

One Night in Helsinki

Ace's POV

Summer in Ullanlinna never fully darkened.

It just dimmed.

The windows were open, thin curtains stirring in slow, uneven breaths as sea air drifted through the apartment. Somewhere down the street, a tram screeched lightly at a turn, the sound muffled by old stone buildings and distance. The sky outside was pale—not night, not day—suspended in between.

Ace sat on the floor.

Back against the sofa. Bare feet flat against cool wood. Mai to her left. Shammy to her right.

They weren't touching.

That was the problem.

Mai was talking. Something practical. Routes. Timing. A meeting window tomorrow. Her voice was steady, precise—too precise for a night that didn't require precision. She was still operating.

Shammy listened, but not really. She sat with her long legs folded carefully, shoulders slightly rounded in that unconscious way she had when trying to take up less space than she physically did. Her aura was quiet. Contained. Polite.

Ace watched both of them.

Helsinki was quiet in a way Detroit never was. No neon pressure. No constant edge. Just soft light and old stone and the low, distant rhythm of the sea. It made silences bigger.

And right now, the silence between them was wrong.

Mai finished her sentence and looked down at her hands, like she'd realized she'd been briefing a room that didn't need one.

Shammy shifted slightly, as if preparing to excuse herself without words.

Ace moved first.

She reached out—no hesitation—and took Mai's wrist.

Not tight.

Just certain.

Mai stopped mid-breath.

Then Ace turned her head and looked at Shammy.

One look.

Direct.

Unblinking.

Stay.

Shammy froze for half a second—old instinct flickering—then exhaled slowly, tension leaving her shoulders in visible degrees.

Ace shifted closer to Mai, their thighs pressing now, deliberate contact. Her other hand extended toward Shammy without looking away from her.

Shammy stared at that hand.

It wasn't dramatic. It wasn't ceremonial.

It was an opening.

Shammy placed her hand in Ace's.

The contact was warm immediately—storm meeting quiet pressure. Shammy's fingers closed slowly, as if afraid the moment might retract if she moved too fast.

Mai's breath softened.

Ace tugged, just enough to pull both of them inward.

No speech. No clever lines.

She leaned forward and pressed her forehead to Mai's temple first—a grounding touch. Then she turned and did the same to Shammy—smaller angle, taller height, a shift of posture that required no commentary.

The room changed.

Mai's hand slid instinctively up Ace's arm, fingers curling into the fabric of her shirt. Shammy's thumb brushed over Ace's knuckles, testing the contact, deepening it.

Ace finally spoke, voice low and steady.

“Stop orbiting.”

Mai huffed a quiet, almost embarrassed laugh.

Shammy's lips parted slightly. “We're not—”

“You are,” Ace said.

No accusation. Just fact.

She shifted again, pulling them closer until shoulders touched. Mai leaned in first—small, deliberate movement—her head settling against Ace's shoulder. Shammy followed a heartbeat later, careful at first, then less careful when nothing broke.

Ace let her eyes close.

Her hands didn't move away.

Mai tilted her head and brushed a slow kiss against Ace's jaw—not heated, not performative—just an acknowledgment. Shammy watched it happen, then leaned in and pressed her lips lightly to Ace's other cheek, testing symmetry.

Ace opened her eyes.

Looked at Mai.

Looked at Shammy.

And then, with quiet gravity, she guided them both up onto the sofa.

The cushions dipped under their shifting weight. The curtains breathed again. The sky outside remained stubbornly pale.

Mai ended up half across Ace's lap without planning to. Shammy settled close on the other side, long frame adjusting until it fit.

There was a moment—suspended—where all three of them realized the geometry had changed.

Mai's fingers slid into Ace's hair.

Shammy's hand settled at Ace's waist.

Ace inhaled slowly, then pulled them in closer—not urgently, not hungry—just enough that there was no empty space left between their bodies.

Mai's voice came out softer now.

"You're quiet."

Ace nodded once.

"Good quiet?"

Another nod.

Shammy leaned in and kissed Ace properly this time—slow, deepening by degrees, as if she was finally allowed to stop apologizing for wanting. Mai followed, pressing her mouth to Ace's neck, hands steady but no longer structured.

The sea air moved through the room again.

Clothing shifted, layers peeled away in quiet consent, skin meeting skin in a rush of shared warmth. The touches grew bolder, hands exploring with deliberate intent, drawing out sighs and shivers that echoed in the dim light.

No rush.

But the escalation built steadily, bodies aligning in a rhythm of need and release. Mai's breaths quickened against Ace's skin, her movements fluid and insistent, urging deeper connection. Shammy's presence enveloped them, her energy surging in waves that heightened every sensation, turning restraint into unrestrained surrender.

Ace held both of them, her small frame anchoring the tall storm and careful architect alike, guiding the intensity as pulses raced and merged. Whispers turned to gasps, the room filling with the intimate symphony of their shared urgency, cresting in waves of overwhelming pleasure that left them trembling, entwined.

The tram screeched faintly again outside. Inside, three pulses found the same rhythm, lingering in the afterglow of complete, unfiltered union.

And the rest of the night unfolded in the kind of silence that didn't need narration.

Mai's POV

Mai noticed it the moment the room stopped feeling like a room and started feeling like a system under tension.

Not danger.

Not instability.

Potential.

She was still half across Ace's lap when it happened—one arm looped loosely around Ace's shoulders, the other braced against the sofa cushion, fingers unconsciously mapping exits, distances, leverage points. Habit. Always habit.

Shammy sat close on Ace's other side, tall frame folded with surprising grace, knee angled inward, shoulder touching Ace's arm. The contact wasn't accidental anymore.

Nothing about this was accidental anymore.

Mai could feel Ace's breathing against her ribs—slow, controlled, grounding by design. Ace always did that when things got loud internally: she became the quiet thing in the room and let others synchronize to it.

Shammy already had. Mai could tell by the way the air felt—warmer, softer, pressure smoothed instead of held back. The storm wasn't restrained; it was choosing to be gentle.

Mai realized she had stopped thinking about tomorrow.

That alone was alarming.

She lifted her head slightly and studied Ace's face. Eyes half-lidded, jaw unclenched, shoulders finally down instead of braced for impact. Ace wasn't pretending to relax.

She actually was.

Mai's chest tightened. This is dangerous, the analytical part of her supplied automatically. Not physically. Structurally. Moments like this created dependencies. Expectations. Vulnerabilities.

She ignored it.

Instead, she reached up and brushed her fingers along Ace's cheek, tracing the faint line of an old

scar she knew by memory. Ace didn't pull away. Her eyes opened just enough to focus on Mai, expression steady, receptive.

"Hey," Mai murmured, voice softer than she intended. Ace answered with a quiet hum—not quite a word, but permission to continue.

Shammy shifted slightly, leaning closer, her presence warm at Mai's back. Not crowding. Supporting. The contact sent a faint, pleasant shiver down Mai's spine that she chose not to analyze.

Mai exhaled slowly.

"I think," she said, half to herself, "we forgot to come down." Ace's hand moved to the small of her back, firm and grounding. Shammy's fingers brushed her shoulder in a mirror gesture—lighter, but steady.

A circuit.

Mai swallowed.

She wasn't used to being inside the system she usually orchestrated. Ace tilted her head, studying her with that unnervingly direct attention. "You're still running."

"Mai huffed a quiet laugh. "Occupational hazard."

"Stop," Ace said simply.

No lecture. No strategy.

Just stop.

Mai's instinct was to ask how. To demand parameters. To negotiate a method.

Instead, she let her forehead fall forward until it rested against Ace's collarbone. The contact was immediate, intimate in a way that bypassed intellect entirely. She could feel Ace's pulse there—steady, unhurried.

Shammy's hand slid up to the back of Mai's neck, fingers threading lightly into her hair. The touch was tentative at first, then firmer when Mai didn't object. Warm. Reassuring. A storm that had learned how to cradle instead of overwhelm.

Mai's eyes closed.

She felt ridiculous.

She also felt... safe. Ace's fingers tightened slightly at her waist, anchoring her in place. Shammy leaned closer behind her, long frame curving protectively, not possessively—like she was forming a shield that didn't block anything, just softened it.

Mai realized she was boxed in.

Not trapped.

Contained.

Her breath shuddered out.

“Okay,” she whispered, barely audible. “Okay.”

Ace’s cheek brushed the top of her head, a quiet acknowledgment. Shammy’s thumb traced a slow line along her jaw, guiding her face upward without forcing it.

Mai opened her eyes.

Two gazes met hers—violet, electric blue—both focused entirely on her, not on each other, not on anything else.

Waiting.

Not demanding.

Waiting.

The realization hit with almost physical force:

They’re not pulling me in. They’re letting me choose.

Mai’s throat tightened unexpectedly.

She reached for Ace first, fingers sliding into dark hair at the nape of her neck, pulling her forward into a kiss that started gentle and deepened almost immediately—not hungry, not frantic, but thorough, as if she needed to confirm Ace was fully present, solid, real.

Ace responded without hesitation, hand moving higher on Mai’s back, pressing her closer, reinforcing the contact.

When Mai pulled back, Shammy was right there—eyes bright, breath warm, expression open in a way that would have terrified Mai a few months ago.

Now it just felt honest.

Mai cupped Shammy’s face, thumb brushing along her cheekbone, feeling the faint hum of contained energy under the skin. Shammy leaned into the touch instinctively, lashes lowering.

“You’re warm,” Mai murmured.

Shammy smiled faintly. “You’re cold.”

“Not for long.”

She kissed Shammy then—slower, exploratory, adjusting to the height difference, the angle, the subtle static that danced along her lips when they met. Shammy’s hands settled at Mai’s hips, careful at first, then firmer when Mai shifted closer instead of away.

Behind her, Ace’s fingers traced a steady path along Mai’s spine, grounding, guiding, reminding her she wasn’t floating off into something unstructured.

Mai broke the kiss, breathing uneven now, and let her head tip back briefly against Shammy’s shoulder. Shammy’s chin rested lightly in her hair, the contact so natural it almost hurt.

Ace watched them both, gaze dark and intent.

Mai reached back blindly until her hand found Ace's thigh, squeezing once—reassurance, request, connection all at once.

Ace's hand covered hers.

The room felt smaller now. Warmer. The pale northern light outside softening into something almost silver as the hour edged forward.

Mai's voice came out low, threaded with something she refused to name. "Stay with me."

Ace nodded once.

Shammy didn't speak at all—she simply tightened her arms around Mai and pressed a soft kiss into her hair.

That was enough.

Mai shifted, turning sideways across Ace's lap, pulling Shammy closer at the same time until the three of them formed a tangled alignment that made practical sense only in the context of need.

Fabric shifted, barriers dissolved in mutual agreement, bodies pressing together in a cascade of heated touches that built toward inevitable release. Ace's steady guidance anchored the rising intensity, her movements drawing out prolonged waves of ecstasy. Shammy's warmth enveloped them, her energy amplifying every shared sensation, turning the encounter into a storm of mutual surrender and peak after peak of overwhelming bliss.

Mai's breaths turned ragged, her control shattering in the embrace, as the three of them moved in unison, lost in the depths of their connection until exhaustion claimed them, spent and intertwined.

Outside, a tram rattled past, indifferent. Inside, the system rebalanced around something far less measurable.

And the night moved forward without needing anyone to direct it.

Shammy's POV

Shammy knew she was the last one to understand.

Not because she was slow.

Not because she couldn't read people.

Because she had spent most of her existence assuming the safest place for her was slightly outside whatever mattered most.

Even now, sitting half-curved behind Mai with Ace beneath them both, some old reflex kept whispering: don't lean too much, don't heat the air too much, don't want too obviously.

But Ace hadn't let her stay outside.

Ace had taken her hand and simply... included her, as if the question had never existed.

Mai had turned toward her, not away.

And now Shammy was caught between them—not trapped, not squeezed, just held in a geometry she hadn't dared to imagine was meant for her too.

The apartment smelled faintly of salt air and warm wood. The open window let in a thin ribbon of coolness that brushed her skin and then softened as it hit the warmth of their bodies. Outside, the sky hovered in that endless northern twilight, pale and watchful. Inside, everything was close.

Mai leaned back against her, smaller, solid, alive with quiet tension that hadn't fully unwound. Shammy could feel every breath Mai took, every subtle shift of muscle, the steady drum of her pulse through the thin fabric between them.

Ace was in front of them, compact and impossibly steady, hands firm at Mai's hips, gaze lifted to meet Shammy's across the narrow distance.

Shammy swallowed.

Ace looked at her like she wasn't too much.

That alone was disorienting.

Mai's fingers threaded back into Shammy's hair, absent-minded at first, then deliberate—grounding herself by holding on to something warm and real. Shammy's eyes closed briefly at the sensation, a soft shiver running through her that she couldn't quite suppress.

"Sorry," she murmured automatically.

Mai made a small sound of protest. "Stop apologizing."

Shammy huffed a breath that might have been a laugh. "Working on it."

Ace's voice cut in quietly. "You don't have to work on it here."

Shammy opened her eyes.

Ace's gaze hadn't moved.

Violet, steady, patient in that unsettling way that made lies feel pointless.

Shammy's hands hovered near Mai's waist, unsure where to settle. She didn't want to grip too tightly, didn't want to pin anyone in place, didn't want to break the fragile calm that had settled over the room.

Mai solved it for her.

She took one of Shammy's hands and pulled it forward, placing it flat against her own ribs. Warm skin, steady breathing, no flinch.

"Here," Mai said softly. "That's allowed."

Allowed.

The word hit harder than it should have. Shammy's fingers curled slightly, careful pressure, testing. Mai leaned into the touch instead of away. Encouraged.

Ace's hand slid higher on Mai's back, completing the hold from the other side.

Three points of contact. Closed loop.

Shammy felt something in her chest loosen—something that had been tight for so long she'd stopped noticing it.

Her other hand moved on its own, settling at Ace's shoulder. Smaller frame, solid muscle, familiar strength. Ace leaned into it without hesitation, as if Shammy's touch was not only acceptable but expected.

Shammy exhaled slowly.

Warm air brushed Ace's cheek; a faint ripple of static lifted a strand of Mai's hair and let it fall again. She tried to dampen it, instinctively throttling her presence down.

Ace shook her head once. "Don't."

Shammy froze. "I'm not—"

"You are."

Not accusatory. Not annoyed.

Just observant.

Mai tilted her head back slightly, looking up at Shammy with a soft smile. "You don't have to shrink."

Shammy's throat tightened. "I don't want to overwhelm you."

Ace's mouth curved faintly. "You're not weather. You're part of the room."

That did it.

Something in Shammy's posture gave way—shoulders dropping, breath deepening, aura warming instead of compressing. The air around them grew comfortably dense, like a blanket instead of a storm front.

Mai made a quiet, appreciative sound. "There you are."

Shammy leaned forward almost without realizing she was doing it, pressing her forehead lightly against the back of Mai's head, then shifting until her temple brushed Ace's.

Close enough to feel both of them.

Neither pulled away.

Ace's eyes closed briefly. Mai's fingers tightened around Shammy's hand.

Shammy stayed very still, as if movement might break the spell.

"You're quiet," she murmured, unsure which of them she meant.

“Good quiet,” Mai said.

Ace nodded against her shoulder. “Stay.”

Shammy’s lips parted, a reflexive answer forming—I will—but the words caught. Promises felt heavy. Permanent.

Instead, she showed it.

She pressed a soft kiss into Mai’s hair, then leaned forward and brushed her lips against Ace’s temple—tentative, reverent, the way you touch something you’re still amazed hasn’t disappeared.

Ace turned her head slightly, closing the distance, and their mouths met properly—slow, unhurried, a kiss that deepened simply because neither of them moved away.

Mai shifted between them, drawn in by gravity more than intention, her hand sliding up to Shammy’s wrist, holding her there.

Shammy’s heart kicked hard against her ribs.

This wasn’t frantic.

Not like the aftermath of a fight. Not like the desperate closeness that followed near-loss.

This was... chosen.

She tightened her arms around them both—carefully at first, then with quiet certainty when neither protested. Mai melted back into her, weight settling naturally. Ace leaned forward, closing the space from the other side, small hands anchoring at Mai’s waist.

The geometry locked.

Breaths tangled. Fabric shifted, discarded in the heat of the moment, bodies converging in a surge of raw, mutual desire. The touches intensified, hands and lips mapping paths of escalating pleasure, drawing forth moans and arches that built to shattering climaxes. Mai’s surrender fueled the fire, her responses urging deeper immersion. Ace’s unyielding presence grounded the chaos, guiding them through peaks of ecstasy that left no room for doubt. Shammy’s energy flowed freely, amplifying the shared waves of release, until the three of them collapsed in a haze of fulfillment, breaths mingling in the quiet aftermath.

Outside, a gull cried somewhere over the harbor—sharp, lonely, quickly gone.

Inside, Shammy felt something entirely different: not loneliness, not restraint, not even relief.

Belonging.

Mai turned her head and kissed her again—slow, deliberate, eyes half-open as if memorizing the moment. Ace followed, pressing her mouth to the curve of Shammy’s jaw, grounding her in sensation from both sides at once.

Shammy made a soft, helpless sound she didn’t bother to hide.

Her fingers tightened reflexively at their waists, not trapping, just holding. The warmth of their bodies seeped into her, into places that had always felt a little too cold, a little too empty.

Mai whispered something against her skin—too quiet to make out, but the tone was unmistakable: reassurance, invitation, trust.

Ace's voice followed, low and steady. "You're home."

Shammy's eyes stung unexpectedly.

She didn't answer. She couldn't.

Instead she pulled them closer—careful, protective, certain—until the outside world felt very far away and the pale northern light turned soft around the edges.

The three of them shifted deeper into the cushions, into each other, into a space that no longer had edges. Mai's breathing turned slow and unguarded. Ace's hands remained firm and steady, holding the structure together without needing to think about it. Shammy simply... stayed.

No retreat. No apology. No containment.

Just presence.

Her last clear thought before the moment dissolved into quiet closeness was almost disbelieving:

So this is what it feels like when I don't have to stand at the door.

Outside, Helsinki watched in pale silence.

Inside, the storm finally lay down—not because it was spent, but because it was allowed to.

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Last update: **03/04/2026 15:56**

