

Best Girl

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Best Girl

by [Caraphernellic](#)

Summary

Anya wanders into Shane's yard and decides he would be a perfect match to be her Papa's human.

Or

The one where Anya conspires to get Ilya a boyfriend.

Notes

This is my first time ever writing something like this, I hope you enjoy!

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Shane glances out the window, then does a double take. There's a dog on his lawn. It's small to medium-sized, with longer scruffy hair. Shane opens his sliding glass door and steps out, moving slowly in an attempt not to startle the dog. He needn't worry, because it runs right up to him.

"Hi." Shane says to it, a little wary, but it seems friendly. It looks well taken care of too, and it's wearing a collar. "Can I see your collar?" He asks the dog, then flips over the medallion hanging from it. "Anya. Well hi, Anya, how did you get out here?" The tag also has a name and a number to call. Shane pets her gently. She licks his hand and looks up at him with big brown eyes.

"You're really cute." Shane compliments. "I bet your Dad is missing you." Shane pulls out his phone and dials the number. Someone answers on the first ring. "Um, hi, is this Ilya?"

"Yes. Who is this?" A Russian voice responds.

"My name is Shane, I'm here with Anya. I found her. Well, she found me."

"Oh thank god." The man says. "I will come right away. Where are you? She is okay?"

"Yeah yeah, she's fine." Shane rattles off the address to his cottage. "Your Dad is coming to get you." He tells Anya. She wags her tail happily, as if she understands what Shane is saying.

Shane and Anya migrate to the front of the cottage while they wait for Ilya to come get her. Shane is sitting on the ground, petting her and obliging her climbing over his legs when a flashy sports car pulls up.

Shane stands up as Ilya gets out. Anya goes running over to him. Oh. My. God.

Ilya looks like Adonis.

Tall with tawny curls and muscles bulging out of his cutoff tank. Shane has to consciously put an effort into not letting his jaw drop.

He watches as the man crouches down to his dog, speaking to her in Russian and checking her over. He stands back up and offers a hand to Shane to shake. "Thank you for calling me." He pulls out his wallet and a wad of bills.

"Oh no, I don't need any money. It was no problem, really." Shane insists. "She's a great dog."

"She is best girl." Ilya says seriously. He seems to give Shane a once over and he hopes he isn't blushing at the action, though his cheeks feel hot. "Let me make it up to you some other way. I can take you to dinner."

This man wants to take Shane to dinner? That's a come-on, right?

"Sure. Yeah, okay." Shane cringes at himself.

"Are you sure?" Ilya asks skeptically.

"Yes! Yes."

Ilya smiles at him. "Great, I will text you and we make plan."

"Sounds good." Shane says, trying for the perfect mix of excited but not overly-enthusiastic.

"Thank you again." Ilya says. "I do not know how she got out. I have cottage by here."

“It’s no problem, really.” Shane says again, flustered and a little embarrassed with this handsome man’s attention on him. He reaches down to pet Anya one last time. “Bye. Be good for your Dad.”

He watches Ilya and Anya drive away, and then he calls Rose immediately once he’s inside.

“Oh my god, Shane!” She squeals with excitement. “It’s a total meet-cute.”

“What if he was just being nice?”

“Shane. It’s totally a date.”

Shane always feels like he can never catch cues that other people do. It’s stressful for him.

“I’ll let you know if he actually texts me, okay?” For all Shane knows, Ilya went home and blocked his number.

~*Anya*~

I went out for a sniff and ended up at a big house that I did not know, but the smells there were *really* good. Then a man came out, and he was very nice to me. He called me cute, which I know is a good thing because my Papa calls me that too. I *am* cute.

The man smelled nice and had gentle hands. He played with me and then Papa came to get me. I could tell my Papa liked him too. Maybe he can be Papa’s human like Papa is my human.

They were smiling at each other but then we got in the car and went home and the man stayed behind. I was a little confused by this.

I wanted my Papa to be happy. He should have another human. The nice man was perfect. I could sense these things.

It was time for my dinner and my evening walk. I watched Papa closely. I thought about the nice man. He sounded different from my Papa when he spoke. I tried to remember the sound of what he called himself.

Shane. I remember the syllables now.

I got in the big bed and waited for Papa, then snuggled up to him. It's very important that I do this, or he will be sad. Sometimes water comes out of his eyes at night. I don't like when that happens.

In the morning, I decide that I should lead my Papa to Shane again. It feels important.

I trot around our yard. Papa is doing what he calls kureniye. *Smoking*. When he isn't looking, I slip out the same way I did yesterday.

I will be safe, because I am good girl. I sniff along, following the same path as yesterday until I see the same house from yesterday. The smells here are *really* good.

It isn't long before Shane sees me. I'm so smart. I wag my tail when he comes outside.

~*Shane*~

"Anya! What are you doing here girl?" She wags her tail. "Your Dad is going to think I'm stalking him." Shane mutters. He takes a photo of Anya and sends it to Ilya.

His phone rings immediately. "She is sneaky!" Ilya says with shock in his voice.

Shane chuckles. "I guess she liked me."

"I will be there soon."

Shane tosses an old ball around with Anya while they wait for Ilya.

"Do you want coffee or something?" Shane offers him when he arrives. Ilya looks at him for a long beat and Shane almost rescinds out of embarrassment when Ilya accepts.

Anya sniffs around the cottage as Shane pours the coffee.

"This is nice place." Ilya compliments.

"Thanks. I had it built." Shane admits.

"Mr. Real Estate." Ilya says, and Shane cracks a smile.

"I guess so." He sips his coffee. "You said you live near here too?"

"Ah. It is summer cottage."

"So is this one."

"You are all alone in this big house." Ilya comments.

Shane shrugs. "My parents' cottage is down the road. It's not so bad." Maybe he should've pretended like it was just so Ilya would stay longer.

“You are close with them. That is nice.”

“Are you not close with your parents?”

Ilya shakes his head. “My mother is dead. My father is in Russia. We do not speak.”

Okay, great way to bring down the mood, Shane chastises himself.

He nods awkwardly.

“Can I smoke in here?”

“Outside.” Shane says. Ilya, Shane, and Anya go to the back patio.

“This is nice view.” Ilya says, looking out at the water and taking a drag from his cigarette.

“Maybe that’s why Anya keeps coming back.” Shane blurts out, and is rewarded when Ilya laughs. They both watch her sniff around the yard happily.

Shane clears his throat. “This view would be good for our dinner. If you wanted to. I could grill.” He doesn’t know where this boldness is coming from.

Ilya looks at him. “Ach. I am supposed to be taking you out! As reward.”

“Oh yeah.” Shane mutters.

Ilya bumps his shoulder into his. “We can do whatever you want. I owe you.”

“We could do both.” Shane mumbles. Listen, he’s a gay man who’s still mostly in the closet. Chances with an extremely handsome and built man don’t come around too often. Rose would call this ‘shooting his shot’.

Ilya looks surprised but pleased. “Da.” He nods. He keeps their shoulders pressed together as they look out to the water.

~*Anya*~

I got distracted by sniffing, but now I need to get back to the plan.

I walk up to Shane casually and lick him just to see what he’ll do. He laughs and pets my head. Okay, perfect. He’s sitting, so I put my front paws on his knees and stand.

Papa says something to me but I ignore him. I like to be good girl but this is important!

Shane pets my sides. Oh, that feels nice. So far, Shane is good in my book.

Papa pats my butt and tells me to get down. I shoot him a dirty look, but comply.

I can’t believe it when Papa tells me we are going home. Again! All this work I have been doing and he still wants to leave. I bark at him and run around the car. Papa uses his angry eyebrows at me. This means I really have to get in the car.

I haven’t even jumped on the couch yet to see what Shane will do.

This means I will have to come back.

~Shane~

Shane calls Rose immediately when Ilya and Anya leave.

“He definitely likes you.” Rose says after he tells her everything that happened this morning.

“Maybe he’s just humoring me because he feels like he owes me.”

“You’re hopeless. But I’m proud of you for inviting him to dinner!”

“Thanks.” Shane says sincerely. His phone buzzes where it’s pressed up against his ear. A text message. He puts the phone call on speakerphone and brings his phone down to look at it. “He just texted me!” He tells Rose.

“Open it!”

Shane reads the message. “It says Waterfront. Tomorrow. Be ready by 7pm.” Waterfront is a local restaurant.

“Oh my god, he made a reservation!” Rose shrieks. “He’s taking you on a date tomorrow! Switch to Facetime and show me your closet. We need to pick an outfit.”

~

Shane paces nervously as he waits for Ilya to pick him up. He’s wearing a linen button down with the sleeves rolled up and khaki pants. Rose said it was nice enough without looking like he tried too hard.

Ilya comes to the door when he arrives, and he opens the passenger door for Shane as he gets into the car. Okay, it definitely does seem like a date then. Shane is relieved but nervous at the same time.

Dinner is good. Ilya is surprisingly easy to talk to. He jokes with Shane without making Shane the butt of the joke, as many people tend to do. He seems like he's actually listening to Shane.

They walk along the shoreline in front of the restaurant after they eat.

"Is okay?" Ilya asks, reaching for Shane's hand.

"Yeah." Shane says, a little breathless. Things like this don't happen to Shane. He's quiet and boring and not very adventurous, to most people's standards. It's why he had such a short-lived stint with online dating.

"You seem nervous." Ilya comments.

"I am." Shane admits freely. "I'm waiting for you to realize that I'm not...boyfriend material."

"Why not?" Ilya says, sounding offended. He stops in his tracks.

"I'm...boring." Shane mumbles, not meeting Ilya's eye. "Not very fun to be around. A stick in the mud."

"Is lie. Liar told you that." Ilya sniffs. They start walking again, hand in hand. "I see beautiful man with stunning freckles. Nice to my Anya. Offers to make me dinner. Blushes very pretty when he is shy."

Shane groans, embarrassed. Ilya smiles at him. "I like you, Shane."

“I like you too.”

“Is not so complicated.” Ilya says thoughtfully. “We meet, we have attraction. Good conversation.”

That’s true, Shane supposes. “Maybe I’m using you to hang out with Anya more.”

“I would not blame you.”

“You should bring her over tomorrow. For dinner at my house.”

“I will bring wine. Or beer. Whichever you prefer.”

“Um...ginger ale?”

Ilya looks at him. “Ginger ale.” He nods.

~*Anya*~

Papa was gone, and he came back smelling like Shane.

Without Shane.

I huff at him. I am annoyed.

~

The sun is setting the next day, and I've had enough. I take myself to Shane's. I will take all the good smells and pettings for myself.

~Shane~

Shane is not even surprised when Anya shows up the following day. He snaps a photo of Anya on the outdoor furniture. "She came to dinner without you."

Predictably, his phone rings. "I do not know what has gotten into her. Are you bribing her?" Ilya jokes.

"Nope."

"I will be there soon anyway, with ginger ale."

Shane smiles and hangs up. He sits on the couch next to Anya. "You're pretty good company." He tells her, scratching behind her ears. He starts a fire in the bonfire pit and puts the burger patties on the grill when Ilya arrives.

Ilya comes up behind him and wraps his arms around his waist. "Is okay?"

"Yes." Shane says, glad that Ilya can't see his blush. He feels so drawn to Ilya, he's glad that the other man seems to feel the same way.

"This is a lot of burgers." Ilya observes, hooking his chin on Shane's shoulder.

"The recipe called for eight."

“So you cut it in half. What, you can’t do math?”

Shane swats Ilya’s hands away in mock annoyance.

They eat together at the table outside, chatting about random things. Ilya asks more about his parents, and Shane tells him all about them. In turn, Ilya tells Shane the story of how he got Anya.

They sit around the fire afterward. Ilya wraps an arm around his shoulders and pulls him into his side. Shane happily leans into it. He fits his head under Ilya’s chin and breathes in his cologne.

It’s peaceful, being here under the precipice of something. Shane relishes in it.

“Shane.” Shane tilts his head to look up at him. Ilya grabs his chin gently between his thumb and forefinger. He leans down and gently presses their lips together.

They kiss again and again, Shane’s whole body tingling. It feels right. Anya barks and it startles them both. They laugh into each other’s mouths before pulling away.

Maybe it’s just a trick of the firelight, but Shane could almost swear he saw Anya wink.

~Anya~

I’m definitely begging for double treats tonight. I’ve earned it.

End Notes

In another life, everything is simple and easy for our boys and they still fall in love.

If you want to yap about Hollanov, follow me on X @caraphernellic

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