I made a beeline to the pillowed windowsill, accompanied by giggles and wolf whistles.

I shooed off a smiling Bertolt and a cackling Reiner from the spot and plopped down with Armin.
He wrapped the blanket around us as I administered vicious glares around the room.

“Looks like Armin's finally got some!” Ymir snickered. A tiniest squeak escaped Armin's throat, too quiet to be heard by anyone but me. I rolled my eyes.

The game went on and we slipped out of the centre of attention, receiving only an occasional, brief glance with a content smile or an I-knew-it smirk. I pulled Armin for one more kiss, this time longer and more affectionate, stroking his cheek with my thumb. After we broke from each other, he gingerly pulled me onto his lap and stroked my hair. Eventually, I rested my head on Armin's shoulder and he tilted his head onto mine and sighed happily.

Chapter End Notes

There's so much cheese here I could open a connoisseur shop. But honestly, if I had a chance to have such cheesy, sweet moments in my life, I'd be as far from complaining about it as I am from becoming an astronaut.

And you can bet Armin didn't trip that mysterious object accidentally. Little shit knows what he's doing.
Jean is an art student in his second year, and a good one at that. His works have a distinctive, fairytale-ish style, rather unexpected considering his personality. Every single person gathered in the living room at the moment was drawn by him at least once – including you. What you don't know is that your face appears in his sketchbooks way more often than those of the others. He's sitting in one of the armchairs (his favourite spot in his house, actually), one of his legs nonchalantly thrown over the armrest. He's wearing a plum colour unbuttoned shirt with a black t-shirt underneath, and black jeans. He's holding an empty mug after the hot chocolate and observing the game with his signature shit-eating smirk on his face.

I checked the scrap of paper and gulped. *Oh man, this is gonna be a show. He's going to be so full of himself. I mean, more than usual.*

“Jean,” I groaned, rolling my eyes. I was proud of myself that I did not blush... well, almost. Close enough. But the more satisfied I was to see that he had it worse. “What is it, are you shy all of a sudden? Who are you, and what did you to Jean?”

The room echoed with cheerful laughter.

“Mon cœur wouldn't allow me to leave mon bonbon doux alone at the mercy of the crowd with the redness on her cheeks.” Jean stood up and mocked a stylish bow in my direction. Now my face was really burning under the wolf whistles and giggles rolling around. *Fucking smug jerk. I'll give him his fucking sweet candy all right. In your face, Jean. In your horse face.*

“You coming or you're that much of a chicken that you talk so much?” I smirked, opening the closet door. More giggles and whistles.

“Who- you started it!” Jean bellowed. Even his ears were red. Eren gave me his condolences for drawing that unlucky paper, but before I could hear more laughter, Jean slammed the door shut and we were swallowed by silence. Apart from feeling deaf, I also felt blind. Completely. There was nothing to let any light in.

“Listen, Jean, uh...” I decided to make peace before the matters got out of hand. I wanted a nice, comfortable evening, without arguing and shouting.

“Shut up.”

*Fuck this. I'm gonna kill him.*

But before I said a word, there was a dry snap and the surroundings suddenly took shapes. Jean was holding a lighter and he took out a candle from one of the boxes. He lit it up and set it on a shelf, along with the lighter. His eyes didn't leave the flame, watching it quietly. After a brief moment, without turning his head, he glanced at me.
“I did mean it, you know?” He muttered. His blush returned with twice as much intensity.

“Huh?” I frowned.

“Uuugh...” He bowed his head and pinched the bridge of his nose. “Uh, forget it. This is stupid. Why did you have to pick me?”

“It’s random, you ass. And if you don’t like me so much, then just go, no one forces you to play with me. Get yourself Mikasa or something,” I scowled. Jean groaned.

“When the fuck will you all stop pester ing me about a fucking middle school crush?”

“Whatever. Get whoever's up your alley, so you wouldn't have to put up with my apparently unbearable face.” I felt my neck heat up and my eyes prickle. Shit. I didn’t want to go that way.

“Fuck, I’m sorry!” Jean's voice went up almost an octave. He turned to face me and reached out to grab my hand, but he changed his mind. “Please, don't cry. I'm sorry.”

There’s something about hearing “please, don’t cry” that makes you want to cry even more, and that was exactly what happened. My face constricted and tears poured down like a damned river. I turned my head away and made my best effort to wipe them off and stop it. I could just as much try to blow out that stupid candle with my mind.

“I didn't mean it like that, I'm sorry!” He seemed almost panicked. “I do like you,” he blurted out. I hiccuped and stared at him in such shock that I actually forgot about crying. “I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I just got angry at all the stuff you say about me, that's all.” He averted his gaze from me. “It just, uh, hurts when I hear that. From you. I don't really give a shit what the others say about me.” He sighed. “There. It's out in the open. Go and laugh as you will. We're even, I guess.”

We stood still and ogled each other. Jean - flustered and annoyed, me – still shocked, with snot almost up my lip. I sniffed.

“Uh, here.” Jean offered me some tablecloth that up until now was resting in peace on the shelf. I snorted and took it.

“Your mum is going to be so not impressed.”

“Yeah, well, this one's for Easter. I have plenty of time to come up with an escape plan.” He smirked, but I could see he was uncomfortable after confessing and receiving no answer to it.

I blew my nose and wiped the tears away.

“All right, now I'm not gross and we can actually get to the game.”

“Huh?” His eyes were as round as saucers and his blush returned.

“God fucking damn it, I'm telling you to kiss me, how much time do you think we have left? Or did you change your mind? That'd be a pity, because I like y-” I was abruptly cut off by Jean's lips crashing onto mine. Finally. This time I was not surprised at all and answered with just as much passion. I snaked my hands to the back of his neck and one of them travelled up to brush through his undercut and higher to his longer hair. He hummed and wrapped his arms around me, one rested at my shoulder blades, the other at the small of my back. I moaned into the kiss and shifted my right leg to wrap it around his thigh. Jean's hand, the one at the small of my back, began going south...
“Gotcha!” Sasha exclaimed, pulling the door open. “You cheaters, what the hell is this candle?!!”

I bumped my head on Jean's collarbone.

“You moron, you wasted our closet time,” I groaned.

“Eh? Who the fuck did wa-”

“Jean didn't get soooome!” Reiner howled in singsong. Connie bent forward, laughing so much that he was not able to squeeze out any sound, but he was the only one. All the others whistled and cackled aloud. Sasha stepped into the closet to blow the candle out and carried it outside, along with the whole candle box, shooting us a mocked murderous glare.

I rubbed my slightly swollen eyelids and allowed Jean to lead me to his armchair, where I was pulled onto his lap – with my legs thrown over the armrest. We sat at such angle that he could slide his hand down to my butt without anyone noticing. I stared at him with a deadpan expression.

“Who said we have to sit in that damn closet to... do things?” He purred into my ear quiet enough to ensure that only I could hear it. I bit my lip before I smirked.

“Good point,” I hissed, and snaked my hand right between his legs. Jean squealed and almost pushed me off his lap. I tilted my head down and cackled, but it was mostly muffled by the others' cheering. “That's for making me cry.”

After another merry moment, people shifted their attention back to the game. I leaned to Jean's ear again and brushed his earlobe with my lips.

“Now, back to what you've said...”

Jean locked his flustered gaze with mine. He gulped.

"Comme tu veux."
Mikasa Ackerman - Cinnamon

Chapter Notes

Mikasa is studying culinary arts – with speciality in pastry. Every mention of her baking is making Sasha drool and swoon, and truth to be said, all the others are close to doing just the same. Today, however, she didn't bring anything despite everyone's expectations. She caught a bad cold two days prior and decided it would be a bad idea. She's sitting next to Eren on her heels, on one of the cushions, wrapped in at least two blankets and her neck and lower half of her face are buried under a huge, red, knitted shawl. Mikasa has lots of red shawls and scarves that were all gifted by her friend, and today's one was in fact made by you. She's also wearing a cinnamon coloured fluffy sweater, dark brown leggings, and exceptionally thick and fluffy pink socks. She's holding a freshly refilled mug full of hot chocolate, warming her palms.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I stared at the paper, feeling a deep beetroot blush spreading on my entire face and ears. Not that it was a big difference – I caught a cold just yesterday and my cheeks and nose were pink either way. I cleared my sore throat.

“M-Mikasa,” I rasped and held back a cough. Mikasa's grip on her mug tightened and she peered up at me. She was pink from her cold, too, but I hoped not all of it. Wolf whistles and cat calls rolled around.

“LLLLLADIES!” Reiner bellowed, wiggling his eyebrows. Eren's ears burned, and Jean looked like he was about to faint.

“Suck it, guys,” I snickered. And then sneezed, evoking more giggles. I stood up and so did Mikasa. She was still holding her mug when we approached the closet and closed the door behind us. I tried to sigh, but my throat was all scratchy and I coughed.

“You have a cold, too,” Mikasa said quietly.

“Mm.” I murmured. I was sweating, although I was pretty sure it wasn't because of my illness. I wondered if this was how Bertolt felt on a regular basis.

“So you won't catch it from me. Want to sip?”

“Huh?” For a brief moment, I thought it was the most bizarre way to ask for a kiss. Then I remembered she still had her hot chocolate. “Oh, yeah. Thanks.”

“I should've taken a blanket, too,” Mikasa mumbled, shuffling. “I'm cold.”

“Come on.” I extended my hand, hoping to reach her. I managed to catch her shoulder. I gave her the mug back and pulled her in for a hug. “We'll be warmer like that. I'm cold, too.”

Not quite.

She kept her hands on the mug, but she snuggled into my arms. She smelled of cinnamon. I pressed my cheek to her hair and inhaled slowly.
She murmured my name.

“Mm?” I hummed, closing my eyes, too hazy to pay absolute attention.

“Do you like me?”

My eyes snapped open and I gulped.

“I was just wondering.” Mikasa muttered, slightly muffled by her scarf. “You don't have to answer.”

I gingerly pressed a small kiss into her soft hair. She sighed and turned her head to brush her lips over mine. I cupped her cheeks in my hands and stroked her smooth skin with my thumbs and kissed back gently. I felt her smile a little and she bent her knees to sit down. I followed. She set the mug aside on the floor and placed her hands on the nape of my neck; one of them travelled up to dive into my hair. She kissed me sweetly, her chocolate-tasting lips moved against mine in a simple, affectionate dance. I cupped her face again and hummed.

And then she sneezed.

I chuckled and pulled her into a tight hug. I felt her shaking with giggles before they escaped her mouth in a short, adorable sound. I kissed the sensitive skin under her jaw and buried my face in the crook of her neck, sinking into the fluffy scarf.

“I take it we've just punched Jean in the face. Twice.” I snorted. Mikasa nodded and coughed when she tried to chuckle again.

“He had it coming,” she murmured. “I told him to add cinnamon to the hot chocolate and he didn't, because he's the only one here who hates it.”

“Like he couldn't just make a bit for himself,” I rolled my eyes.

“Mm.” Mikasa sniffed and rested her head on my shoulder. “I'm sleepy.”

“So am I. Colossus exams, and now this cold,” I mumbled and yawned. “Let's kick Hange, Erwin, and Mike off the sofa and we'll nap there.”

“Mm. Let's do that.”

I closed my eyes and yawned again.

A loud creak of the door being opened woke me up. I had managed to fall asleep in that damn closet. I flinched and squeezed my eyelids under the sudden light and noise. Mikasa scowled.

“Awww, look at that,” Sasha cooed, bringing curled hands to her mouth, gazing at our wrapped forms.

“So none for you, Kirstein!” Eren cackled.

Erwin kindly offered us the sofa before I even asked, and Mikasa persuaded Eren to bring cinnamon. Eventually, we nested in a pile of pillows and blankets, snuggled to each other, holding one steaming mug of hot chocolate each.

With cinnamon.
And now I have a craving for that damn chocolate with cinnamon. Smart, me. Smart.
Bertolt Hoover - Cello

Chapter Notes

Bertolt is music. He's studying music and he's in the cello class. He's in the top ten of the ranks of the country's universities. He goes on competitions and he wins them. Last month, he was asked to perform in one song for a prominent jazz band's new album. You've heard him playing numerous times on concerts and competitions, but you love the most when you are given a private, one-on-one show; Bertolt explained once that he didn't feel like performing before more than one person if it wasn't for anything formal. Personal, intimate concerts for his friends were a whole other thing. Contrary to popular belief, he's not as much shy as rather very quiet and withdrawn. Today's evening he's wearing a black MUCC t-shirt over a black long-sleeve and black skinny jeans that accent his long, long legs in a way that makes you blush at the sight alone. He is the only one that didn't wear a thick winter coat on his way to Jean's house, donning a lighter jacket instead. He's sitting next to Reiner on the pillowed windowsill, observing the game with a small, polite smile.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I read the name on the paper and smiled widely despite the intense blush that spread over my cheeks. I stood up and handed it over to Sasha before I tilted my head to the side and called:

“Bertolt, your turn!”

Bertolt's face skipped up several tones of red and his smile changed to a flustered one. For a brief moment, he hid it with his large hands. He looked at me, got to his feet, and walked over, offering me his hand, which I took way too eagerly to not catch attention to the gesture, evoking wolf whistles.

“Get some, Bertolt!” Reiner shouted. Bertolt coughed in embarrassment and opened the closet door for me. We stepped inside, the hinges creaked, all the light was cut out. I inhaled deeply. Despite the freezing temperature outside and a comfortable, optimal warmth in Jean's home, Bertolt was slightly sweaty (as usual), though his smell was never nasty in any way, I actually liked it. We were still holding hands and I squeezed his a little. I got a little squeeze back and I grinned.

“So...” I began, unable to cover a small hesitance in my voice. “Are we playing? The game?”

“Um...” Bertolt hesitated as well. “If you don't mind, I think... I think we shouldn't.” But he didn't let go of my hand.

“Huh? Why?” I asked louder than I intended, feeling my heart drop to the floor.

“I think it wouldn't be fair for the people we... like.”

“People we like?” My voice got thinner by an octave and twice as quiet as before.

“Mm...” He released my hand. I closed my eyes and tried to control the pained grimace on my face, even though no one could see it. I leaned my back on the wall and slid down onto the floor. Bertolt called my name.
“What is it? Are you unwell? Are you claustrophobic?”

“Me?” I mumbled. “I'm fine. I'm great. So, you like someone else?” I blurted out before I could hold my tongue. The way I formed the question, it gave out too much about my own feelings.

“What do you mean, someone else?” Bertolt audibly tensed up. He shuffled and sat down as well. “Wait... did you just say what... what I think you did?”

I sighed and rubbed my forehead with the balls of my hands. Whatever. He's on the trail of it anyway, I might save myself the anxiety of waiting for him to get it.

“I'm in love with you, Bertolt.” I fidgeted. He gasped. “Whoever's that person you like, they're damn lucky. And-”

I was abruptly pulled forward and Bertolt's fingers sought my chin before he crashed his lips to mine. He showered my lips with short, strong kisses. His other arm pressed to the small of my back and helped me to shift onto his lap. I ran my hands up to the nape of his neck and higher, to dive my fingers into his hair. He shivered.

“I... love... you... so... much...” he murmured between the kisses. He took a deep breath and rested his forehead on mine, gently stroking my cheek with his thumb. “I wanted to tell you so many times, and I couldn't gather myself, even when I was playing to you...” He swallowed thickly. “I'm sorry I've said... that, before. It must have hurt you.”

“I love you, too,” I whispered, brushing my fingers through his hair. I licked my lips and kissed him again, slowly, but I broke apart teasingly all too soon. I tilted my head back and pressed my index finger to his moist lips when he tried to catch me back. “And I have just the idea how you can make up for what you've mentioned.” I kept my finger in place and I leaned forward to his jaw to trail bites and sucking kisses down his neck, intending to leave marks.

“Fu-” Bertolt clenched his teeth to stop a swear. His fingers on the small of my back dug into my skin.

“What is it?” I asked in a sultry tone.

“P-please,” he stammered. “You're going to m-make things a-awkward if you k-keep this up.”

“Mm... just one more...” I hooked my finger under the collar of his t-shirt and the long-sleeve underneath to pull them aside. I latched my lips on his collarbone and bit down not so gently. Bertolt gasped and groaned my name.

“Please,” he strained to whisper. “I'm begging you. Please.”

I sighed and buried my face in the crook of his neck. He exhaled with relief and hugged me close. We sat like that for a while, listening to each other's breaths and feeling our heartbeats until the door shot open.

“Ooooh, look at that!” Sasha exclaimed. I scowled at the volume of her voice. We stood up. I blushed furiously and one glance at Bertolt was enough to see that his face was deep red... and there was a neat path of small bruises on the side of his neck. I grinned.

“They got some!” Reiner roared joyfully.

“Yeah, I can see some,” Connie remarked. “Two... three... five... six. I can see six.”
The room echoed with cheering and whistles. We walked over to the windowsill and Bertolt plopped down next to a cackling Reiner. He pulled me onto his lap once more and nuzzled my hair with a happy sigh.

“Seven,” I mumbled to him. “There are seven.” I hummed. “I can’t wait to hear you playing again...”

I glanced up. His ears were burning.

Chapter End Notes

It always seems to me like people simplify Bertl's personality too much, making him a pile of sweating shyness, while he’s actually anything but shy (still sweaty, though, of course). Being introverted does not equal being shy, far from it.

Please let me know what you think <3 I love Bertl so much.
Annie Leonhart - Warmth

Chapter Notes

Annie studies fashion design. You've been spending with her a great deal of time browsing clothes both online and on foot, and it's her that is mainly responsible for your current taste. Not only in the way you dress yourself... Annie is very much into visual kei and today she's wearing all dark brown. Vegan leather leggings and fingerless gloves, a wide belt, a padded vest over a long-sleeve, and a thick shawl that almost trailed behind her on the floor. Picture a more feminine version of Mihael Keelh. And then there were her boots... those platforms must have had at least 15 centimetres, giving quite a boost to her tiny posture. She's occupying the second armchair, sitting back with arms crossed on her chest and one of her ankles placed on her other knee. She's downed four mugs of hot chocolate already.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It's not that I was scared of Annie, but her indifferent demeanour made me feel uneasy, even after I had known her for two years and had been spending with her long hours every week. I knew there was a warmer side to her, buried under that icy shell, and I had seen it more often that the others gathered in the room could have ever expected. Today didn't seem the day. She hadn't received the grade she wanted in her most treasured subject and she was clearly upset about it. I mustered my courage and read out loud her name. She raised her head to peer at me enigmatically.

Is that a blush? Oh my god, IS THAT A BLUSH? She's blushing? It's not very noticeable, but it's there!

There were giggles and general anticipation, but nothing overwhelming – one did not simply annoy Annie when she was in a bad mood, if one wanted to keep their head on.

I nodded to her and walked over to open the closet. She stood up without a word and strode in. I followed, shut the door, and there we were, swallowed by darkness. Annie exhaled with resignation, almost like she could sense the tension that was building up of my anxiety.

"Are you uncomfortable with me around?" she asked quietly. "I've noticed it's been getting worse lately."

"I... I wouldn't call it so," I mumbled, fidgeting my fingers.

"Then what would you call it?"

"Um..."

"Is it because you want to spend more time with Bertolt, but I'm usually around?"

"Bertolt?" I frowned. "Why Bertolt?"

"You always come over when you see him," Annie remarked.

I come over because I see YOU, Bertolt has nothing to do with it, I thought bitterly.
“I don't have anything for Bertolt,” I said. “It's him who happens to be around.” My heart stopped and I held my breath.

“What does this mean?” she asked. I flinched in surprise when she grasped my hand with both of hers. Here it was, the livelier side of her was coming out. I squeezed her fingers gently.

“You know what that means,” I muttered, exhaling.

The next moment Annie threw herself into my arms and clung to me tightly, she gripped the back of my sweater in her fists and buried her face in the crook of my neck. I gasped. My arms automatically wrapped around her and I blinked rapidly a couple of times, trying to process the situation.

“Annie... you-”

“Shut up,” she mumbled into my skin. As always, it worked. But my hands were free, and I tilted her chin so bring her face to mine, so I could press my lips to hers in a tender kiss. She was warm and tasted of the chocolate she drank. Her fingers on my back relaxed and she sighed through her nose, answering me just as carefully and sweetly.

As the kiss progressed, however, things started heating up. My collar felt too tight and my hands trailed down to Annie's waist, pulling her closer as I nibbled at her lower lip. She groaned and hooked her leg around my thigh, raking her fingernails down my back. The feel of her chest pressed flush to mine made my cheeks heat up. I hummed and let my hand travel down to her hip, and further to the back of her thigh that was wrapped around mine.

I've seen her warm side already, not once and not twice, but this is a whole new level, I thought, struggling to keep my mind in order. I can't say I'm too surprised, though... she pushed all the cold to the outside, to make a shell for what's underneath...

She ground against my hip and we both shuddered. I ran my tongue over her lower lip and we deepened the kiss.

And then the door swung open. I closed my eyes and grunted with irritation. Annie, her leg still wrapped around my thigh, glared at a flustered Sasha. I peered behind the poor girl. Everyone was red. A couple of them seemed about to faint. I exchanged smirks with Annie. For a second I considered shutting the door and locking it.

Eventually, we stepped outside. I sat down on Annie's armchair and pulled her onto my lap, throwing around amused stares. Annie, back to her deadpan expression, reached for her fifth mug of hot chocolate.

Chapter End Notes

My cheese connoisseur shop is doing well.
Levi Ackerman - Caring

Chapter Notes

Levi is studying psychiatry, he's in his fourth year. A carefully selected couple of friends knew that he made the decision after his mother, who had suffered from severe depression for years, slowly wasted away and eventually committed suicide. The rest of his childhood and then his teenage years he lived with his uncle Kenny. This evening he's wearing a loose, dark green hoodie, white, ripped jeans, and his signature white scarf that he wears regardless of the weather. He's standing, leaning on the wall behind the sofa, a cup of hot black tea in his hands. He's the only one not drinking the chocolate.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I ogled the scrap of paper. Sasha wrote the name in all caps and she underlined it.

“L-Levi,” I uttered, glancing at him. One of his eyebrows shot up and he pushed his back off the wall to walk over to me and look at me down his nose. I stood up and he wrapped his arm around my waist, leading me to the closet. Everyone was quiet, except Mike, who snorted and smirked.

“Tame the Shorty!” Hange bellowed. That finally sprang a series of giggles. Levi gave them the finger and closed the door behind us.

I shuffled in the dark until I rested my back against the wall. I crossed my arms on my chest and shifted my weight to one leg. I didn't expect Levi to do anything and as hell I didn't feel confident enough to start anything on my own, even though I would really have loved to. I heard him move around. By the sound of it, he sat down on the floor.

“Isn't it too dusty?” I asked with only a hint of humour. *I might as well at least talk to him.*

“I had cleaned it before you all brats arrived. Do you think I'd let anyone in if there was a tiniest trace of mould?”

*And why I am not surprised...*

“Of course you wouldn't,” I said, sitting down on my heels. “I really like how you care about us.”

“Tch. You morons can't take care of yourselves for shit, so someone has to do it.”

“You are such a caring mother hen,” I chuckled.

“It's not me who makes everyone wear so many layers that we all look like balls ready to roll when we go out,” Levi pointed out stoically. I smiled and sighed.

“You'll take care of the dirt and I'll keep them warm, then,” I said.

“You are such a caring mother hen,” Levi snorted. *He's changed so much since I met him the first time,* I thought. *Four years ago he wouldn't say any of this. He wouldn't have even admitted he cared.*
“And prou-”

“Enough talk,” Levi cut me off. “We playing or not? Do you want to?”

My eyes went round and my mouth suddenly was completely dry.

“You mean – you want to?” I uttered.

“Well, if you don't, it doesn't matter,” he mumbled, retreating back to his deadpan demeanour.

“But...” I hesitated before I asked, “you want to because of the game, or...?”

“Doesn't matter,” he repeated plainly.

“Because if it's not for the game, then...” I trailed off. *Man, I'm fucked. And not.*

“Then you don't,” he finished for me sourly.

“Oh? That's not what I wanted to say!” I hissed, poking him with my index finger. I hit his shoulder.

“Then what?” he tried to fake an indifferent tone and it didn't work well this time.

“Then I want you to kiss me,” I muttered under my breath.

“Huh?” I could picture how he raised his eyebrows.

“Kiss me!” It was a whisper, but it had an intensity of a shout.

“Ask nicely,” a smirk was clear in his voice.

“Oh hell no,” I snarled. I reached forward and grabbed his shoulder, the one I had poked earlier, then I grabbed the other, and I roughly pulled him to me. Levi understood in an instant and he grasped my waist to bring me to straddle his lap. Our lips, however, brushed gently, prolonging the sweet wait. I sighed and trailed my hands to his neck and up to cup his cheeks. They were shaven clean and so delightfully soft in touch.

Levi moved his left hand to my shoulder blade and rubbed circles there. He pressed his lips to mine stronger and moved them in an affectionate rhythm, eliciting a muffled hum from me.

“How long did you want to do this?” he whispered when we parted and he rested his cheek on mine. His breath ghosted over my ear.

“Too long,” I murmured, leaving a peck on his cheekbone. “How long?”

“Longer,” there was that smirk in his voice again. He nuzzled my hair and grazed his lips over the shell of my ear. His fingers dug into my back and he raked them down to my waist. I shuddered. We kissed again, slowly, patiently, and we deepened it. I traced my hands to the nape of his neck and stroked his jaw with my thumbs. I giggled deep in my chest and we parted again.

“What's so funny?” he asked, puzzled.

“I wouldn't say funny, but I honestly didn't expect you to be so... gentle,” I chuckled.

“I'm full of surprises,” he mumbled. “And you deserve all the gentleness I have.”
“My, my,” I cooed. “I think I like this new side of you.”

“Don't you fucking dare to tell anyone, or I'm going to-”

“Yeah, yeah,” I giggled. “Kiss me again.”

But just when he closed in, we heard footsteps. I rolled my eyes.

“Stand up, if you want to keep that Mister Stone-Face appearance,” I advised. He sighed and helped me up. Before the door opened, he grasped me around my waist, the same way when we were heading towards the closet earlier, and we walked out, both with a deadpan expression.

“She got the leviosis,” Hange whispered theatrically. The room flooded with laughter and howling.

“Gonna go on a murder spree,” I mumbled when we made our way to the spot I previously occupied and we sat down. Levi surrounded me with his arm and I leaned my head on his shoulder.

“Some shitty caring mother hen you are,” he murmured.

Chapter End Notes

Usually you get the whole "Levi-is-up-your-vagina-before-you-know-it" thing while he's more of an awkward "how-do-I-even-do-romance" person, so here, have a fluffy and tender scene. Because yes. Also I gave him an outfit inspired by the corps uniform.
Marco Bott - Melt

Chapter Notes

Marco is in his second year of veterinary studies. He's been already working in a local veterinarian clinic for a year and you often find yourself visiting and helping him with caring for the residents of the shelter floor. Partly because you love animals, but mostly because it means spending more time with him, and every minute in his company is priceless to you. Today he's wearing a dark blue hoodie with a big owl printed on the front and a pair of wings on the back, and skinny black trousers. He's sitting on one of the cushions on the floor, knees drawn up and supporting his crossed arms, on which he lay his chin. He's sitting a bit farther away from everyone, and he hasn't touched any food nor even his beloved hot chocolate, so much unlike him. He observes the game with calm, sad eyes, but when he sees someone looking at him, he brightens up until they look away.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I wouldn't have even known that Marco was in the room if I hadn't seen him coming in with the others. I tilted forward to catch a glimpse of him, sitting silently by the side of Jean's armchair.

“Come on, give me that,” Sasha impatiently removed the piece of paper from my hand and a shit-eating grin appeared on her face when she shot me a mischievous look. “Aaah, Reiner!”

“ME?” Reiner's eyes were as round as saucers in utter shock.

“No, you moron, not you. Our bet is up,” Sasha smirked. “Marco, off you go to the closet. Don't forget to take someone on your way. Oi, Marco, you listening?” she called. Marco blinked a couple of times and registered what happened. His cheeks heated up. He peered at me and his blush deepened. He got to his feet and approached me, nodding his head in a kind greeting, while he also offered his freckled hand. I grasped it. It was warm and soft, and it made the butterflies in my stomach throw a wild party.

“Shall we?” The warm smile on his full lips melted my heart. I gave him a timid smile and stood up.

The cheering that accompanied us was filled with anticipation and approval, which made me blush even more. We entered the closet, Marco closed the door, and the sounds from the living room were nearly completely cut out. He sighed and let go of my hand, but before I had a chance to feel sad about it, he pulled me into a tight hug and buried his face in the crook of my neck.

Now, that wasn't anything out of the ordinary, since we did have a habit of spontaneous, friendly, short hugs, but this as hell did not feel like one of those. First of all, there was the situation we were in. The game. With its obvious rules and purpose. Second of all, those friendly hugs were always prompted by something significant and positive happening, like that time when Mrs. Sophie, an old cat that we both loved and that was a long-term resident in the shelter, woke up all fine after her surgery. And third of all... this embrace felt desperate. The way Marco clung to me, how his lips were drawn in a narrow line against my shoulder, how his whole frame seemed tense... I remembered how he was sitting in the living room, all quiet and withdrawn, so unusual for him.
“Marco, what happened?” I asked softly, pressing my cheek to his, soothingly stroking his back up and down and trying to ignore what this closeness was doing to my mind. And body.

“I'm sorry,” he said quietly. He sounded utterly broken and it stabbed my heart. “Mrs. Sophie passed away this morning.”

“Oh dear,” I whispered. I leaned my temple on his collarbone and sighed. “She was so long there and she was so old that I thought she would stay forever. Hey, Marco…” I moved my hand to lift his chin and smiled despite that he couldn't see it. “She had a good, long life, many friends at the shelter, and we gave her all the best we could. That matters.”

He was silent for a moment.

“Yes,” he answered slowly. “A good life and doing our best. You are right.” The pitch of his voice lowered and a shiver ran down my spine.

Is he-

The tip of his pudgy nose grazed my cheek before his lips connected with mine. It was a gentle, innocent kiss, too long to be a friendly peck, but too short to get a response from me. I was left breathless and with my heart running a mile a second.

“I should've said that long, long ago... If you only wish so, I'm going to do my best for you. I would offer you my heart held in my hands, I would give you the moon, I would embrace you and hold you in my arms as long as my heart is beating, and after, and I'm going to bring you as much happiness as I'm able to, and I'll always try as hard as I can to bring more,” he whispered. “I'm all yours. If you only say you wish so.”

I gulped. I traced my hand from his chin to cup his cheek.

“Tell me I'm not asleep and this is not happening only in my head,” I murmured. “Because if I'm going to wake up in a minute and realise it was nothing but a dream, I'm going to cry.”

Marco kissed me again, this time longer and with passion. Our lips were parted and I couldn't get enough how warm and soft his felt, moving over mine slowly and lovingly.

“I'm here,” he purred. “I'm not going anywhere.” His hand dived into my hair and he leaned in for another kiss, pressing me flush against his body with his other arm. “I- I love you.”

I pecked the tip of his nose and he chuckled.

“I love you, too, Marco,” I said, and I thought I was about to melt into a puddle of that cinnamon hot chocolate any moment now. Marco embraced me gently and we rocked slightly side to side. I traced a line of kisses along his jaw and ended up at his parted lips again for one more sweet kiss. Marco hummed and stroked circles on my back with his thumbs.

Then the door opened carefully and Sasha peered inside through a two inch wide crack. She snickered.

“Pay up, Reiner!”

I tilted my head onto Marco's shoulder.

“What did you bet on, anyway?” I asked as the two of us made our way to my spot on the floor.
“I said you'd get together,” revealed Sasha. “And Reiner said we'd also catch you half-naked.”

Marco and I glued our stares onto Reiner who shrugged and sent us a shit-eating grin. We sat down and Marco lay on the floor with his head on my lap.

“But... there's like a dozen of other names in that box,” I pointed out. “How could you bet about it when I could have drawn a different name?”

“You underestimate our wits,” Sasha snorted and walked over. She squatted down and turned the box upside down. A bunch of paper scraps showered Marco's head.

All of them bore one name. Marco.

“You sneaky little shits,” I sighed.

“We did the thing!” Sasha exclaimed. “Huh?! Say we're the best!”

The others rolled their eyes, but they cheered and whistled at us. Only Connie shouted that indeed, Sasha was the best. Of course she was.

The game went on and I collected all the papers from Marco's hair and the floor, making sure that every single one made it into my pockets. I decided to keep them all. They were important. Once I finished, I moved my hand to stroke Marco's cheek. He closed his eyes and sighed and my heart melted once again at how lovestruck it sounded.

I noted to take Sasha for a good dinner and pay for her.

I leaned down and pressed a kiss into Marco's hair.

“I love you,” I whispered.

Chapter End Notes

Why yes, my cheese connoisseur shop is doing magnificently and I'm opening another in the other part of the town.

Marco is my most precious, sweet, special cinnamon roll, I love him so much and of course I had to make this as fluffy as possible. Yes.

The poor, loved, fantastic kitty is named after a cat that my grandmother had a long time ago. I adored her.
Ymir is studying palaeontology. She visited a museum of natural history and saw perfectly preserved, 7000-years-old remains of a mammoth found in the vast plains of Siberia when she was 12, and her mind was all set. It was both creepy and endearing how she could throw herself into hours of conversations about her special interests, and you’d be lying if you said it didn't fascinate you. Today she's wearing a red long-sleeve under a dark grey cardigan, and black ripped trousers. She has a necklace with a beautiful ammonite fossil and she chose to let her hair loose. She's occupying one of the four armchairs, sitting cross-legged on it and leaning forward with her elbows on her knees. There is an empty mug on the coffee table before her.

Might have a slight mature flag on it.

“Ymir,” I said aloud, feeling my cheeks and ears heating up.

“Babes!” Hange exclaimed.

Ymir smirked and stood up, accompanied by wolf whistles, and approached me, swaying her hips with every step. I got to my feet as well and stared back at her, bring up a matching grin. We walked so close to each other that our shoulders brushed. She wiggled her eyebrows at everyone and I closed the door.

“That's only seven minutes and counting down,” she hissed quickly. “So let's make things, ehh, straight,” she cackled. “Lol. What a dumb word. Yeah, well, anyway. I'm totally up for a make out with you.”

I bit my lips and inhaled sharply through my nose.

Cannot be. Did she really say that?

“Except,” she added. She hesitated before she spoke up again. “I'm not doing anything if it's going to be a one-timer.”

“Don't take this the wrong way,” I murmured with a hint of hope, “but why exactly?”

“Ehh... well... either none, or all. I mean, I'd rather do nothing than to get a bite and not go out with you and stuff. You're up my guts, babe.”

“That was one hell of a way to say it,” I commented. I took a breath and my blush got worse. “So, let's make out, and then we'll plan the date. Babe.”

“Deal,” she snorted.

I do love how straight to the point she is. Straight. Seriously?

And then her hands were all over me, pressing me close, raking my back, our lips smashed
together, tongues dancing, our fingers tracing simple patterns on each other's shoulders, cheeks, necks...

I moaned into the kiss when Ymir's palm grazed over my chest.

“We don't have much time left and we're both going to be so sorry when they'll break in,” I murmured, tracing kisses down her neck. She hummed and rubbed circles on my back.

“I don't know about you,” she whispered, “but I'm pretty sure I'm going to have an urgent reminder that I was told to babysit my cousin, the one that lives near you, so you'll obviously offer to drop me by.”

“Of course I will,” I smirked, digging my fingers into the small of her back. I pushed her against the wall. The impact knocked something off the shelf, but we couldn't care less. I grabbed her under her right thigh and brought it up to my hip. She bit my lower lip and let out a low growl.

“And then I'm going to check just where else you've got those sweet freckles of yours.”

“That a threat?” she purred, sliding her lips over my jaw.

I cupped her face and licked the corner of her mouth before I leaned closer to nibble at her earlobe.

“A promise.”

“It's only fair if I check if you have any on you, babe,” she remarked teasingly.

“I totally agree.” I nodded. My other hand slid down to her belt and slipped under her shirt.

“Fuck, cold fingers!” she yelped, flinching. A wave of laughter reached our ears through the door.

She snickered. “Go on. I think they are coming.”

I cackled at the back of my throat and crept my hand up, pulling her long-sleeve halfway up her stomach. She latched her lips onto mine and sucked at my lower lip, giving out an appreciative groan.

The door opened. Sasha gasped, and so did a couple of other friends behind her. Ymir and I exchanged feral grins as I slowly let her leg down and pulled my hand out from below her shirt. Then the whistles and cat calls started. Jean was about to pass out. My face was red, but I smirked at them along with Ymir.

She pinched my butt and I jumped. Everyone burst out laughing.

“Did you know she's got freckles on her ass, guys?” I asked, eyeing her mischievously. “I just checked.”

The laughter went onto a howling level now.

“And her ass is-” Ymir began, accepting the challenge.

“Glorious!” Reiner cut in. I bent forward, laughing so hard that I was unable to let any sound out.

“Yeah, speaking of checking, I've got to check up on my snotty cousin,” Ymir scowled. “So I'll be going. With all that fucking snow, I've got to drag my carcass to the bus stop three streets down.”

“Is it that kid that lives up my street?” I asked, raising my eyebrow.

“Ya. That one.” Ymir looked at the vintage clock that stood on the china cabinet. “I'm gonna be
late, shoulda left five minutes ago. Next bus is in fifteen.”

“I can drive you off.” I shrugged. “I can pick up some cookies on my way back and bring them here.”

“YES!” Sasha yelled. “Get those with chocolate and hazelnuts! And the ones filled with strawberry marmalade!”

“Sasha, you moron,” Jean rolled his eyes. “They sure as fuck aren’t coming back.”

Ymir wiggled her eyebrows and I waved to them with a wicked smile as we left the room, followed by whistles and cheering.

Chapter End Notes

You pervy pervs, you.
Contrary to the first impression that people usually have of the heavily muscular and broad-shouldered Reiner, he is a highly intelligent person. In high school, he, Bertolt, and Marco were the only ones that could be a chess challenge for Armin and his unreal wits. Reiner studies physics and last week he applied for an internship at NASA. He's wearing a chequered, green and black, unbuttoned shirt over a white t-shirt with “KEEP CALM and EAT SOME PI” printed on it, and slightly tattered jeans. He's sitting next to Bertolt on the pillowed windowsill, throwing risqué comments and hearty grins, and slowly sipping on his hot chocolate.

I gulped. It was just a scrap of paper, weighting nothing and not worth a penny, but one look at it sent a raging blush all over my face.

“Reiner,” I uttered, looking at the spot where he sat with Bertolt...

… but he wasn't there.

“Huh?” Sasha raised her eyebrows. The giggles that began after I called the name silenced down and everyone plastered their stares onto Bertolt, who was the only one currently sitting at the windowsill. Bertolt's face heated up and he brought up a timid smile.

“He said he's going to bring s-some more chocolate.”

I rolled my eyes.

“I'll go get him.”

“You get him alright, Tiger!” Sasha yelled and a round of laughter and whistles rolled around the room.

Everything to get out of there. Everything.

I exhaled with relief when I closed the door to the daily room and strode down the hall. I vaguely remembered where the kitchen was and I frowned, seeing that no light was on inside – otherwise it would have been seeping out into the corridor. Then I remembered that although I did get out of the line of cackles and perverted stares, I was about to have a one-on-one time with Reiner, without playing the game – and suddenly, prospect of walking back to the crowded room grew appealing.

Because Reiner...

Well...

I halted at the threshold, scanning the dark kitchen. I spotted a familiar figure by the window.

“Reiner?” I called hesitantly. “What are you doing?”
“Uh- oh, it's you.” Reiner laughed, and there was a hint of weird nervousness in it. “I was, uh, getting more chocolate, we ran out.”

“In a dark kitchen... staring out of the window,” I summed up. I crossed my arms and tilted my head to the side. “Come on. What's going on?”

Reiner didn't answer at first. Instead, he turned around and leaned his back at the window frame, making his whole front obscured in the dark. He sighed and crossed his arms as well.

“I needed some alone time.”

“And... I mean, not that needing alone time is weird, but that is unusual for you during a party,” I pointed out, frowning.

“Okay, I'll say it, I wanted to skip this round,” Reiner said quickly, like he was afraid that he could bite the words back before they manage to come out.

My stomach was full of hot chocolate, but after this statement it felt more like icy snakes.

“A- oh. So that's how it is.” I let my head down. “I... you know,” a surge of anger spiced up my blood, “we didn't have to do any of that stupid stuff, just talking about something in that stupid wardrobe would be nice! Am I so terrible that even talking to me is too much?” I gulped and drew my lips in a thin line. “Never mind,” I added bitterly. “Get that chocolate and come on.”

I turned around, intending to leave, although I had to admit that I was in no state to go back to the room, not when I was about to burst into tears. Bathroom it is.

“Wait...” It wasn't a shout, just a little whisper, and that was probably the only reason I halted. I didn't turn to face him, though. “You mean... you picked... my name?”

“Is your fabulous brain still in your skull?” I snarled. “What did I just say? Uh... sorry.” I sighed. I stared at him over my shoulder. Reiner was standing sideways to the window now and I could see his utterly shocked face well in the orange light coming from a street lamp. I fidgeted and took a step towards him. “Reiner?”

“I...” Reiner closed his mouth that earlier stood agape. “I didn't think it would be me.” His lips slowly widened to a surprised smile. Then it faltered. “Fuck. I'm so sorry, I didn't mean... that earlier – I didn't mean that I didn't want... with you, I just... I didn't- I mean, the probability was low and I-”

“For heaven's sake...” I groaned.

Someone patted my shoulder from behind and I almost jumped out of my own skin.

“How long you two are going to stick here?” Sasha asked with a wicked grin. “The closet is waiting, dorks.”

“How much do you think she heard?” I murmured to Reiner as soon as the closet door closed behind us.

“Don't care.” He probably shrugged. “Um... so... I'm sorry about that earlier. I should've said that... clearer. Except I, uh, didn't want to, because what if you didn't want, and...”
“Chocolate does you no good, Reiner,” I sighed, feeling hopeful warmth spreading in my veins. “Get to the point.”

“O-okay. I went out because I wanted my name to be the one you picked, but I knew the chances were low, and I didn't want to watch you going in with someone else.” Reiner blurted out everything very fast again.

I snorted.

“You should start reading Discworld, or you'd have known that a chance of one in a million happens nine times out of ten. Where is your science now?”

“So... you want to...?” Reiner rasped, taking in a deep breath.

“Oh yes,” I said, nearly flying up with the butterflies fluttering in my stomach.

Reiner, of course, was built of rock-hard muscle and he most likely could crash through a wall if he put some steam into it, but I'd never have guessed it by the way his fingers came to gently tilt my chin up when he leaned down to tenderly press his lips to mine. I inched closer and reached up to the nape of his neck. Reiner sighed and moved his hand down to my waist, the other he rested on my hip, bringing our bodies flush.

My heart was about to jump out of my chest when he smiled against my lips and began tracing lines of kisses all over my face, muttering sweet words and stroking circles into my back with his fingers. I cupped his face and grazed his chiselled cheeks with my thumbs. We kissed once more, slowly and attentively, trying one another, and I was relishing in how fantastic it felt, those thin but soft lips, the hot tongue dancing with mine, how he hummed calmly and happily when I brushed through his short hair...

My eyes were closed and I didn't even notice that the door swung open until Sasha started laughing. I pulled back in bewilderment and saw that Reiner must have known the time was up, but despite that, he had decided to continue the kiss. A low, merry chuckle erupted from his throat when he enveloped me in a whole-hearted hug, lifted me up and spun around.

“YAHOO!” Hange jumped to their feet, accompanied by crazy cheering, howling and whistles. My entire face burned red when Reiner carried me to the windowsill and sat next to Bertolt, who had an endearingly silly smile on his sweaty face. He showed us a thumbs-up and I giggled, getting comfy on Reiner's lap.

Reiner pressed a kiss on the top of my head and rested his chin on my shoulder. The game continued and I had a good opportunity to hear the part of his not-so-innocent comments that were too quiet for the general audience...

… and much more...

… interesting.

Chapter End Notes

The stuff about Reiner's wits is all legit. If you keep up with the manga, then you know it, and if you read the smartpass interviews, then you also know about the chess.
Reiner is a nerd. I'm loving that Isayama got the fuck out the "brainless pile of muscle" stereotype from this precious cinnamon roll.

And yes, the Discworld quote-ish is legit, too. If you've never read anything from Sir Terry Pratchett, may he rest in peace, then you should.

Me and my puns have no shame nor regrets. That's the most legit thing of all legit things.
Erwin Smith - Careful

Chapter Notes

*Erwin Smith. Oh, Erwin.* That's the level of thought your brain can produce when your eyes unexpectedly stumble upon his figure. Erwin studies at three separate faculties: history, psychology, and social science... and there's been a rumour going around that he'd been planning on picking up one more thing. How he manages to keep up with such titanic amount of work is beyond anyone's comprehension. This evening he's wearing a dark grey sweater over a white shirt and dark blue jeans. He never wears a hat, and it was snowing outside – hence his hair got a wee bit fluffy from moisture after he entered the warm house. He's sitting with Hange and Mike on the couch – with Erwin sitting on the far left.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

I looked at the little scrap of paper. Speechless. My eyes wandered up to stare at Sasha and I considered faking a sudden case of “I'm not sure if I locked my flat”... because yes, it would be fantastic to have a moment alone with Erwin, but no, it would be utterly horrible. So far, I had kept my mood up by avoiding such situations – hence avoiding turning into a stuttering, blushing mess on a verge of fainting.

Unsurprisingly, Sasha was having none of it. She tore the note from my hands, glanced at it, and pulled on such a shit-eating grin that put Jean's signature smirk on its knees to wail in despair.

“Erwin!” She yelped, turning on her heel to face him. Hange howled and slammed their palm on Erwin's shoulder, making him scowl at them. Then his eyes locked with mine and – holy crap – a slight blush appeared on his cheeks.

*He blushed.*

*Holy crap. HE BLUSHED.*

I took a deep breath and stood up when he offered his hand. My own hands suddenly felt cold, sweaty and all icky and I prayed that he wouldn't notice.

*No, no, nonononono, of course he noticed, he must be thinking how gross my hands are, how I'm all gross, oh crap, I'm lost, all my chances are dead, goodbye Erwin, goodbye my dignity, goodbye m-

The door closed.

Keep your composure. Be a dame. You can do it. Be cool.

I let out a short, hysterical giggle.

*Oh yeah. Way to go. Good job.*

Erwin quietly spoke my name and that alone made my skin crawl with goosebumps.

“You seem nervous,” he remarked kindly. I could almost see his typical light, polite smile that rang
in his tone.

“D-do I?” My voice came out in a squished squeak.

“I... make you uncomfortable, don't I?” He asked quietly. “I've noticed... how you... avoid me. I'm sorry you picked me, then.” He definitely suppressed a sigh. “I can pretend I'm not here, if that makes you feel better.” There was that gentleman smile in his voice again.

I silently thanked that it was one hundred percent dark in the closet and no one could see how my face took on an expression of a fish pulled out of water. I bit my lower lip and did my best to get the clogs in my brain to work. Erwin called my name again.

“I can just stop talking, sorry,” he said.

“N-no,” I uttered. “I don't- I don't avoid you because I don't l-like you, because then I wouldn't, because I'm not a chicken for people I don't- I don't like, so I run not because I don't like you, because I don't not like you... wait... did that even make sense?” I mumbled to myself, for a blink of an eye forgetting where I was.

“Some of it,” Erwin said. The diplomatic part of his studies surely did show. “From what I gathered... you mean you avoid me... because you like me? Also that you are not afraid of people you don't like, and I do agree that it's true, I remember that time when you talked Miss Dreyse off the other day...”

*I'm done for. He just went over it like it meant nothing.*

“... But I do understand that it might be much harder to face people that stand on the exact opposite side of... hmm... your heart.”

*What.*

“To be frank, I do find it more difficult, too.” He chuckled. “I don't usually stutter.”

*Well, here goes my hope... he is surely not stuttering now.*

“That- that must be an interesting sight,” I said in a horribly high-pitched tone.

“Oh? So you haven't noticed?”

“What... noticed... what?” The clogs in my brain finally began moving. My eyes shot wide open. “You mean... me?”

“I thought... I made that... clear,” Erwin muttered.

*Ah, that must be the thing he calls stuttering... seriously?*

*WAIT. WHAT?*

*WHAT?!!!*

“Me?!” I covered my mouth with both hands and screeched.

*I'm a natural born smooth person. Beautiful.*

“But... I did understand you well, didn't I?” he asked suddenly.
“Yes.” I whispered in utter shock.

“So – can I...?”

I felt a hand brushing over my shoulder and I threw myself forward, darting my fingers right at Erwin's collar, gripping it tightly and pulling him down – because, of course, he must have been planning to kiss me.

And, of course, my luck gave me the finger. The completely obscured vision resulted in me hitting at full speed my upper lip at his chin and additionally smashing my teeth onto it. I yelped and pulled away, losing balance and grabbing Erwin after me – judging by the sound, he hit the wall with his forehead, since he kept his right hand at the back of my head and his left arm at my shoulder blades, saving me from crashing with the hard surface.

*I'm such a graceful creature. Great. Brilliant. Fabulous.*

*Good god, I'm a fail.*

“Holy crap, I'm so sorry!” I whimpered. “Are you okay? I'm so sorry!”

Erwin shook slightly... and then a sunny chuckle escaped his chest.

“I'm all right. But... you know...” He audibly gulped. “You could... kiss it better, maybe?” There was that quiet, lovely laugh again. He didn't retract his arms from me – quite the contrary, his right hand stroked my hair, and the other pressed me a little closer.

And deepened my killer blush.

“O-okay. Maybe... slower this time.” I giggled. I gingerly traced my hands up from his collar to cup his face and bring it down. He leaned forward... I raised to my tip-toes...

“Careful,” Erwin whispered... his breath ghosted over my nose...

I tilted my head to the side and grazed his cheeks with the pads of my thumbs...

Our lips were so close that I almost felt something like sparks jumping between them...

We kissed.

I closed my eyes and wondered whether I could literally melt down and remain a puddle of happiness for eternity on the floor of this stupid closet. Erwin's lips were slightly chapped from the cold outside, but holy sh- I- I mean- they were perfect. My fingers snaked to the back of his head to brush through his undercut and higher, to the longer strands, and I was sure that if I only tried to push myself a bit higher on my toes, I'd float into the air (and the clouds of butterflies in my stomach surely would help).

Erwin hummed and stroked my hair. His other hand slipped down to my waist and pulled me flush to him, and I could relish in how warm he felt, and I wanted to stay like that forever, enveloped in his arms, in his warmth, scent, with his lips and the soft hair, and the way he kissed, wholeheartedly and gently, and patiently, and-

The door swung open and I almost scored one more fall – but like previously, I was safely held up by Erwin. I peeked up and my blush, which had never left my face, burned a hundred degrees higher, if only possible.
His hair.

His soft, shiny, fabulous, perfect hair.

A mess.

I made it into an utter, hopeless, apocalyptic mess.

Hange cackled so loud that they doubled over, slamming their open hand on Mike's knee, who scowled and pushed Shitty Glasses away. I covered my eyes with one hand for a moment. The other was clasped firmly but cautiously in Erwin's, who seemed to be oblivious to the main cause of the common amusement. He glanced down to me and sent me a peaceful, bone-melting smile.

Mike curtly left his seat to me and soon I was tugged under Erwin's shoulder, sipping on another mug of hot chocolate... sitting there with the most horrible, stupidest, most idiotic smile in my life.

Chapter End Notes

Cheesy cheesy cheese, cheesy cheesy cheese, cheesy cheesy cheese, eeeeh macarena! HAI!

//with a special dedication to Ashy. (°_5°)
Eren Yeager - Thoughts

Chapter Notes

Eren, just like Bertolt, is studying music. He is not in the cello class, though – his speciality are drums. Everyone states that – apart from pursuing his interest – it's a brilliant way for him to spend all his never-ending energy that he would otherwise utilize in his fights with Jean. The fact that so much physical activity gives him an impressive body build... well... let's just say that you'd give up a lot to see him topless. Or just plain naked. Yes. Tonight he's wearing a black t-shirt with FUCK YOU YOU FUCKING FUCK printed in white letters on it, a dark red longsleeve underneath it, and ripped pale jeans. And, of course, he has his signature titanium loop piercing on the left side of his bottom lip. He's sitting next to Armin on the floor, munching on cookies rather than drinking hot chocolate. He's been particularly content the whole day after passing his last exam without a hitch – this mood is enough to irritate Jean, who right now is dreaming of throwing some acidic remark at Eren.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I glanced at the paper for a heartbeat and then I registered what was about to transpire. Jean had been observing Eren for a good while now, and he had all the symptoms of come-at-me-bro written all over his features. Eren, like everybody else, was watching me. That was when I remembered. And blushed. Oh, how I blushed. Instead of speaking – I wasn't sure if my voice would even have worked – I pointed my finger at him.

Eren's eyebrows shot up and his cheeks went red, too. It was an expected reaction – it didn't matter who picked him, the game alone and being chosen was enough to make anybody cover in at least a faint shade of pink.

But I hoped that it was not the only reason he flustered.

Jean opened his mouth, undoubtedly to make a snide remark, but he closed them back upon my glare. Eren didn't even notice – he gave me a shiny grin and extended both arms to me. I grabbed them immediately, eliciting wolf whistles which got louder as Eren started walking backwards, pulling me after him. Sasha ran over to open the closet door, and then she closed them behind us.

It was dark.

Eren was still holding my hands. His own were warm and mostly soft, although he did have some callouses on them.

“So,” he spoke up.

“So...?” I stuttered.

“Bertolt said you were going to audition for the vocal class,” Eren blurted out suddenly, giving an impression that it wasn't really what he wanted to say. “Were you?”

“Y-yeah...” I frowned. “I had no idea he knew. I'd rather... keep this quiet. What if I don't get in?”
“I’d love to play with you!” I could hear his signature grin in his voice. “I-I mean, music, if you, uh, plan to join up the band groups, too.”

“I might...”

What I didn't mention was that I definitely would join his group if I got in. That was why I had decided to audition in the first place.

“That would be awesome!” He laughed, but then faltered. “Um... I'm not going to ask you to do anything that you wouldn't like to do,” he mumbled so inaudibly that I had to tilt forward to hear him well.

I leaned in a bit farther than I anticipated. I felt his breath ghosting over my face. Eren sensed the proximity, too, as he stammered my name. I gulped and mustered the courage.

“Unless you ask me to kill Jean...” I giggled, “there probably isn't much that you could ask me in here that I wouldn't want to do.”

Eren inhaled sharply.

“I- I don't want to give you the wrong idea,” he said slowly. “I... I... I'm not asking just to play the game. I mean, it is the game, but I wouldn't... I mean... You know what I mean?”

No way. Holy crap. No way.

“I mean because it's you,” he murmured under his nose.

“Me?” I squeaked. The high pitch of my voice was straight pathetic.

“Y-yeah. Yeah. You. I guess it's, uh, I meant to say that anyway, but since it's, uh, a nice occasion... I've been thinking about this a really long time...”

“Is that you, Eren?” I asked, giggling nervously. “Or did someone switch your brain with, I don't know, Armin's? Since when do you give so much thought to some—”

“Will you go out with me?!” I staggered back, scowling at the volume of his voice.

Definitely Eren.

Muffled cackles, howls, and whistles floated through the door to our ears.

I was dumbfounded.

“Please, say something,” he whispered.


The moment he let go of my hands and grasped my shoulders was the only warning I got before I was pulled forward and his lips crashed to mine. A surprised squeak tried to escape my throat, but it got lost somewhere in the kiss, somewhere between me wrapping my arms around Eren's neck and the way he nipped at my lower lip. I closed my eyes and responded like my life depended on it, sliding the tip of my tongue along his lips, challenging him, almost purring with delight.

“I wish I could see your pretty face right now,” he murmured at some point, running his hands up and down my back.
And I'm super happy that you can't, I thought, trying not to imagine what shade of red it currently was. I decided to simply cuddle myself closer and hide that raging blush in the crook of his neck. Eren chuckled quietly and leaned his cheek onto the side of my head, bringing up his right hand to stroke my hair.

The door opened violently, but instead of Sasha, we were met with Jean's piercing stare. In a blink of an eye, his expression changed from intensely curious to his regular smirk.

“What is it, Eren?” He placed his hands on his hips and his grin widened. “Couldn't get it up?”

What followed could be only described as an eruption of laughter and whistles. I felt how Eren's arms stiffened around me.

Oh crap.

Eren let go of me, turned around, and took on his ready-to-kick-ass stance. Not giving much thought to it, I took a step forward until my chest was pressed to his back and I covered his eyes from behind.

“Come on!” Eren yelped, trying to pry my fingers off, but he had no chance against my steel grip.

“NO FIGHTING,” I growled. “Five steps forward!”

I directed blinded Eren to my spot, not sparing Jean's shin from receiving my firm kick. Once we sat down, I shuffled onto Eren's lap, blocking him from any attempts at getting up to murder Jean.

“I can't believe you did this,” he mumbled after the laughing settled down and everyone else focused again on the game.

“Get used to it,” I whispered right into his ear.

Eren sighed in defeat and hugged me closer.

Chapter End Notes

Achievement unlocked: Rogue Titan tamer
Achievement unlocked: Horse whisperer
If you were to pick one word to describe Hange, it would be: explosion. Not just because they study chemistry and never hesitate when it comes to experiments, from the child-level ones to those requiring an inch-thick bulletproof glass, but because Hange, well... How to phrase it... never mind. This evening, they are wearing a light yellow shirt and white trousers – no labcoat only because Levi forced them to leave it when he dragged them out of the laboratory an hour later than Hange was supposed to stop for the day. Or, to be more precise, for the entire semester. Their lab goggles, however, stayed, since they forgot to pick up their normal glasses. Hange is sitting between Erwin and Mike on the couch, throwing around happy glances... looking like a cute puppy, as the goggles make their eyes seem much bigger.

“H-Hange?” I stuttered, preparing myself for the eruption.

And here it came.

“OOOOOH MYYY!” Hange jumped to their feet and almost sprinted to my spot. “Me? Really?!”

My initial reaction was to have my face flush deep red and produce a crooked, bashful smile. Anyone would probably behave like this in the given situation, but I had another problem. Hange had been stuck in my mind like a broken record for months and there was no helping it.

I stood up and finally grinned back at them.

“Come on, come on, come on!” Hange yelped, pulled me into the closet, and Sasha slammed the door shut.

“I'm so happy you picked me!” Hange whispered enthusiastically, digging their fingers into my shoulders.

“Y-you are?”

No way.

“Imagine being stuck here with Short Stuff...”

“Oh. Right.”

That's... not what I expected to hear.

“I've got something for you,” they muttered conspiratorially. “I hoped to catch you before the party, but I got carried away in the lab and then Short Stack dragged me in, and then I didn't want to pull it out with Annie around, you know how she is with chocolate, and-”

“Chocolate?” I asked. “You brought me... chocolate?”
Hange nodded so vigorously that I heard their ponytail smacking the nape of their neck.

“And not just any chocolate... I made it myself! In the lab!”

Oh boy. I think I have second thoughts...

“I did research on your favourite flavours and hand-picked them to incorporate them into the taste of the chocolate!” Hange cackled, much like Sasha when she bought her beloved prosciutto half price off.

“You did all this... for me?”

“Of course I did! Here, have a bite!” There was a sound of shuffling cloth and I presumed that Hange dug their hands into their pockets.

“I can't see anything, you kn-” I was unable to finish, abruptly cut off by a small stick pressed between my teeth.

“How is it? How is it? Do you like it? Is it nice?” Hange rasped excitedly.

I took a bite and munched on it thoughtfully, giving an impression that I was judging the taste, while in fact I was struggling with keeping my brain intact and my heart from pumping itself out of my ribcage.

“I didn't expect it to be... pocky?” I said slowly.

“Well, of course it had to be! It had to be a thin layer, I didn't have time for a block of chocolate to cool down, they keep liquid nitrogen locked after last month I tried-”

“It's fantastic.” I frowned, trying to comprehend how good it tasted. “I love it. I can't recognise what's in it except for the chocolate itself, but it's perfect-”

“Awesome!” Hange bounced up... and then they wrapped their arms around me and pulled me into a bone-crushing hug. “I'm so glad, I'm so happy!”

“Hange... I can't... breathe...”

“Sorry.” They giggled, loosening the grip, but not letting me go; instead they started rocking slightly side to side and moving us in a slow, slow circle.

“Hange?” I mumbled, feeling my cheeks heating up so much I was sure my skin would be peeling by the morning, like after a sunburn. “What are you doing?”

“Dancing,” they answered just as quietly.

“I can't hear any music from the living room,” I said.

“Really? I can.”

“Hange-”

“Won't you finish your chocolate?” they asked suddenly. Was that a trace of nervousness in their voice?

All right. Let's sum up the facts. Hange is happy that I picked them. They made me chocolate and put a lot of effort into it. They are anxious about whether I liked it. They are hugging me. Or
“I will...” I trailed off for a moment to raise my hand in which I was still holding the rest of the pocky. “But I need a little help.”

“Help?” I could hear that Hange was puzzled.

“If you don't mind,” I continued, poking the treat at their lips.

“Wait, but that goes- you want to kiss me?” Hange gasped. “Me?”

“I- uh...”

Maybe it wasn't a good idea.

“You don't need chocolate for that!” They almost chanted, pulling me closer and pressing their lips tightly to mine, muffling a little squeak that attempted escaping my throat.

Scratch that. It was a good idea.

I ran my hands up to cup Hange's face, replying with the same eagerness. We stopped turning in circles, but still gently rocked side to side, tracing delicate patterns wherever our fingers touched: cheeks, neck, shoulders, back, waist, hips, up the stomach-

I bit Hange's lower lip and smiled widely. I chuckled, and so did they.

“Eat the chocolate,” they hissed, trying to sound serious, but only ended up laughing even louder. I snickered and chopped the pocky with my front teeth, humming at the wonderful taste. Once I was done with it, I leaned my head forward to leave a spatter of little kisses over Hange's lips.

“Thank you,” I murmured.

“I'll bring more!” They squeaked, squishing my cheeks. “It's just that Short Stuff kicked me out before I made more than this one...”

“I can help with the rest, it sounds fun.” I sighed with a smile. “And afterwards... we'll go to see a movie?”

“Like a date?” They whispered.

“Like a date.”

“Deal,” they answered, squeezing me in their iron grip once more, making me wheeze out all the air from my lungs.

“Hange-” I coughed out. “My- ribs-”

“Sorry!”

I giggled and buried my face in the crook of their neck. I caught a faint, but not quite lovely smell of smoke in their clothes.

*I hope that was not from the chocolate experiments...* I smiled again. Typical Hange.
“Okay, I think that's it!” Sasha's muffled voice reached us from behind the door. I frowned.

Light and cheering flooded the closet.

“You were eavesdropping?” I asked in disbelief.

“Nnoooo...” Sasha bit her lip and did her best to avoid my stare.

“Uuuuhhh...” I rolled my eyes and pulled Hange after me, towards my spot.

We plopped down and wrapped my blanket over our shoulders.

“That really was fantastic,” I murmured right into their ear. Hange stared at me with those eyes three times bigger because of the goggles, and gave me their typical crazy grin.

“There's more where it came from.”

“Chocolate?”

If it had only been possible, their eyes became wider.

“Not only chocolate.”

Chapter End Notes

I'd definitely not mind grabbing a bite of that chocolate myself. One can dream.
Connie Springer - Hugs

Chapter Notes

Connie is in his 2nd year of nursing studies. After he spent 5 years caring for his paralysed mother, he decided to keep on helping people this way, and his determination is endless. Today's evening he is wearing a dark brown hoodie and blue tattered jeans... and bright orange socks with doughnuts printed on them – actually a Christmas gift from you (which meant to be a joke before you gave him the actual gift, but he took great liking to them). He's sitting next to Armin, on the floor, slowly seeping on his hot chocolate, munching cookies every time he puts his mug down and throwing cheeky remarks during the game.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I took a deep breath. *Here it comes.*

“Connie!” I called and grinned, ignoring the little blush that appeared on my cheeks. The absolute plus side of interacting with Connie was that I didn't have to risk going through any of the... Jean-like incidents. Jean loved saying it had been because Connie had not enough wits for that. I was of the opinion that Connie had enough wits to know that it was Jean who had not enough wits to behave like an adult.

For a brief moment, Connie's face took on an expression to a fish pulled out of water, during which his slight blush turned into raging fire.

“Up and go!” Sasha bellowed, looking disturbingly similar to a very excited Hange.

I stood up first and Connie followed right away, nearly jumping towards the closet to open the door, making everyone cackle at his eagerness. He turned around to peer at me, sending me a 100 Watt grin. Typical Connie. He would've smiled at anyone. Maybe except Levi. I answered with a big smile and passed the threshold. The door closed.

“Can I hug you?” Connie asked right away. I raised my eyebrows, feeling at the same time how my entire face and neck heat up.

“Me?”

“Well... there's no one else in here,” he pointed out hesitantly.

“As in, no one to hug, or no one to see?”

*Why am I even saying that?*

“Huh? Both, I guess... except... none of us can see anything, so does that even count?” He let out a short laugh.

“Yes.” I huffed suddenly.

“Huh?”
“I mean – I mean, you can hug me.”

“Oh, o-okay...” It sounded like he hadn't expected actually getting the permission. But Connie reached out his hand to find me and it brushed my elbow before I was pulled forward and timidly wrapped in his arms. I suppressed a small sigh and snaked my hands to his shoulder blades.

I didn't expect him to make it a short friendly hug and when he made a move to step back, I instinctively tightened my arms around him.

“Eh?”


“Wait, you- oh, sorry, I thought-”

I giggled, trying not to sound too hysterical.

“Jeez. I'm dumb indeed. Can I hug you again?” I could hear him fidgeting.

Instead of saying anything, I reached out my arms and I was pressed closer than before. Connie smelled of those favourite cookies of his that he was munching on, and a bit of the hot chocolate, since it was him who had prepared it. I leaned my temple on his shoulder and this time didn't manage to withhold a quiet sigh.

"You are shaking," he pointed out.

"Uhh... I'm not exactly a fan of dark, small spaces," I admitted quietly.

"What?!" Connie hissed. "Are you an idiot? Why would you play the game, then? Come on, we are going out."

"Don't. I'm not really afraid now," I said. It was true. "And... I wanted to play, well, cause I hoped to pick-"

"Sorry you got me, then." Connie chuckled bitterly. I rolled my eyes.

"You are an idiot," I murmured. "Will you let me finish?"

"Sorry... I just, uh, I don't really want to hear-"

"You."

"... huh? You are joking, right?"

I didn't answer. Silence fell for a good while, but neither of us made any attempt to break the hug.

Connie mumbled my name, and then added something incoherent.

“Hmm?”

“I've... I've said... I...” He broke out into the same fit of hysterical giggle that I'd shown just a minute earlier. “S-Sorry. Would you... ehm. Would you like to go out with me some time?”

“Are you asking me out on a date?” I whispered.

The truth was, I had been suspecting something, but I sincerely doubted those suspicions were
anywhere near the reality... but still, they fuelled the way I blushed and stuttered in front of him from time to time, and how right now my stomach was doing backflips with the swarms of butterflies inside.

“... yeah. I am.” Connie muttered under his breath.

My smile was so wide that my face was probably about to rip in a half.

“I'd love that.”

Connie gasped.

“Okay... I did not expect that,” he admitted. “Who would pick me, after all-”

“I just did,” I cut in.

“Y-yeah, that's right. I think I need a moment for it to sink in yet.” He chuckled awkwardly.

I reached up to cup his face and leaned him down to place a long, sweet kiss on his lips. I heard a muffled squeak that escaped his throat and I smiled again.

“It definitely sank in,” he said in a high-pitched voice.

“Good,” I murmured and rested my head on his shoulder once more, with one more sigh. Connie gingerly kissed the top of my hair and leaned his cheek onto it.

Chapter End Notes

I decided not to spoil this one with going out of the closet and the usual laughing and whistles, so here, the ultimate undisturbed fluff.
Mike Zacharius - Heartbeat

Chapter Notes

Mike is in his 4th year of medical studies. Some say that he can smell the illness before the patient even speaks about it. Whether that is true or not, it's difficult to say, but it's a fact that Mike's nose is extraordinarily sensitive to all kinds of scents. Today he's wearing a dark green longsleeve, light brown cargo trousers and a deep blue scarf. (His nose is amazing, his fashion sense... not so much). He's sitting with Hange and Erwin on the sofa, savouring every sip of his hot chocolate with a small smile. He doesn't lift his gaze to look around much.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I bit my lips and let out a nervous giggle before I gave the paper to Sasha. She shot me a questioning look, but one glance at the name I picked explained everything and all her teeth flashed in a huge grin.

“Mikeee!”

“YAAAAOOO!” Hange howled, slapping Mike's shoulder. Mike gave them an expressionless stare, which only made them howl louder, and all the others laugh in earnest. My cheeks felt unbearably hot and I had no doubts that they were of an exemplary shade of red.

“Too bad for you, Kirstein!” Eren bellowed. Jean's ears went intense pink.

“Ooooooi, YEAGER!”

Mike got up from the sofa and approached me to extend his hand and pull me to my feet. My own hand was so tiny compared to his that it almost drowned in that grip. I had never stood so close to him and this time it hit me hard just how awfully tall he was. My collar suddenly seemed too tight.

We stepped over Eren and Jean, who were currently fighting on the floor, and passed Mikasa and Marco, who were making their way towards the two morons, rolling their eyes. Mike opened the closet door and with a little bow and kind smile he let me in first.

He closed the door.

I blinked a couple of times before I gave up on adjusting to the darkness. It seemed that not a single speck of light could get in anyway. I heard Mike taking a deep breath.

“These perfumes you have...” he said slowly. “Those the ones-”

“Y-yeah,” I stammered. “The ones you group-gifted me on my birthday. I like them.” I frowned when a realisation hit me. “It was you who picked them, wasn't it?”

Mike hummed in his own typical manner.

“I thought they would go well with your body chemistry and compliment it, it has a particular spice to it an hour after applying that I supposed you could appreciate,” he remarked. “I mean- how you say that...”
“That I would like them.” I smiled and giggled. Mike was a rather taciturn type and whenever he spoke, there was a big chance it would come out in awkward, science-y statements until he paused to form them in a more casual way.

“...yes.” He sighed. “That's a better way to say it.”

“Mm, I wouldn't think so...” I gulped and gathered myself. “Yours is rather... charming.”

“Not really,” he mumbled. “But you've just given me premature ventricular contractions.”

“Umm...” I frowned. *What does that even mean? Damn medical talk. What was it? Did he just say I gave him a boner? What the hell?*

“Uhh, I mean, it means you made my heart skip a beat. Sorry. I think I do that when I'm nervous.”

“I did... what?” I asked weakly.

“I think...” he trailed off and reached for me instead. His hand grazed my shoulder before he brought it down and scooped my own hand in both of his. He raised them and placed a careful kiss on top of my fingers. “This.”

I took a deep breath.

“I see...” I whispered. I withdrew my hand, but before he had a chance to say anything stupid, like *I'm sorry, I got carried away* or something of the sort, I wrapped my arms around him and closed in into a hug. He tensed at first, but eventually returned the gesture, trailing one of his hands to stroke my hair... and there it was again, that signature hum of his, though this time it sounded more calm and happy.

“Exactly this,” I murmured into his shirt. “Rapid cardiovascular constrictions.”

“Premature ventricular contractions,” he corrected me seriously. Come to think of it, his tone was so serious that I suspected he had barely kept himself from chuckling. “You are fantastic.”

Silence fell and I realised the air was almost snapping with some kind of sweet tension. Mike pulled back slightly and he moved his hand from my hair to cup my cheek. He leaned down—

I closed my eyes. I traced my hands from his back to his chest and tilted my chin up, doing my best not to fall over with those... I could just call them *skippies*...

Mike's lips gently brushed mine before we connected for a long, tender moment. His stubble scratched me a little, but there was no way I could pay any mind to it, not when I was up on cloud nine with how amazing that kiss was. I smiled into it and so did Mike.

The door swung open and I squinted at the amount of light that flooded us. Mike turned us around, hiding me from the view and showing his back to the room. His arm moved...

“Whoa, Mike, that's rude! I only open the door, this is the rules, and *you flip me off?”* Hange whined.

Mike snorted and reached for the handle.

“Five minutes.”

With that, he closed the door and it was all dark and *skippie* again.
Chapter End Notes

Five minutes will probably turn into an hour.
Sasha is studying exterior design with speciality in gardens. As a kid, she used to live with her parents in a lovely, remote village in the mountains – the kind that you find on the cliché postcards – until she was seven and they all moved to the city. She’s missed the space and gardens there ever since. Armin’s grandfather is one of the professors on her university and since she's friends with Armin, they often go on trips to visit famous gardens around the whole Europe, sometimes tagging you along (although your main reason for going was looking at Sasha, not at the gardens). She used to train sport archery, but last year she broke her arm in two places (courtesy her first time riding a horse on a trip her uni gardening club had) and she had to drop it. Today she's wearing a knee-length dusty pink dress with a dark brown cardigan and tights, and she pinned a matching crafted rose the bun on top of her head.

“Well?” Sasha asked, stirring her hand in the cursed box again and peering at me with wide, glimmering eyes. “What's the name?”

“Um...” I smiled awkwardly and raised the scrap for her to see.

“Eh?” She frowned, and then burst out laughing. “Take this, Armin, I’m going in!” she said, handing the box over.

Whistles rolled around the room.

“Sasha, are you sure you didn't write your name on all the papers and to ditch us all now?” Reiner called, wiggling his eyebrows. “Suspicious! First you pick her, without showing us the paper, and now she's got your name? Coincidence? I think not!”

“Shut up, Reiner!” I giggled, feeling my cheeks heating up. “You are just envious.”

“Sure I am!”

More laughter erupted between our group.

“Well?” Ymir’s eyebrow cocked up. “What are you waiting for, do you need us to carry you in there?”

“Go for it, Sasha!” Connie bellowed.

Sasha took on one of her ridiculous faces and stuck out her tongue at Ymir, reaching out for my hand. Once she grabbed it, it was like I was pulled into a fast running river, I was jerked up to my feet and the next moment we were both in the closet, the door slammed shut, and muffled chuckles reached us from the outside. I gulped.

“My plan worked perfectly,” Sasha whispered conspiratorially.

“Plan?” I repeated. “Wait... don't tell me... Reiner was actually right?”
“Yep! Isn't it brilliant?”

The interior of the closet was ultimately dark, but it didn't require much imagination to know that Sasha was beaming. I, on the other hand, was burning, if my face and neck were anything to go by.

“Y-yeah, it is brilliant, but-”

“But?” Her tone faded from cheerful to nervous in a second.

“But why? Why would you want to get stuck in here with me?” I mumbled, a little hopefully, ignoring my cheeks going even hotter and making sure not to blurt out something stupid.

“I thought that's obvious,” Sasha muttered. She was still holding my hand and hers started getting sweaty. Or was it mine?

“I'm not complaining at all, in case it sounded like I was,” I added quickly before I could bite my tongue. “I...”

“Well, I really wanted to give you something!” Sasha stammered with an embarrassed giggle. “Close your eyes! No, wait, neither of us can see anything in here anyway, stupid me... Well, then...” She raised my hand that she was holding and uncurled my fingers before she placed something small on my palm.

“He-here you go,” She squeaked with one more giggle.

“What is it?” I frowned, bringing up my other hand to feel at the mysterious object. “Oh, wait, maybe... um... how do I open it?”

“No no nononono, you don't open it!” Sasha whined in panic. “It's not a box!”

“Sasha, I'm utterly confused right now,” I mumbled.

“Right, I forgot... stupid me...” She shuffled a little, a dry snap sounded in the closed space, and suddenly a tiny, warm flame burst in the darkness, lighting up the proximity. A burning match between Sasha's fingers gave enough light for me to finally take a look at the gift. My mouth dropped a little, but before I could get a better look, Sasha hissed and blew the tiny fire out.

“That's my favourite flower,” I said slowly, going back in my mind to three seconds ago, when I was staring at a little piece of polished resin with a beautifully arranged petals embedded in it. “You did it by yourself?”

“Yep!” She chirped, back to her beaming self. “You like it?”

“Yes, it's fantastic,” I murmured. “But... I don't have anything for you, I didn't know-”

“That's all right!” I could hear the smile in her voice. “Because that's not the end of why I got us here!”

“Eh? What do you mean?”

“Well, there's the game!”

“The... game... oh, you mean-?”

“I guess you didn't see what I wrote on the back of the pendant?” Sasha asked, and this time I heard a pout.
“I saw the whole thing for literally five seconds, I didn't even notice it was a pendant.” I chuckled. “So... what did you write on it?”

“Uh...” Sasha's bravery died out in a blink of an eye.

“Sasha?”

“Will...” She took a deep breath. “Willyoubemygirlfriend?!”

“Your... girlfriend? That's what you wrote on it?”

“No, but that's still-”

“Yes.”

My cheeks are going to melt off my face any time now.

“Yes?” She repeated. “You mean, you will?”

“Yeah, that's what I-”

“Oh my god!”

I was cut off when Sasha wrapped her arms tightly around me and squished her lips to mine, or rather she would have if it wasn't for our noses that squished first.

“Ouuuch...” I groaned, probing my fingers at it.

“Sorry,” she mumbled with an embarrassed chuckle. “I got too happy.”

“There is no such thing as too happy,” I murmured with a shrug.

“But what if your head explodes of happiness?” she asked seriously. “That could be a thing.”

“We'll worry about that when it happens.” I sighed. “So... the whole time, every time you took me with you on your field lectures with Armin's grandfather, you were spying to see which flower is my favourite?”

“Not quite.” She giggled. “I knew about the flower months before then.”

“Huh? Then why?”

“I was trying to get an alone time in some nice garden?” Sasha squeaked. “I wanted to do this for months, but somehow I've never managed, it's so stupid...”

“Wait.” I rubbed my forehead. “You mean, you were going out with me to ask me to go out with you?”

Sasha gasped.

“It doesn't make things better if I tell you that every time I agreed to go on those trips, despite how bad my feet were killing me after each one, because I wanted to do exactly the same, does it?” I said weakly.

I started laughing.

She started laughing.
“Sasha, we are both such idiots...”

She cupped my face and this time she tilted her head to avoid the nose crash. I closed my eyes and hugged her close.

“Idiots live a happier life,” she said quietly with a giggle.

Her lips brushed mine and we kissed for a long, sweet moment. I sighed through my nose and was answered with a content hum. I ran my fingers through her soft hair when we parted and she buried her face in my shoulder.

“Sasha...”

“Mm?”

“I've dropped the pendant.”

When the closet door were opened by Connie one minute later, we were found on our all fours, frantically skimming our hands all around the floor, our butts facing the threshold. Connie started laughing like there was no tomorrow, but we ignored it, continuing our desperate search.

“Looking for this?” Connie asked. We stared at him, and at my gift from Sasha he was holding between his thumb and index finger. “Wait, what does it say here...?” His eyebrows shot up at the same time as Sasha jumped to her feet and tackled him to the ground.

“DON’T YOU DARE, YOU POTATO STEALING MIDGET!” She yelled, pressing her hands to his mouth. Connie tried to say something, but it came out in puffs and gibberish between Sasha's fingers.

“Eww!” Sasha withdrew her hands in an instant. “How the hell do you even produce so much saliva, Connie?!”

“THERE'S AN I LOVE YOU ON THIS THING!!!” Connie bellowed.

Chapter End Notes

I refuse to reduce Sasha to a food-obsessed maniac.
Historia Reiss - Mask

Chapter Notes

The first time you met Historia four years ago – and back then, her name was Krista. Also back then, she was your new neighbour, a sweet and empathic angel, the ultimate beauty and light that could brighten everything around her. Fast forward three years, Krista turned out to be a cover for Historia, a protected witness in some gigantic classified case, a woman still caring and empathic, but... something that you still weren't really sure about. What you are sure about, though, is that you still get all jittery on the inside around her and that in the past, you used to think that she had those sensations, too – but, exactly: in the past. Historia was an entirely different person and you became convinced that whatever Krista might have displayed towards you, it was the part of the mask. At least she trusted you and Ymir enough to tell you that tiny bit about her true self. Historia has always been receiving home education, and has been jumping around different subjects at will, excelling at those she was interested in. Today she's wearing a long, grey, woollen dress and a pastel pink, knee-length cardigan, and her hair – as usual – loose. She's occupying one of the armchairs, holding the mug of hot chocolate in both hands and slowly sipping on it. She's not looking at anything nor anyone, either not interested or deep in thought – no one would be able to tell which.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was still strange to see Historia written down instead of Krista, I thought as I stared at the little scrap of paper. Sasha even added an exclamation mark after it, as if to signal to whoever picked the card to be wary of the change.

It was, after all, still fresh.

I brought up a warm smile and turned to face her. She caught my gaze and titled her head with the smallest blush.

“This has your name on it, Historia,” I said timidly and got to my feet.

“Chin up, sweetcheeks!” Ymir patter her back while throwing a huge grin at me. Ymir had always been too observant in some matters. At least on my side of them.

Giggles rounded around the room, making my cheeks burn brighter and Historia pinch her lips and dig her gaze into the carpet, but once I grabbed her hand and she stood up next to me, her face changed into a much livelier, almost teasing one - something completely not Krista-like. It was her that skipped forward and dragged me into the closet, not giving a chance for Sasha to close the door - she slammed them shut by herself.

I didn't even have a second to breathe before she wrapped her arms around me, pulled me down - after all, she was tiny - and boldly pressed her lips to mine.

I gasped and stiffened in her grasp, opening my eyes wide as if it was possible to see anything in the pitch black darkness.
“Kr- Historia?” I uttered in bewilderment when she pulled back an inch for air.

“It's a closet game, isn't it?” she asked dismissively. My heart, which had been pounding wildly against my chest so far, fell at her words.

“The game...” I repeated blankly. “If you don't mind, I'm not into making out for some game. It's empty. Not my thing.”

“Empty?”

“Yeah.”

“You expected something else?”

I didn't answer, untangling myself from her and taking a step back until I bumped against the wall. I crossed my arms on my chest.

“Things like this are important to me, and I don't want to do them if they are just some act for entertainment.”

Acting.

*She had been doing a lot of that, hadn't she...*

It was quiet for a longer moment; I could feel the passing seconds crawling on my skin like ants.

“IT's not an act,” she mumbled finally.

“What?”

“I'm not acting here!” she scoffed, stabbing her finger into my chest - well, I suspect it was her intention, but she hit my throat instead. Hard. I coughed, scowling and pressing my hand to the spot which hurt like hell.

“Are you okay?!” she squeaked, groping in the dark to reach my face and cup it in her palms. “Where did I hit you? Oh crap, I didn't mean that! I'm sorry!”

“It's all right,” I rasped, letting our a strangled chuckle. “I'm all right. Just please don't do this again, you might break my neck the next time.”

She exhaled with relief and ran her thumbs up and down my cheeks.

“Sorry,” she mumbled and withdrew her hands, but I caught them and laced our fingers together.

“Did you mean it?” I asked quietly.

“Y-yeah. I wouldn't have kissed you if I didn't mean it either.” Her voice was getting less and less coherent, a habit she displayed when nervous, which she had had ever since I could remember. “I’m tired with acting, it makes me want to puke, all these years spent like I was violating myself with all this crap. I'm so done with that. I'm so done pretending that I am someone else and that I don't feel what I feel. I'm so tired.”

She let out a tiniest sob.

“Oi...” I whispered, pulling her forward, letting her lay her head on my shoulder while I wrapped my arms around her and leaned my cheek on her soft hair. “Historia...”
Her fingers gripped the back of my blouse and I felt her smiling against my skin.

“You have no idea how fantastic it is to hear you saying my name. My name. And you know...” She gulped. “Last week, the process ended. They are locked up. You know what that means?”

I sighed and pressed a tiny kiss into her hair.

“So... officially, under your name... what do you want to do to celebrate?”

“Date?” she asked in a clear voice.

“Date it is,” I murmured, tightening the embrace a little and closing my eyes. “Absolutely.”

Chapter End Notes

... and here it is, the last one. I admit that I had to push myself a bit here, I'm not so eager to write for characters that I'm not so much invested in, but still, it was a good exercise.

Thank you so much for all the kudos! Please let me know what you think!♡♡♡

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