

James bowed his head and thumped it gently against the windowpane. At first, he thought the quiet rattle and bang was from the shitty, landlord special, glass rattling in its frame. The much louder swearing, first frustrated and then triumphant, told him Cillian was home.

His heart rate, already nice and high, spiked a jolt or two skyward.

Cillian. His roommate. Platonic, not permanently attached, but in high demand, with a new pretty boy or big bear on his arm at least twice a month. He rattled all the windows when he had company, and James had learned to take it with a grain of salt, a snorted chuckle, and a really good pair of noise-canceling headphones -- because honestly, Cillian was one of those guys you couldn't help but love. Some men had a gift for that. Half Irish and leaning into it, using the accent he'd gotten from his Galway mother to its full advantage. Full head of wild red curls and a day or so's worth of stubble. Surprisingly broad shoulders, built like a Viking bard, with a cute little pillow belly when he sat down.

"Your call is very important to us. Please hold..."

James missed the rest of the robot spiel, too busy watching Cillian wander into their living room, tossing his keys in the general direction of their coffee table and his own knitted cap toward the back of the couch. No company tonight, James noticed.

Cillian grinned broadly, his teeth white and even, and mimed "phone call?" before putting his finger to his lips and plunking cheerfully down onto their couch. Yep. There was the belly. During dry spells, which happened far more often than James would like, he itched to drop down beside Cillian and rest his head on that nice little cushion to see if it was as comfortable as it looked.

"Won't say a word," Cillian mouthed to James. Then almost immediately, out loud: "Problems? Weren't you supposed to be on a plane tonight?"

"Supposed to be, sure." James gestured at his phone. "Airline says otherwise."

"You bought your ticket weeks ago."

"Again, airline's website says otherwise. Trying to get an actual human on the line to convince them of that."

Cillian winced in kind sympathy and idly rested his hand on his stomach where his Aran sweater had ridden up an inch or two. "Sucks, my friend. Wish you good luck."

James' fingers twitched. Their windows didn't keep all the cold out, but Cillian ran warm. He'd be toasty as a fireplace to cuddle up

with. James could rest his head or roll over to face him while they talked about a little of everything and a lot of nothing. And while he was there, possibly nose into the warm skin. Press a light kiss to Cillian's navel. Or flip completely onto his stomach, braced on his arms, all the better to take care of the zipper on Cillian's jeans and --

Okay, so he didn't think about that kind of goings-on only during dry spells. More like all the time, actually.

*All I want for Christmas is youuuuuuu...*

Click. "Your call has been disconnected. Please hang up and try again."

James clapped a hand to his forehead and growled through gritted teeth, wondering if Androids could actually accordion up and break across the middle if you squeezed them hard enough. Either way, he was about to find out, either from travel-induced rage or sexual frustration.

"Ah, now. I know that look."

James had closed his eyes, but he heard Cillian lever himself off the couch and clatter over before thumping a companionable hand to his back. "It's a few days till Christmas still. You're not going to get a human on the line during rush hour."

"True so far." James opened his eyes. "Suggestions?"

"Sure, easy. Call back tomorrow morning and yell at them then. Or not, because they're humans and they're probably at least twice as pissed at the system as you are, so be a kind fellow and go easy on the poor bastards. Figure it all out with a cool head then."

Cillian grinned at him from inches away. He smelled of bayberries and fir and wool. "And in the meantime, I happen to know the perfect cure for a raging temper fit."

Despite himself, a matching smile tugged at James' lips. Cillian was just magic that way. "Don't say drinks."

"Drinks!" Cillian thumped him harder, then tossed an arm around James' shoulders. "Best idea I've heard today. Let's go."

With a choice between that and listening to bubblegum caroling for another hour -- well, it wasn't really a choice at all.

All I want for Christmas is you. He tapped Cillian's fist with his own. "You're on. Let's go."