Consume Me

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/718.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Slash (M/M)
Fandom:	Alien Stage
Relationship:	Ivan/Till (Alien Stage)
Characters:	Ivan (Alien Stage), Till (Alien Stage), Hyuna (Alien Stage)
Additional Tags:	Canon Divergence, Modified Canon - Fix-It, Character Death Fix, POV Ivan (Alien Stage), Angst with a Happy Ending, Major Character Injury, Boys In Love, Anal Sex, Top Ivan (Alien Stage), Bottom Till (Alien Stage), Rescue Mission, Everybody Lives, Pining, Canon-Typical Violence, Cuddling, Gun Violence, Suicidal Thoughts, Low Self-Esteem, Hurt/Comfort, Getting Together - Freeform
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-10-30 Words: 8,138 Chapters: 3/3

Consume Me

by FallLover

Summary

All Ivan has to do is keep the song going until their rescuers appear. And he'll do whatever it takes to make sure Till gets out of here.

Thankfully, help arrives.

Notes

This was originally posted on Archive of Our Own after the release of Round 6, but is being posted here as a back-up for outages.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

All Ivan had to do was keep the song going long enough for help to arrive, and then both he and Till would be free at last. That's it. He knew he could do it. Mizi wasn't kept in the facility anymore, so Till wouldn't stick around for her this time. Till was also so out of it that they could just grab him and explain later. That was easy enough.

Just one more performance, Ivan thought as he brushed non-existent dust off his all-white outfit. *One more, and they'll come to find us.* He didn't know what hope was, really. But when they had nothing left to lose other than themselves, he clung to the idea of it. He tried to imagine a future with them being free of owners to abuse them, of competitions to destroy them and the people they cared about. He wasn't sure he could, but it was nice to imagine, anyway.

He didn't know that Till would choose him in this presumed happily ever after. Maybe Till would disappear somewhere else. Maybe Ivan wouldn't be able to follow him. But just getting there was the hard part, so Ivan tried not to think about it too much. He wanted Till to have a future to choose, first.

But as Ivan took his time getting onstage, he realized that Till was off his game even more than usual. All the drugs that the Segyein were pumping into Till's system to keep him going and to stop him from attacking the Segyein were bound to fuck with him more than they bargained for, even if they somewhat tried to be careful not to damage his genius. He just sounded *tired*, and like he'd given up. There was no fight, no fire. And as Ivan walked up to the second microphone, he could see the ever-present beaten look in Till's eyes.

Till had been like that since Mizi went missing during her match against Luka. And the Segyein had tried to drug Till's emotional pain out of him.

It made Ivan furious. He hated that the Segyein had done this to Till. The Segyein didn't ultimately care who or what they had on their hands. Beauty and skill were replaceable with whatever they could buy and hype up next week, and Anakt Garden and all the other training grounds were always raising new merchandise. After this competition was over, there would be more. And more.

It was hard not to be mad at Mizi, too, despite everything. Ivan had been friends with her as well, and missed her, and it wasn't her fault that Till's worship of her left him in disarray in her absence. But it was hard to see Till falling apart without sometimes having harsh thoughts about his absent friend, even ignoring his own familiar feeling of loss. Ivan was the one who had to watch, alone, as Till become first upset, then angry, then a husk in her wake. And nothing Ivan did could snap Till out of it. No conversation about food, music, or jokes, no encouragement to draw… Nothing.

Ivan started singing as the rain drummed on his hair, and wished for the thousandth time he had a single ounce of whatever it was that attracted Till to Mizi. Was it her smile? Her beauty? Her kindness? Ivan had tried to mimic all of those things, though he struggled with the kindness part. But no matter how much Till warmed to him, there was only one heavenly body Till turned to at the end of the day.

Ivan got that, to a degree. Everyone had their stars to follow.

Till was handsome as ever in the outfit he'd been assigned, but it also highlighted how worn out he seemed. In the downpour, he seemed to visibly droop. The Segyein didn't let him have a guitar this time: Ivan imagined they didn't trust what he'd do with it, which was kind of hilarious given how one of the singers was meant to be shot to death, slowly, in front of a live audience.

Doubtless it's to save on equipment replacement costs, Ivan thought as he gazed ahead. He wondered what Segyein accountant did the math on that.

There seemed to be so much distance between Ivan and Till, but Ivan was ready to leap into action when he needed to. Their would-be rescuers had contacted him for this, and Ivan planned to do his best.

Ivan didn't push to take over the song completely. He tried to lure Till into being more active. But every time Till had his moment, he was just so tired. So defeated.

It hit Ivan that they couldn't do this. Through the rain and the lights, Ivan couldn't fully see the crowd, which wasn't unusual. He didn't care anyway: his focus was on Till.

But the crowd would be disappointed. Till's score would go down. The guards would come out. It would be over. Ivan knew he wouldn't survive seeing Till's battered corpse.

Ivan gazed at the near-invisible crowd before him and knew that he'd come onto this stage hoping it'd be the last time he'd have to do this. But also knowing it might not be the last because he was rescued, but because the whole thing had failed.

But I'll get Till off this stage for good, Ivan thought. *No one will touch him again.* He'd made those assholes in the bar suffer too little for what they did to Till. But at least they hadn't had guns.

Ivan knew he was fragile, too. After everything he'd done to get stronger, he was still too weak. But he'd use everything he had if it meant helping Till escape.

Ivan looked at Till, who was still gazing despondently ahead, as if he'd already accepted the outcome of his loss.

Ivan knew he couldn't replace Mizi, no matter what. But there weren't all that many ways to force Till's score up without getting them both killed. He didn't have the rage Mizi had when she went after Luka, or at least Ivan couldn't direct his rage at the system at *Till*.

But if he had to go out with a bang, then he'd do it properly.

He shoved his microphone aside and walked towards Till, who was completely ignoring him.

The lights went off. The artificial rain shut down. Smoke filled the air and the robot guards scrambled.

Ivan breathed in deeply and kept walking to Till. He grabbed Till's thin arm, but gently, finally making Till look at him in some surprise.

Till's eyes were so empty. He didn't care what Ivan did to him. He seemed so small. So easy to break.

Ivan remembered how excited Till had been when they almost escaped the garden. The joy of his drawings. The way Till worked so hard to perfect his music.

If it's gone forever, Ivan thought while frowning, *I don't care. He can live free somewhere else. He'll find something new to love, even if it's not me.* He'd seen too many singers shot down by the Segyein. He wouldn't let Till become one of the dead, at least not here.

Noise from backstage started to fill the air. The guards were fighting someone – probably Ivan and Till's rescuers. It gave Ivan some hope, and he tried to pull Till back there. They didn't have time to explain, and he didn't want to give hints to their captors about what they were planning.

Fog filled the air, and it smelled a little off, like smoke from a fire was mixed in with it. The crowd became more restless, and now Ivan could hear their shouting.

Till followed Ivan slowly, stumbling a little. Ivan was holding Till tightly enough that he felt Till stiffen at the sight of a woman with short pink hair appearing out of the fog. Till's eyes widened, and his lips parted in shock.

And because Till was so distracted, only Ivan's good ears heard the gun prepare to fire. He shoved Till forward and felt a burning in his side that made him stumble forward. He pushed himself up from the ground, to go help Till, but his balance was off, and the fog made it hard to see properly.

Big hands pulled him up and dragged him out, and Ivan tried to fight them, but they were a *lot* stronger than he was. He'd been pushed and shoved everywhere since he was little and had been grabbed off the streets. He wouldn't let them stop him from saving Till, even if he died in the doing.

"Relax," a human voice said in his ear. "We're the good guys. We got you."

Ivan blinked and looked at the man holding him.

A muscular, blonde, pale-skinned human wearing a backwards baseball cap smiled at him. The man had Ivan's arm around his shoulders, and didn't seem bothered at all by the extra weight.

Ivan looked forward and saw who he realized was Mizi and Hyuna helping Till along. Mizi's face turned to Till in concern, then back ahead. Hyuna was unmistakable. They were all

moving quickly down a dark corridor.

But Till was walking. His arm squeezed Mizi's jacket.

He's alive, Ivan thought happily. *He's alive. We're going to be okay.*

The fog made Ivan a bit loopy, and he lost track of things. He woke up in some kind of large moving vehicle, leaning on someone's right shoulder. When he blinked his eyes open, he could mostly only see darkness, save for a small artificial light to his left. He felt the bump of the road beneath the vehicle as they moved along.

"…You awake?" A familiar, quiet voice he adored asked.

Ivan's heart raced. He looked over and saw Till staring ahead next to him, but not moving. Till was so close that Ivan could count his eyelashes, even in the near-dark.

Till still looked tired. But there was a slight fire in his gaze that hadn't been there earlier.

"…Yeah," Ivan said, loath to move away when Till was letting him lean. "Where are we?" He honestly didn't care, so long as Till was alive.

"On our way to the safehouse," Till said, quietly. "We'll be there soon. They bandaged you up and said you'd need to rest."

Ivan could feel the injury on his side. And when he looked down, he could see his all-white clothes were a mess of blood and tearing. He wanted to laugh, because he was happy, too. He hoped he'd ruined them beyond use. The Segyein had given him very few actual good things – Till, Mizi, Sua – and their clothing and tournament could burn.

"You saved my life," Till said, sounding incredulous. He stayed close, though.

Ivan smiled. "I guess. But the others did all the work."

"You kept letting me carry the song," Till said. "You didn't have to." He sounded annoyed, then.

Ivan winced, wondering if he'd twigged Till's pride. "You'd have died if I hadn't." The thought was too gruesome. He had nightmares of Till dying in various ways over the years.

Till sighed in exasperation. "Yeah. They said you had to do it to give them time, and this wouldn't have been possible otherwise."

Ivan liked how warm and comfortable Till was. Ivan never wanted to move, even if he got a permanent crick in his neck or something.

"You pushed me out of the way of the shot," Till said, sounding frustrated. "Even after everything I did the last time you tried to save us…"

Ivan breathed in, pushing aside old wounds. “You didn’t do anything.” Till had been a kid, too. They all made mistakes. And ever since, they’d been surviving. And there were plenty of good moments in between.

“I ruined things,” Till insisted. “You could have been out sooner.”

Ivan smiled, sadly, not wanting to think too much about what might have been. “But then you wouldn’t have been.” His life wasn’t worth living if Till wasn’t in it.

Till sucked in a breath.

Ivan prepared for the rejection. To be shoved away. He got Till out. That’s all that mattered. And he could think about sleeping like this for the rest of his life, propped up against Till, even when he was alone.

An arm wrapped around Ivan’s back, pulling him a little closer.

Ivan’s eyes widened in shock. The arm was small, but warm, and firm.

“You’re a reckless dumbass,” Till said, sounding annoyed. “That’s cool. Go back to sleep. I’ll wake you when we get there.”

Ivan felt shaky. He didn’t know how else to describe what was in his chest. He hadn’t known hope since he was first purchased, and the rest of his life had eroded any remaining traces of it.

“Let me protect you for once,” Till said, rubbing Ivan’s side with a thumb. “Sleep.”

Ivan swallowed and nodded, settling into Till’s side. “Thank you,” he finally said, quietly. “Thank you for coming with me this time.”

Till breathed in deeply, but said nothing.

Ivan smiled and shut his eyes, content.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My Archive of Our Own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ivan ended up falling asleep again, in part due to strong painkillers the rebels put him on. He woke up a little to find himself leaning on someone's shoulder as they walked somewhere in the dark. From the feel and gait, he could tell it was the man from before, who'd helped them. Ivan thought his name was Dewey or something based on conversation he'd heard, though he had some trouble keeping track. His eyes were always looking around for Till, whom he discovered walking next to him, in a way that clearly showed he wanted to stick close.

Ivan couldn't see the other man's expression in the dark. But he was glad Till was still looking after him. He hoped that never changed. If Till had tried to wake him up, he couldn't recall it, but at least Till was keeping an eye on him.

Ivan wondered if Till would hug him again. *Maybe I should get injured more often*, he thought. Anything to have Till watching him. Being near him. But he had the impression it'd make Till angry, so he might try other things first.

When next Ivan recollected, he was staring at a strange ceiling and laying in a small bed that wasn't the *most* comfortable, but he was at least laying down. His jacket was gone. There was sunlight on the ceiling, it was warm, and as he turned his head, he could see a window to the outside, just over the shoulder of Till, who was sitting in a chair nearby, air fingering a guitar and gazing at his lap, focused.

Till's silver hair bounced with his movements, and he wore a slight smile as he worked, seemingly enjoying himself.

Ivan relaxed at the sight, and just watched Till for a bit. Till hadn't done this in a while due to his feelings over Mizi. *Maybe he's already coming back now that she's here,* he thought, a bit bitterly. He cared about Till being happy. Till was free, Mizi was alive, and Ivan could be happier. *It doesn't matter who makes him happy,* Ivan thought, even as he could feel the jealousy trickling in. *It doesn't matter.*

He was happy Mizi was okay, after all. At least some of them should get out of tournament alive. And he'd genuinely missed her, in between worrying about Till. He wondered if she'd even been part of the push to get the pair of them out of the tournament.

I'll have to ask her, he thought, distantly. He'd been sent cryptic messages telling him little about his rescuers and their plans, but he'd been desperate: Till was likely to die otherwise. Someone wanted to help them, and that was what mattered. If they survived, they could figure the rest out. But it was odd being in the *survived* part of the scenario.

He felt that if he were strong enough, he'd have sat up and kissed Till then and there. But he couldn't move much, and he'd probably just knock Till out of the chair. But it was a nice

fantasy.

Till looked up then, taking in the sight of Ivan staring at him, which made Till's eyebrows rise almost comically. "Oh, you're awake. You need to go to the bathroom or something? You hungry?"

Ivan thought all of that seemed reasonable, so he nodded. This had the bonus effect of Till helping him sit up, which hurt a bit, but meant Till had his hands on Ivan. He had a strong grip, despite having neglected himself. It was one reason he was so heavily drugged: he was dangerous when he wasn't.

"How are you feeling?" Ivan asked as they moved slowly to the door, with Ivan leaning on Till heavily.

"I'm okay," Till replied with a soft smile. "A bit jittery, but that's mostly because this whole thing with the rebels is wild."

Ivan grinned and said, "Yeah." It was a lot of things. Who knew what would happen to them now? The Segyein were their entire lives, and now they still were, to a degree, but at a distance.

Moving around more meant that Ivan got to see their safehouse, or wherever it was they were. It was a large space, with lots of hallways, but not many people. There was a mirror in the bathroom where Ivan could see he looked pretty messy and tired. Hardly the attractive figure he tried to be for Till.

But it's not like that stopped him from grabbing me, Ivan thought with a smirk as he finished his business.

They spotted Hyuna and Mizi on their way back from the bathroom, and Hyuna nodded at them.

Mizi smiled. She looked so different with short hair. Almost freer, somehow. And happier than Ivan could remember seeing her in years. She always carried such heaviness around her that she tried to hide.

Till froze briefly, nodded, and then helped Ivan to the kitchen.

Ivan smiled back at Mizi, trying to be happy to see her even as he felt pleasant mood drop. He knew that at any second, Till would go to Mizi. Even talking to the cook in the kitchen – a quiet, tall brunette in a sweatshirt, and with a scar over his face, who passed them plates full of food without a fuss – didn't distract him from the gloom. The kitchen smelled nice, though, and Ivan was almost sad to leave it. Because at least Mizi wasn't there, which meant he could spend more time with an undistracted Till.

They ended up back in the bedroom, and Ivan sat on the bed, eating his food quietly, his eyes on Till. The food was good, but he'd rather drink in the sight of the man staying with him, while he stuck around. They didn't talk, but it was nice, all the same.

He said he'd protect me, Ivan thought as he chewed and Till stared at his plate. *But from what? And now that we're here, how long does that protection last?* It was a miserable thought. So he wanted to make the most of what he had.

Till chewed quickly and got through his food fast. It seemed like he wanted to get done with it and move on, which made Ivan assume he was going to track down Mizi. Nothing else could get him that pumped that wasn't music. When Ivan finished, Till took both of their plates out of the room, leaving Ivan alone.

Ivan breathed in and lay back down, feeling a bit tired. He'd had hope with that conversation and embrace in the truck. Maybe that was all adrenaline or something. Or maybe Till was off to find his own room now that Ivan was awake. The tiny bed couldn't comfortably hold them both.

Not that Ivan was averse to trying. He imagined a few possible scenarios while the seconds passed. He'd had a lot of daydreams over the years and they were easily transferable to his new home.

Thankfully, the painkillers were still working.

There was a knock on the door, and Ivan looked up to see Hyuna there, grinning at him. "Hey, Fang."

Ivan smirked. "Hyuna." They hadn't been close, but it made sense she was part of the reason he was here, and he'd always be grateful.

She walked inside the room and sat down at the chair nearby, looking him over. "You got fucked up pretty bad. But the drugs are working, so that's good. We can't get the best stuff, but what we got is good."

"Thank you," Ivan said, quietly, meaning it. Hyuna and her people got Till out. That's what mattered more than any injury Ivan gained.

Hyuna snorted. "So a gunshot is what it takes to get you to be all biddable? Of course it would."

Ivan raised an eyebrow at her, unimpressed.

Hyuna laughed. "Or maybe it's having Till all over you?"

Ivan smirked. *That helps,* he thought.

"He hasn't left your side much," Hyuna continued, leaning back and crossing her arms. "Bet you're loving that."

Ivan's cheeks warmed. He *was* pleased.

"He and Mizi are having a chat," Hyuna said, glancing back at the door. "Mizi's checking in on him, just like I'm doing for you."

Ivan's smile shrank. *Of course she is,* he thought. He bet Till really *was* enjoying it, after everything.

Hyuna looked back at him. After a moment she asked, "Something wrong?"

"No," Ivan replied. Nothing had changed, that was all. He'd wanted to believe what Till said before, but…

"Liar," Hyuna said. "Something's bugging you." She raised an eyebrow. "Is it cause Till's with Mizi? You jealous?"

Ivan simply gazed back at her, unimpressed. If she expected him to get mad, he wasn't going to. He was too hurt and still a bit overwhelmed by being free and having Till safe. And he didn't want to give Till an excuse to stay away.

Hyuna grinned. "Mizi's pretty different these days. She's the one who really spearheaded this mission. She's living it up, you know." She tilted her head. "Also she's mine, and she's never been interested in Till. And I suspect that's part of what the conversation is going to be about."

"She only ever had eyes for Sua," Ivan commented, quietly. That hadn't stopped Till. *But it never stopped me, either,* he thought. He was glad to know Mizi's affections were elsewhere, but Ivan knew how Till was before, and they'd probably just fall back into that again.

Hyuna nodded. "She still does, kind of. But since her escape she's gotten a bit better." Her gaze grew dark. "In as much as any of us can, anyway."

Ivan lowered his gaze. He wasn't like Hyuna, Sua, Mizi, or Till. They'd all lost something to the Segyein and their awful world, and though Sua and Mizi had mattered to Ivan, it wasn't the same as Hyuna losing Hyunwoo and Luka and or Mizi losing Sua or Till losing Mizi. Yeah, Ivan cared for Mizi and Sua, but they'd always gravitated closer around each other than anyone else. And since Till had escaped, Ivan had never really lost anyone. All he had for experience was seeing what loss did to others, and how he *knew* he couldn't lose Till like that.

But there was always the chance that even when Mizi turned Till down, Till might not choose Ivan, regardless. Maybe Ivan really was too much in the end. Ivan couldn't blame him.

"You and Till don't have to stay here," Hyuna said eventually. "Obviously we could use the help, but the more rookies we get, the more precarious this gets. And they'll recognize you more."

Ivan nodded slightly. They both had familiar faces, and after Mizi's rescue, the Segyein were more on alert for similar antics. They'd been lucky this worked.

"Not that we're kicking you out," Hyuna clarified. "But you have options. We'll help."

"…Till won't leave Mizi," Ivan said. It was simple fact. Especially now that he had her back. He'd never let her go.

“And you go where Till goes, huh?” Hyuna asked with a soft smile.

“Yes,” Ivan replied, quietly. “If that’s okay with him, I guess.” Would Till even want Ivan around, too? Even if Till couldn’t be with Mizi the way he wanted, Till would probably stick around like a lost pet looking for its owner. It was what Ivan did, anyway.

Hyuna scoffed. “It’s not like he owns this place. Isaac, Dewey, and I decide who stays and who goes. You can stay, too, if you want.” She tilted her head at him. “You’re allowed to have stuff for yourself, you know.”

Ivan looked up at her. She looked so calm and confident, like everything Ivan tried to be. But she had Mizi and her other friends. She was capable and strong. Ivan was just himself. Without the competition and his owners, what use was he? He was too injured to run and knew little enough to get by. He already got caught once, and failed to escape another time.

“People who are freed,” Hyuna said quietly, drawing his attention, “they struggle to figure that out. We’re taught that nothing is ours. We’re living on someone else’s property, eating their food. We have to spend our lives paying it back, to be *grateful* for the right to suffer under them. Letting them profit off of what our work earned them while we get chucked into cells where they can ignore us when they’re not using us and drug us into compliance.” She sighed and looked out the window. “But this is the end of that. You took your freedom. You got Till’s freedom. And now you’re free to choose for yourself.” She looked at Ivan, her gaze hard. “What do you want, Ivan?”

Ivan gazed at her determined expression and the only thing that came to mind was, “Till.” He wasn’t complicated like Hyuna. He didn’t care about freedom or having things. There was just one thing on his mind. And he’d never been unclear about that. He wondered if he *needed* to do what Hyuna and Mizi did: find something new to do with himself. Something to fill the Till-shaped hole in what someone might call his heart, if Till was really determined to chase after Mizi forever. But he didn’t know what else there was. Other than to make sure Till was happy.

Hyuna smiled at him. “Then you should go for it.”

Ivan smiled softly. *Of course*, he thought. He knew giving up was pointless. He’d tried already, and it hadn’t worked. If Till was happy enough with Ivan at his side, and no more than that, then Ivan would be happy to be there. Or pretend to be, anyway. It would be just like before.

Hyuna studied him for a minute, then pushed herself up. “Life’s short, Ivan. You’re lucky that shot didn’t kill you.”

Ivan gazed back at her and put a hand to his side. Human bodies were so fragile. His had only one purpose: to get him to Till. He hadn’t even thought about getting in the way of bullet.

“It’s not like you to just let him slip from your fingers,” Hyuna said. “You *did* put your life on the line for the guy.”

Ivan smiled and said, “You sound like you really care.”

Hyuna shrugged and said, “It’s your life, Ivan. Don’t waste it.” She walked out of the room.

Ivan gazed ahead at the empty chair, wondering *what* he was going to make of his life. He’d probably have to learn some useful skills to help, even if he couldn’t hold a gun or mount a rescue. *Mizi isn’t the only person who can adapt,* he thought.

Then he heard voices outside the door. He looked over to see Till walk in, looking a bit pale.

“I got some water,” Till said. He had some cups in his hand and walked over to hand one over to Ivan, who sat up to take it. Then Till sat in the chair. He glanced at Ivan and then back at his water.

Ivan moved the cup to his mouth and sipped quietly. A part of him wanted to just pull Till onto the bed with him or something, tiny as it was. Though he imagined with the injury it’d hurt. Not that he minded all that much. He still remembered the way Till had felt to lean on.

“I talked with Mizi,” Till said.

Ivan simply watched him, wondering what *wonderful* bombshells would be dropped there.

“She and Hyuna are together, you know?” Till said, smiling awkwardly. “I think Mizi’s doing better, too, since Sua…” He grimaced. “She’s doing *better*. She said so, anyway. A little. The rescue helped.” He smiled a bit wider then. “She said thank you for that. Even though I didn’t do anything…”

“You stepped forward,” Ivan said, making Till look at him in surprise. “That’s something.”

Till snorted and set his cup on the floor, hiding his smile. “I guess. You know she and Hyuna are together now? That’s crazy…”

Ivan was glad that was in the open, but he tried to be supportive, “And how are you feeling after hearing that?”

Till shrugged. “It’s just normal, I guess. Mizi was really hung up on Sua. It’s nice she’s moved on.”

You’re a lot nicer about who she moved on to than I would be in that situation, Ivan thought. “But you liked her, right?”

Till winced. “I mean… yeah, but I knew it’d never work out. And people change. And I’m happy she’s happy.”

Ivan wasn’t sure what to make of that. They hadn’t been here that long. Maybe Till would change his mind about being content with this. Or find someone else to obsess over, knowing Ivan’s luck.

Till looked back at Ivan again, his expression more serious. “Hyuna talked to me, too.” His expression was more serious now.

Ivan grinned. “To tell you to lay off Mizi?” Hyuna was fierce when she wanted to be.

Till rolled his eyes, “Mizi’s capable of that herself. But no…” His expression softened. “She said… you had something to tell me?”

Ivan didn’t twitch. He was too practiced at pretending calm when he wasn’t. He was famous for being cool in the face of the grotesque and startling. “About what?”

Till gave him an unimpressed look. “Whatever the shit you were planning to talk to me about. Just spit it out.”

“You haven’t talked with me in ages and now you’re interrogating me?” Ivan asked with a raised eyebrow. “I’ve been *shot*, you know?” He put on a mock pained expression. “You should be treating me, not questioning poor little me.”

Till snorted, but said, “You weren’t shot in the *face*.”

Ivan grinned despite himself. “What do I get if I tell you?”

“Just tell me, for fuck’s sake,” Till said, clearly annoyed.

Ivan breathed in deeply, and thought of what Hyuna had said. Finally, he replied, “When I was walking to you during the song, I was going to kiss you.”

There was silence, then. Ivan looked up at Till and saw Till’s eyes were wide in shock.

Ivan smiled grimly, thinking, *Yeah, of course you’d hate that*. “I figured it was one of the only ways they’d raise your score. They always lower the score of the contestant attacking the other one. Mizi’s lucky Hyuna and her crew arrived when they did, or…” He sighed. “But yeah.”

“…So you just planned to do it because you wanted to help me?” Till asked, his voice quiet. “You were going to sacrifice yourself for me?”

Ivan swallowed. “Yeah.”

“Life’s short, Ivan. You’re lucky that shot didn’t kill you.”

“No,” Ivan said, looking up at Till, who was still shocked. “I mean… yes and no. I was going to sacrifice myself to save you. If I could. Because… you’re the only thing that matters to me. I couldn’t let you die on that stage.” Even now he remembered the burst of fear, and his willingness to go forward with his plan. Maybe he owed it to himself to spell things out for good. To get a clear answer for once over whatever Till felt.

“Ivan…” Till said, quietly. There was worry there.

“I wanted to kiss you because I want you, Till,” Ivan said, gazing somewhere over Till’s left shoulder, unable to look at Till properly. To see the pity. “I always have. And if I was going to die anyway, then… why not go out doing something I’ve always wanted to do?” He laughed slightly. “So yeah. That’s all.”

He expected Till to get up and leave. He didn't expect Till to just *sit* there, staring at him in shock.

Ivan finally stared back at him, not sure what else to do. *Maybe he's just thinking about what to say?* Ivan thought. *He was always pretty awkward with words that weren't lyrics…*

Then Till groaned and reached up to rub his eyes. "You *idiot.*"

Ivan's eyebrows rose. "Excuse me?"

"You fucking—!" Till glared at him. "All that shit you did, and *that* was your plan?! You could have *told* me like… *once!"*

Ivan recalled the way Till had been since Mizi disappeared. "You weren't in a headspace to know about the plan in advance," he said. "You haven't been." He gazed at Till's angry expression and said, "What if you spilled the beans while you were drugged?" He'd had an inkling Mizi was involved somehow, if she was alive, but he couldn't confirm it and didn't want to get hopes up, or risk the Segyein being clued into things.

"No, you fucking—! UGH!" Till threw his hands up and stood, getting up and walking closer to the bed so that Ivan had to look up at him. "Why didn't you tell me how you *felt?!"*

Ivan's cheeks burned, and then then he glared. "I thought it was *obvious!* Even Hyuna knew! Why do you think I took you with me when I tried to leave the garden?" He saw the startled look on Till's face, which said a *lot* about how wrong Ivan had been back then. So he pressed on, angrily, "And you're into Mizi anyway. You don't see anyone else." The bitterness in his voice was clear. What did he have to lose at this point?

Till made an angry noise and pushed his right knee onto the bed, bumping Ivan's side and making him wince slightly, even with the painkillers. But then he was distracted by Till moving his face down to Ivan's and pressing their lips together.

Ivan froze in place, too shocked by what was happening to fully register it.

Till finally pulled away, and then opened his eyes to glare at Ivan. His lips were moist and reddened. "You idiot. Yeah, I like Mizi. That doesn't mean I don't like you." Then he pushed forward into another kiss.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My Archive of Our Own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ivan was so surprised he almost didn't grab Till back. He could feel Till's fingers in his hair. Till's body heat. His racing breath. Till's right arm pressing against Ivan's side as he leaned forward. This, on top of Till's words, was *everything.*

Ivan's body finally caught up, and his arms wrapped around Till before pulling him down to the bed. Ivan ignored the buzz of pain in his side to focus on the soft sound Till made against his lips, which Ivan drank up. Till was leaning over him, almost fully, his body weight pressing onto Ivan's. It hurt over Ivan's injury, but it reminded Ivan this was real, not a dream.

Till pushed back against Ivan's hold to separate their lips, gazing down at Ivan with slightly dazed green eyes. "You made a weird noise. Are you okay?" He frowned. "You look too pale, too."

Ivan pulled Till down into another kiss, ignoring the surprised noise Till made. He could feel Till holding himself up a little, trying not to lean all his weight down, maybe. But he didn't pull back. In fact, Ivan could feel more of Till's body reacting to the kiss, judging by the growing hard-on pushing against Ivan's left thigh.

When Ivan finally loosened his hands to let them break for air, Till leaned his head over Ivan's shoulder, breathing hard. "Things haven't been easy, I get that, but… I've liked you, too. For a long time. I just didn't know how to say it."

"I think you've made yourself clear," Ivan said as he ran his hands through Till's silver hair and kind of hoped Till kept talking. His right hand dragged down Till's neck, fingering the collar that Till hadn't taken off yet, partially covering the letters of Till's name. He stroked the skin around it, marveling in how Till wasn't running. How he just stayed there, letting Ivan do what he wanted.

Ivan didn't know when it happened. They'd been close when they were little. Till *had* come with him, at least briefly, when they were escaping, after all. But Ivan never thought it went that far…

Till moved back for another kiss, surprising Ivan.

He's so forward, Ivan thought happily. He wanted that liveliness in Till's eyes, his body. Till felt things so powerfully, in ways Ivan couldn't comprehend, like an ocean you could sink into without ever finding the bottom. And if Till liked Ivan back, Ivan wanted to drown in what it was like to be wanted in return.

He'd never thought Till would want him the same way.

Till tugged at Ivan's clothes, yanking the awkwardly designed shirt up to bare Ivan's chest. When he broke the kiss to pull back and look down, he paused, his eyes on the injury and the bandage. Careful fingers moved around the area without causing harm.

The light touch still sent goosebumps over Ivan's skin. Hyuna was right: Ivan had nearly died. And he'd nearly missed out on all of this, and how awful that would have been…

Till moved his hand and pushed himself up a bit to better bring his legs on the bed and straddle Ivan. He lowered his head to kiss a trail down the middle of Ivan's chest, making Ivan shut his eyes in pleasure. It didn't help that Till was sitting pressed against Ivan's dick, and every time he wiggled with his movements, it brushed Ivan's cock and made him grunt in pleasure.

It felt like a dream, but Ivan didn't want to get lost and miss any of it.

Till grinned and reached forward to open Ivan's pants. The smile vanished in a frown as he muttered, "Fuck, these things are ridiculous. You've got almost as many zippers as I do."

"Took an army to get me into it," Ivan said with a grin, enjoying Till's determination. His pants weren't actually *that* complicated, but he could feel how shaky Till was. And Till's hard-on was probably distracting him. Not that Ivan planned to make things easier. He *was* injured, after all. He wanted Till to spoil him while Till was open to the idea.

It was fun.

When Till *did* get the pants down, baring Ivan's cock to the air, Till grinned, even as his face turned a bit red. "Well, I guess that's a compliment."

Ivan snorted, wondering how much clearer he could be that Till was the center of his universe. "Take your pants off."

"Giving orders now?" Till asked with a raised eyebrow, meeting Ivan's gaze.

"I can't move very far," Ivan explained, "And I want to hear your pretty voice when you're bouncing on my dick, not choking on it."

Till's blush darkened beautifully. "You think pretty highly of yourself, huh?"

"You're the one who undid my pants before I said anything," Ivan said with a smirk. He'd felt those desperate fingers working. He knew what Till wanted for once.

Till snorted and sat up to undo his pants, giving Ivan perhaps an unintended show. Ivan appreciated it and set a hand on Till's right knee. He had to remove it when Till moved forward so that he could lift his legs and kick his pants off, bringing their faces closer together. But when the garment was away, leaving Till's lower half bared, he sat back up again, pushing forward to Ivan's crotch. He studied Ivan's dick for a minute and then put two fingers into his mouth, making noises as he sucked on them that made Ivan's heart race. When he pulled the fingers out – glistening – and sat up, Ivan's right hand clutched the bed sheet beneath him.

“You’ll probably need more than that,” Ivan said quietly as Till moved his hand behind himself. He’d had dreams about this kind of thing. They didn’t quite match reality and he wasn’t sure how to keep himself calm.

Green eyes moved back to Ivan as Till said, “You think this is my first time fingering myself?” There was a challenging light in his eyes.

Ivan’s eyebrows rose in surprise and he almost bit his lip. “It’s not?”

Till snorted and moved his arm more.

Ivan wished he could see what Till was doing. His heart was pounding.

“All the shit they pump me with,” Till said, “It kind of fucks with my saliva. Makes it thicker than it should be or something. I can breathe and sing fine, or else they’d stop. But it’s useful for certain things.” He shut his eyes briefly. “Nng…”

“If I’d known,” Ivan said, his voice dark and heavy, “I’d have snuck into your room more often.” He grinned when Till peeked at him. “Maybe I could have helped.” All the moments they’d stolen together over the years, even sometimes sharing a bed together, and he’d never known. Cuddling close, wishing for more.

But back then he’d just wished to stay. He’d only ever dreamed of this, in quiet moments where he needed a distraction.

“I’d have probably kicked you out,” Till said with a huff. “I was kind of embarrassed about it… Didn’t know what I thought of anything.”

“So what’d you think about when you did this in the past?” Ivan asked, curious. He didn’t really need to be the center of Till’s world for all of Till’s life. He was happy crashing into Till’s orbit somewhere along the line. But clearly Till had been hiding more than Ivan realized, and now that he *knew*, he wanted it all, especially when Till was offering.

Till looked up at the ceiling and said, “I dunno. Anything that got me off. Lot of random shit, mostly. I’ve seen enough stuff in private performances that I’ve got an imagination.”

Ivan remembered the last private performance he’d interrupted. “Oh.”

Till grinned down at him. “Sad I wasn’t thinking of you?”

Ivan grinned back. “You will after this, I think.” He wasn’t planning to let Till go any time soon, that was for sure.

Till snorted and pulled his hand back. “Probably.” He moved up and forward, and then took hold of Ivan’s hard cock. “Fuck, are you gonna make it before I even get you inside?”

“I can hold it just fine,” Ivan said, shaking a bit under Till’s delicate fingers. “I’ve had practice.”

Till twitched at that, but then moved his hips so he could press the head of Ivan's cock into his hole.

It was tight, and Ivan breathed in hard. His toes stretched the deeper he pushed inside. The sight of Till leaning back, working down was just so much.

"Did you think of me like that sometimes?" Till asked, his breath tight, too, as he slowly worked himself up and down Ivan's cock, making the small bed creak. "When you beat off?"

Ivan laughed shakily, hoping Hyuna wouldn't be mad about the noise. "All the time." Till felt so good around him. Warm and wet and just *wonderful*. "Though imagining really doesn't compare."

"Really?" Till asked as he increased his pace a little, moving up and down Ivan's cock, trying to pull it deeper. "I always thought imagination was better."

"Imagination isn't *you*," Ivan said before he grunted on a good thrust as his hips tried to go with Till's movements. It all made his injury twinge, and he wondered, vaguely, if Hyuna would be mad at him for that, too. Or whoever dealt with his wounds.

Being injured didn't compare with being inside Till. Feeling Till's hot skin on his, hearing Till's fast breaths. The way Till rested his hands on Ivan's body for balance.

Till's ass pressed against Ivan's skin, letting Ivan in at the deepest he could go, and Till muttered, angrily, "Why do you just *say* shit like that? *Fuck!"* Then he pushed himself up and down, even faster, sending delicious waves of pleasure through Ivan's body on each bounce. "You're even worse when you're not singing! Always have been!"

Ivan laughed as he clutched the bedspread with his fingers. He cracked open his eyes to watch Till's frowning, focused, sweaty face as he worked.

Till's sweaty silver hair was askew, and his green eyes were bright. He had his left hand pressing hard against Ivan's right thigh, while Till's right hand pumped his own cock. His lips worked around moans and grunts that just got louder as they went on. It made Ivan move his hips faster, pressing his cock in harder to punch his way through Till's body, making Till shudder.

On one particularly powerful shove, where Till's body smacked down on Ivan's hard, Ivan gasped and said, "Well, you take my breath away no matter what *you're* doing."

Till made a startled noise, and then come spilled over Ivan's chest, making his slick skin twitch a bit in surprise.

"You're the *worst*," Till added shakily. He slowed down as he came, but shortly got to work picking himself up and dropping back down again. "Just come already. Fuck."

Ivan was right on the edge of it, with each movement Till made pushing him closer and closer. He gazed up through hooded eyes at Till, who looked so beautiful falling apart and

still working for Ivan. Ivan wanted Till to be happy and rest, and Till looked so blissed out right now.

“Do it for me,” Till said with a grunt.

Ivan felt something twist in his stomach, followed by a wave of pleasure that made him arch his head a bit. His legs hopped a little on the bed as he came.

Till stopped moving too much, keeping Ivan inside him through it. His hands rested on the bed around Ivan’s chest, and his head was lowered over Ivan’s neck. He was breathing hard and shaking a little. His thighs shuddered.

Ivan was breathing hard, too, and felt vaguely achey. After his cock emptied itself out, he felt leeched of everything. He just wanted to pull Till down to himself and hold him close. But all he could do was reach out to grasp Till’s right wrist and tug him a bit.

Till looked up at him in surprise. His eyes were even more dazed. His sweaty bangs flopped over his eyes. Ivan wanted to tuck them aside.

“Lay down,” Ivan said, wearily. *Near me, like we used to do.*

Till glanced behind himself, then down at Ivan. He breathed in deeply before he maneuvered himself so that he could settle on Ivan’s right side, opposite the injury. Ivan’s dick popped out of his ass, letting come spill out on the sheets. Till tucked his face into Ivan’s neck and let his right arm rest over Ivan’s chest. He was squished against the wall, pressing their warm bodies together so closely that Ivan could feel Till’s heart race.

Ivan leaned his head over to press a kiss into Till’s hair.

It was just them in their mess. Ivan’s heart was still racing along with Till’s, wanting more, not sure how much was too much.

“We’ll figure out what to do after you heal, later,” Till said. His right hand rested over Ivan’s upper chest. “Mizi and Hyuna said we have options, and we have to talk about it, cause they all seem kind of complicated.” He breathed in deeply. “All I’ve ever known was music.”

Ivan could hear the fear in Till’s voice. It was a big world out there. One that could swallow them up again, particularly given neither of them were trained for much else. Despite Ivan’s doubts, he would do his best for Till. Always.

“But we’ll work out it out,” Till added. “Together.”

Ivan smiled, happy Till was back in fighting form, and being true to his promise. With Till at Ivan's side, he felt like he could do anything. “Yeah.” He rested his right arm over Till’s back and shut his eyes. “Together.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My Archive of Our Own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!