

2018 Holiday Short  
Dmitri's First Christmas

Dmitri woke up alone. He knew Keira had been gone for some time even before he touched the cold spot where she usually slept curled up next to him. It spoke to their ever-growing trust that he hadn't even stirred when she slipped out of bed, having long since gotten used to her midnight wanderings.

She didn't do it as often as she used to, but some nights her memories rode her hard and a rough fucking wasn't enough to still them. The first few times it happened, he'd shadowed her steps, intent on ensuring she knew she wasn't alone.

Until she'd told him to fuck off and leave her be.

He smiled a little into the darkness. His Keira, his queen. Unimaginably strong, even with her personal demons biting at her heels.

Still.

It was Christmas Eve.

Their first.

Dmitri hadn't celebrated the holiday in longer than he could remember—he wasn't certain he'd *ever* celebrated it—but the date still lingered in the back of his mind. He and Keira had been together nearly a year. Perhaps it was time to start new traditions.

He pulled on a pair of lounge pants and went in search of his wife.

She wasn't on their floor—the third. Not in the library, or haunting the nursery or wandering the halls. Not the second floor, either. Dmitri wasn't concerned, not really, though he still picked up his pace. His men would have alerted him if Keira was in any kind of danger.

But she had a penchant for sneaking out, even still.

The faint tinkling of bells stopped him in his tracks at the bottom of the stairs. *What the fuck is that?* He stalked toward the sound, determining it came from the living room tucked at the back of the house near the kitchen. Dmitri opened the door and went still.

He'd found his wife.

She was perched on the windowsill, gripping the curtain rod overhead to lean out and precariously place a star at the top of a Christmas tree that had *not* been there when they went to bed earlier tonight. He held his breath as she secured the star, ready to step in if she fell.

She didn't. Naturally. His wife might drive him out of his goddamn mind at times, but she was capable in the extreme.

Keira gracefully stepped down and grinned. "Merry Christmas."

"It's Christmas Eve."

"Actually, it's after midnight." She opened her arms. "What do you think?"

Dmitri took in the tree. How long had he been awake? It was superbly decorated, all white lights and silver and gold ornaments. Presents mounded beneath it, stacked without rhyme or reason. "I wasn't aware we were celebrating."

"Well, we weren't." She pulled at the hem of the oversized T-shirt she wore. *His* shirt. "But last week I was talking with Carrigan, and I realized that as much as holidays could be hellish at home when I was growing up, they were kind of magic, too." She crossed to him, stopping a few inches away and running her hands up his bare chest. "So I decided it's time for some new traditions. We'll leave the nightmare and take the magic. Make it ours."

Something strange wove through his chest. "We never had a tree in the house. At least not that I can remember."

Keira's eyes went wide. "Wait a damn minute. I thought we weren't celebrating because we're too badass for Santa and Christmas music and pretty lights. I didn't know it was because you didn't know how."

"I know how to celebrate."

"Really, Russian?" She shook her head sadly. "It's worse than I thought. I'm glad I trusted my instincts and went over your head."

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He covered her hands with his own. "This is important to you."

"Correction. It's important to *us*." She grinned. "Come on." She grabbed his hand and tugged him forward to the tree, her glee downright childlike. "Now, tradition is that you can't start opening presents until the sun comes up, but I'm a rebel like that." She dug through the presents, pushing boxes out of the way.

Dmitri leaned over and took in the labels painstakingly printed on the corner of each brightly wrapped present. "Isn't it tacky to buy your own presents, *moya koroleva*?"

"Nope." She nudged another box aside. "There are some for you under here, too. And our men."

Dmitri found himself smiling at her antics. Trust Keira to set her priorities in order. "If you wanted gifts—"

"You would have showered me in gifts. I know." She sat back on her heels. "And, really, you *did* buy me gifts." She beamed at him.

Fuck, she seemed to get more beautiful by the day. Every time he thought she couldn't possibly surpass herself, she went and proved him wrong. She sat there, slightly rumped, wearing his shirt, her face bathed in the soft light of the lit Christmas tree, smiling at him like he was her world.

Dmitri dragged his hand over his mouth. "*Moya koroleva*."

"I know that tone of voice." She pointed at him. "One present, Dmitri. Just open this one and then you can follow through on the promises those dark eyes are making me right now." She held up a small box, roughly the size someone would use for a gift card. "First thing's first."

He joined her on the floor, kneeling carefully among the scattered boxes. Dmitri had the strangest thought that they'd entered some parallel universe. One where he held fond memories of the holidays, where he woke up every morning breathless with anticipation. He could almost, almost see it. He accepted the small box and studied it. Classy silver wrapping paper. A perfectly proportioned bow stuck to the top. "Tell me the truth. Did you wrap this?"

"I have many secret skills, Russian. You should know that by now." She leaned over and bumped his shoulder with hers. "Open it." She practically vibrated with impatience.

He ran a finger along the edge of the paper. "Seems in poor taste to open presents early. Perhaps we should wait." He mostly meant to tease her. Nothing on earth could have stopped Dmitri from opening this present given to him by his wife on their first Christmas together.

Keira was having none of it.

She moved behind him, wrapping her smaller body around his, pressing her breasts against his back. Her lips brushed his ear. "Open the present, Dmitri." She ran her hands down his arms and back up again. "Trust me."

He unwrapped the present slowly, enjoying this closeness with her. This moment that almost felt like magic, if he believed in such fanciful things. The paper fell away to reveal a plain white box.

"Open it," she whispered, his very own angel to tempt him into sin. As if he needed the nudge.

Dmitri opened it. A single card lay nestled within, plain white just like the box, except for the bold black writing scrawled across the front. It took three rereads before the words registered.

*Let's make a baby.*

All the air rushed out of his body. He blinked at the card, his mind curiously blank.

*Let's make a baby.*

A baby. With Keira.

A fucking *family*.

"Dmitri? Dmitri, talk to me." Keira slid into his arms, her expression concerned. "Oh shit, I broke my Russian."

"I'm fine." He spoke through numb lips. Damn it, he could do better than this. Dmitri gave himself a shake. "I'm fine."

Just like that, he watched her retreat even though she hadn't moved from her spot in his arms. "It's okay. We can wait. I just... We hadn't really talked about it since the whole you-kinda-kidnapping-me thing, and I wasn't ready before. Which I think is pretty understandable, what with us all cementing our criminal empire and that sort of thing this year."

"You're ready now?"

She frowned up at him. “Well, yeah. I wouldn’t have gone through all this trouble to surprise you into an invitation to knock me up if I wasn’t ready. I would have just gotten you a puppy.”

“*Moya koroleva.*”

She rushed on, as if she couldn’t be sure of what he’d say next. If she couldn’t be sure of *him*. “Something cute and hardy. A Frenchie, maybe. Or a Corgi. We’d call him Bullwinkle. It’d be great.”

“*Keira.*” He framed her face with his hands, stilling her. “You want to have a baby.”

Her breath hitched, and her smile dimmed, her expression melting into something serious. “I want to have a baby. Not for politics. Not to secure our legacy, or any of that shit. I want a baby for us. Maybe a couple of them. A family.” She shifted closer, straddling him. “I want Christmas mornings without all the emotional torture my father liked to pull leading up to it. I want some little hellion to run us ragged and fill this house with laughter. I want it *all.*”

Dmitri’s chest went tight and hot, and he still couldn’t catch his breath. “You’re sure.”

“I’m sure.”

He looked down at her, feeling like he was seeing her for the first time all over again. No longer the broken princess speeding her own self-destruction. The fire of their world hadn’t destroyed her, it had only tempered the steel of her. It made her stronger.

It made her the queen she was now.

*His queen.*

Words had never been a problem for Dmitri, but they failed him now. He kissed her. He was helpless to do anything else. He dug his hands into her dark hair and told her he loved her with tongue and teeth.

Keira, being Keira, met him in the middle.

She wrapped her arms around him and rocked her hips against his hardening cock. The lightest raking of her nails down his back cut loose the last of the ties holding him in place. Dmitri toppled her onto the rug, sweeping the presents out of the way to make room for them.

He eased his shirt off her and, just as he suspected, she wore nothing beneath it. “I love you.”

“I know.” She reached up and hooked his neck, pulling him down to cover her even as she worked off his lounge pants with her feet, kicking them down his legs. Keira nipped his bottom lip. “I love you, too.”

Need for her was a fire in his blood. He cupped her between her spread thighs, groaning when he found her wet. “Tell me the truth, *moya koroleva*. You were touching your pretty pussy while you were down here setting this up.”

“Maybe the idea of Santa Clause just gets me there.” She lifted her hips, urging his fingers deeper. “I think you’d look sexy as fuck with a beard, Russian.”

“I’ll take that into consideration.” He couldn’t wait any longer. Dmitri withdrew his fingers and guided his cock into her. Bliss. Pure bliss. He fucked her slowly, thoroughly, taking his time and enjoying every whimper and gasp that escaped her lips. “Tell me again.”

“I love you.” Keira grabbed his ass, using the leverage to arch up and grind her clit against him. “Put a baby in me.”

Pleasure rolled down his spine. He looped his arm under her waist to lift her hips, so he could give her the angle she loved the most. One stroke. Two. On the third she came with his name on her lips, her expression going hazy with pleasure.

Dmitri couldn’t hold out. He didn’t want to. Not this time. He cradled her against him as his strokes went rough and fast, chasing his own pleasure. Chasing the end of it. He kissed her as he came, pumping his cum into her. Something already sexy as hell turned unbearably erotic.

Keira wrapped shaking arms and legs around him, pulling him close even as he did the same with her. “So, what you’re saying is that you like my present.”

He smiled against her lips. “It’s the best one I’ve ever had.”

