

A Lifetime To Go

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A Lifetime To Go

by [PeaceLilies](#)

Summary

Shane and Ilya enjoy their first wedding anniversary together after a tough (but successful) first season playing together

Notes

A lil something I wrote just because...

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

Chapter 1

June

Shane lay starfished out on his bed, staring unseeing up at the familiar ceiling of his and Ilya's bedroom in Ottawa.

He was unimaginably sore. He wasn't sure if he could move.

He'd been dead to the world for nearly ten hours and it still felt like not enough sleep. He wasn't sure why he was awake. He was glad he was in his own bed though.

Shane felt the mattress shift next to him and turned his head to look at Ilya, who was now sitting up. He was hunched over, resting a hand on his ribs, which looked like they were starting to bruise.

"Hey," Shane said softly. Ilya turned his head, brushing curls out of his face. He offered Shane a tired smile.

"Hi."

Shane smiled back, reaching out toward his husband, his hand laying palm up on the bed. Ilya rested his hand on top of Shane's, the two of them just looking at one another.

"You okay?" Shane asked.

Ilya tilted his head side to side. "Eh."

Shane nodded. "Me, too."

Ilya sighed and nodded, too. Slowly, he got himself out of bed, trudging to the bathroom. Shane watched after him before turning his eyes back to the ceiling, and closing them.

He was so fucking glad the season was over.

The Centaurs had won the Stanley Cup.

There had been no way that Shane and Ilya would have allowed the team not to win, especially with everything they had been dealing with over the course of the season. They hadn't needed to prove anything. They were fucking incredible players. Downright dangerous when they were on the ice together.

So they'd simply done what they always did. Played incredible hockey and won it all.

Shane was so fucking proud but stupidly exhausted. He couldn't worry about next season. He needed a break.

His first season with Ottawa had been both amazing and terrible. High-highs and low-lows. He was fucking *tired* on every level.

Playing with the team had been incredible. It had taken some time for Shane to orient himself to a new style of coaching and different line dynamics but his new teammates and coaches had made that easy.

Playing with Ilya and being on the power play with him had been beyond his wildest dreams. The Centaurs power play was the best in the entire league thanks to them and having Ilya there with him on the ice had been absolute magic.

Having the time to practice together and work on things together, building off of what already felt innate to them, had been spectacular.

Shane had really loved playing hockey this year. He always loved it but after everything that had gone down in Montreal, it felt so good to be accepted with open arms. The team had been one of the best supports that he and Ilya had had throughout the entire season.

Shane was so grateful for each and every one of his teammates... but he felt kind of guilty, too.

For all the incredible hockey they'd played and how amazing the team was, everyone having really clicked, things hadn't been all sunshine and rainbows.

The worst part about the entire season had been the media.

Shane was used to the press. He'd been in front of a camera since he was twelve years old and he had had to deal with his fair share of critics and opinions about him and his play throughout his entire career in hockey, even in Juniors.

He had no problem when he was critiqued on his play. He was able to take that information and either dismiss it or work to improve. But he had never had anyone comment on his relationship before.

It had been one thing when it had been about Rose. Easily dismissible rumors, things that he and Ilya joked about. But things had gotten very, very personal when the speculation and rumors and gossip were about his *marriage*.

Reporters asked, to his and Ilya's faces, if their "relationship problems" were the cause of a bad play or a lost game. Treating their relationship as something unsustainable, as if it was all temporary, when they both wore rings around their fingers.

The speculation and opinions around their relationship had been incredibly frustrating and it had created so much unnecessary noise.

Their teammates had stepped in, steering conversations back toward hockey, or flat out telling reporters to stop talking about Ilya and Shane's relationship. They both appreciated it immensely but Shane certainly felt bad that they had to do that at all.

He didn't want to be a burden on his new teammates, feeling like he was adding more to their plates, being a disruption.

It had been really hard. He had been afraid of something like this happening and even with preparation from Farah, it had been overwhelming and unfair.

Shane and Ilya were high performers under pressure. They were professionals. But there had been several occasions where they had pulled one another into empty meeting rooms and cried frustrated tears into each other's jerseys.

On the plus side, Shane had never felt closer to Ilya.

They were a team. A good team. A strong one.

They were there to support one another. To be each other's biggest hype man and defender.

Even when they didn't always agree, they were there for one another.

They had their fair share of bickers, even fights, but they always came back together to sort things out between them, and it *never* got in the way of their play.

Shane was proud of them and all that they had managed to do this season. But using all of that mental and emotional energy, on top of the physical strain of playing an eighty-two game season plus a full Cup run, had left him completely drained.

He couldn't wait to get to the cottage. To be away from all the attention, able to focus on himself, and Ilya, and Anya.

They had already decided to shut off their phones for a few weeks and steer clear of anything involving sports media.

It was just going to be the two of them and Anya, at the cottage, until their hockey camps.

Nearly two full months of peace and quiet. Of having Ilya all to himself. Shane couldn't wait for that. To just *be*.

And they'd be celebrating their first wedding anniversary. That was pretty exciting.

They had told Farah they wouldn't be going to the NHL awards and had asked Svetlana and Rose to go in their stead. Both women had delightedly agreed. Shane had been grateful to both women for doing that for them, as neither Shane nor Ilya were feeling particularly generous with their time after the year they'd had.

They'd partied with their teammates and had decided to use their time with the Cup together, bringing it with them to their camps.

Shane was pulled from his thoughts as the bed shifted under him again and Ilya appeared above him. His shaggy curls hung around his face like a curtain, his hazel eyes trained on Shane. He was smiling behind his playoff beard and Shane smiled back.

“Come here,” he said, reaching his arms up.

Ilya lay down on top of him, a comforting, warm, firm weight. They both groaned; the sore, bruised parts of them complaining at the added pressure as their bodies pressed together, but neither of them moved.

Shane wrapped his arms around Ilya, one hand holding his opposite wrist, and he closed his eyes, turning his face into Ilya’s neck, breathing him in. He was still sleep warm and smelled like himself and having him like this was reassuring.

They stayed like that for a while, neither of them wanting to move, but Ilya eventually pushed up onto his forearms, leaning down to kiss Shane very softly. It was a tender kiss, just their lips pressed together. Ilya pulled away slowly, carefully extricating himself.

Shane let his hands slide along his shoulders, down his arms, until Ilya was out of reach. He got up and went to their dresser, pausing to say good morning to Anya.

She hopped on the bed, sniffing at Shane’s face.

“Hi, sweet girl,” he murmured, petting her, and laughing softly as she licked his face. She rested her head on his chest and let out a long sigh. Shane chuckled and stroked his hand over her soft fur, peeking over her to watch Ilya slide into a pair of shorts.

Anya perked up immediately when Ilya turned back to the bed, ears up, tail wagging.

“Oh, my sweet little donut,” Ilya cooed at her, sliding into bed on his belly, laying next to Shane, and petting Anya. She shamelessly crawled over Shane, making him groan, and Ilya laugh.

“Jesus,” Shane huffed. “I’m chopped liver over here.”

“Do not be jealous that I am the favorite, Shane,” Ilya hummed teasingly, petting Anya, and letting her lick his face. Shane shook his head and slowly maneuvered his way out of bed to use the bathroom.

“I’ll leave you two to your little love fest,” he chirped.

Finished in the bathroom, he found his husband and dog sitting up in bed, waiting for him. Anya hopped off and Ilya followed. He took Shane’s hand and kissed his cheek. Shane sighed happily, his heart flipping at the sweet gesture.

They followed after Anya, making their way slowly downstairs for coffee and breakfast.

Their media appearances were done and their season was over, so they could head to the cottage whenever they wanted.

Ilya let Anya out in the backyard, standing on the deck, while Shane moved into the kitchen to start making coffee. He pulled mugs from the cabinet when Ilya and Anya came back inside and Ilya went to the fridge, pulling out a carton of eggs, and some other ingredients.

He grabbed a bowl, cracking eggs one handed into it. Shane smiled, running his hand along his husband's waist as he passed him to get Anya's breakfast ready.

Shane grabbed her bowls, filling it up with her food, and fresh water, bringing it over to the pink mat with her name on it.

"Wait," he said to her as he placed the bowls down for her.

Anya sat, prim and proper, her eyes trained on Shane. He stood back, giving her a few seconds.

"Okay," he told her and she skittered forward to get to her food, making him laugh. "Good girl."

"Are you torturing the dog?" Ilya asked over his shoulder as he scrambled the egg mixture he'd made.

"No," Shane replied. "I'm keeping on top of her training. Unlike *someone*."

He sidled up to Ilya, wrapping his arms around him from behind, and kissing his bare shoulder.

"I'm the cool dad," Ilya replied and Shane snorted, nipping at him playfully, before moving away to pour coffee once the machine beeped.

Ilya made them cheese omelets with chopped veggies and breakfast sausage. He looked stupidly good at the stove, wearing nothing but his shorts, his curls all wild. Shane would happily watch him there all day. He was still unfairly handsome in the mornings and Shane wanted to shower him with kisses.

So he did, making Ilya stand there while Shane cupped his cheeks and pressed soft kisses to his face, just because he could. Ilya's face was so shy and so sweet and Shane kissed him some more.

They finally sat at the kitchen table, lowering themselves slowly into their seats, and laughing about it.

"God," Shane sighed. "Is this how we're going to be when we're in our sixties?"

Ilya huffed a laugh. "Probably."

Shane shook his head, cutting into his omelet and taking a bite.

"This is good," he hummed because it was. Ilya was a pretty good cook. They both were these days. They'd done a lot of cooking together, it had kind of become their thing.

Ilya smiled, taking his own bite.

Shane looked at him, smiling back.

“What?”

“Nothing,” Ilya replied, leaning back in his chair a bit as he picked up his coffee. “You are cute.”

Shane blushed and huffed, rolling his eyes. Ilya laughed.

“What do you think about leaving for the cottage tomorrow?”

“Fine,” Ilya replied after a moment of thinking. “Will be good, maybe.”

“Yeah. That’s what I was thinking.”

Shane knew they were on the same page; getting some space from Ottawa for a bit and just having time for themselves.

“We can do laundry and pack,” Shane continued.

Ilya nodded. “Okay. No problem.”

Shane smiled softly, reaching out with his foot to brush his toes over the top of Ilya’s foot. His husband chuckled, trapping his foot playfully. They both laughed.

“I’ll text my parents and let them know we’ll be off grid.”

“Yes. I talked to Troy, too. Not to be worried if we are unavailable.”

Shane chuckled. “Harris would get concerned if all of a sudden he didn’t get any Anya content.”

“That is true,” Ilya replied with an amused smile.

They talked a bit more about logistics and what they might need, before lamenting their exhaustion and soreness as they got up from the table.

They left their dirty dishes in the sink for the time being before going upstairs to shower. Shane made their bed as Ilya turned the shower on in the bathroom. He was already naked when Shane joined him, pausing just to watch the outline of Ilya as he stood under the shower spray, the shower doors fogged up.

Shane joined him, closing the door behind him. Ilya just stood there, head bowed, eyes closed.

“You okay?” Shane asked.

“Mm,” Ilya replied, opening his eyes. “Tired.”

“Yeah.”

He shifted closer and Ilya moved out of the way so Shane could step under the waterfall spray.

“How’re your ribs?”

“Not great.”

Ilya turned and Shane hissed as he got a full view of the bruise on Ilya’s side. It was ugly and purple and maybe a little swollen, which was concerning. Shane would have been more panicked if he hadn’t heard from their trainer that Ilya hadn’t cracked any ribs.

“Jesus Christ, Ilya.”

He reached out a tentative hand, very lightly touching the skin, lifting his eyes to Ilya’s.

“Will be fine,” Ilya assured. “But I will be moving slow.”

“You should be in bed.”

Ilya made a face and shook his head. “No.”

Shane huffed but he knew that nothing short of uncontrollable vomiting, a dangerously high fever, or surgery would keep Ilya in bed.

“Take some ibuprofen at least.”

“I will.”

Shane sighed softly and moved into Ilya’s space, dropping his forehead against Ilya’s chest. Ilya hummed, wrapping his arms around him, and just held him under the warm spray.

Shane’s eyes stung a little. Mostly it was because he was tired but some of it was worry. He didn’t like seeing Ilya in pain or uncomfortable. And he just couldn’t wait to be out of the suburbs. Away from prying eyes...

Ilya kissed the top of his head, smoothing his hand up and down Shane’s spine soothingly.

“I love you,” Shane murmured, loud enough to be heard over the spray.

“I love you, too.”

They washed up, both of them moving carefully through the motions. Normally Shane would have washed Ilya up himself, inevitably ending up blowing him, or Ilya fucking him, but there was no way he was going to be able to get down on his knees and back up again. His quads were sore and exhausted. He was amazed he was still standing.

They kissed a bit, just holding each other, before Shane rested his forehead against Ilya’s shoulder.

“Sorry,” he murmured. “I don’t think I can...”

“Is fine,” Ilya replied soothingly, stroking his hand against the wet hair at the back of Shane’s head.

Shane's eyes stung again, leaving him feeling a little ridiculous. He knew that it was okay that they weren't having sex right now, that there was no pressure, that Ilya wasn't upset with him. Nothing was wrong. They were both wrung out, mentally and physically and emotionally exhausted after the tumultuousness of the season.

But it still felt like a failure.

Shane wasn't sure if that was because all of the vitriol that they'd been exposed to was catching up with him or what... but he was upset.

He let out a shaky breath and Ilya made a soft noise, carefully pulling Shane closer, holding him.

"Sweetheart," he murmured and that word sent Shane completely over the edge.

He sobbed against Ilya's neck, letting out all of the exhaustion and frustration and sadness he'd been holding onto since the playoffs had started.

Ilya rested his cheek against Shane's head, soothing him softly, letting him cry.

When he was completely spent, Ilya leaned away, gently wiping Shane's cheek with his thumb.

"Better?" he asked gently and Shane nodded, sniffing.

"Sorry."

"Nothing to be sorry for," Ilya replied. "It has been a lot."

Shane nodded, letting Ilya hug him, closing his eyes, taking solace from the embrace. He was so grateful for patient, loving husbands with hearts of gold. He had no idea where he would be without Ilya.

A ship lost at sea. Unmoored.

Ilya was home. Safe harbor. The calm in the face of Shane's buffeting anxiety. And Shane needed that. He always needed it.

Ilya leaned away, cupping Shane's face in one palm. "We are okay."

Shane smiled softly, leaning into his touch. "I know. Thank you."

Ilya smiled back, brushing his thumb over Shane's lips. "There it is. I love this smile," he murmured, in Russian.

Shane closed his eyes as Ilya bent close, pressing soft kisses to Shane's face; over his forehead, between his eyes, over his eyelids, his freckles. "I love this face."

Shane fluttered, eyes stinging again in the face of Ilya's sweetness.

Even with everything that had happened this year, Ilya had been so gentle with Shane; so patient and so understanding. Sometimes he felt undeserving of it but he had tried to return the sentiment, to be there for Ilya as much as Ilya was for him.

Ilya never wanted to be a burden. Never wanting to cause problems or make waves, but he had had his own concerns and anxieties about all the media attention. He had been so worried that Shane was thinking that he was too complicated, that he wasn't worth the hassle of all the negative media.

Shane had hurt to hear that, that Ilya was anxious about Shane leaving him, or getting fed up, or throwing in the towel because of everything that was going on. That none of the things they were experiencing would have happened if they hadn't been outed and that that was somehow Ilya's fault.

Shane had said he would never give up on Ilya or their relationship, and he had meant every bit of it. Ilya's depression wasn't going to scare him off and certainly not the fucking press. But depression and anxiety weren't necessarily rational.

He had assured Ilya that he was loved. That he wasn't too much for Shane. That no amount of media weirdness could ever make Shane love him less or want to leave. It was frustrating, surely, but not because of anything that Ilya had done.

They had done a good job of communicating, of supporting one another, of being on the same page.

This was just the relief of putting that first year behind them. All the feelings coming out.

Shane opened his eyes, laughing softly as Ilya rubbed their noses together, the gesture so adorable and soft that Shane got all gooey inside, before Ilya turned off the water.

They stepped out of the shower, grabbing towels, and dried off, making their way back into their bedroom.

Shane slid into a pair of briefs, opening up the ring box on their dresser where their wedding bands resided during the season. They had worn silicone ones, a suggestion from other players who were married, and it had been fine, but Shane hadn't loved it.

He hadn't been a fan of how the silicone felt against his skin in his glove and while it hadn't impacted his performance, it was more just a comfort thing.

He'd thought about going back to wearing his ring around the chain he'd bought but Ilya had been talking about getting his wedding band as a tattoo... and Shane was seriously considering the idea.

He wasn't super into tattoos for himself but he did like the idea of something permanent like that on his body. Shane was all in. He had been for a long, long time. He intended to spend the rest of his life with Ilya and the permanence of an inked band around his finger was very appealing to him.

Shane slid off the silicone ring, taking his wedding band out of the box, and put it on. Ilya came up behind him, kissing his shoulder. Shane looked up, catching his reflection in the mirror, watching as Ilya wordlessly took off his own silicone ring and plucked his wedding band from the box, sliding it on.

Shane smiled and Ilya met his eyes in the mirror. Ilya smiled back, winking at him, before kissing his cheek, and turning away to finish getting dressed.

Once they were both dressed, Ilya gathered their laundry to start a load, while Shane pulled out bags so they could pack what they needed for the cottage. They already had a lot of stuff there and would pick some things up to bring with them (like groceries) but there were always a few things they liked bringing from home.

Shane packed a few items and went to find Ilya, who was lying on the floor with Anya in the living room.

“Should we go for a walk?” he asked, Anya perking up at one of her favorite words.

Ilya rolled onto his back, looking up at Shane, his curls splayed out against the carpet, his t-shirt having ridden up a bit to expose a sliver of skin, a peek of firm belly that Shane wanted to kiss.

“We should,” Ilya replied, slowly sitting up. He got to his feet and sighed and Shane chuckled, rubbing his back as they walked to the door together to put shoes on, Anya following them happily.

Shane slid on his sneakers, watching Ilya clip Anya’s leash to her collar, leaning down to rub her face, and kiss the top of her head.

“Yes, I know you are excited, sweet girl,” he cooed, Anya’s paws tip-tapping on the floor by the door.

Ilya looked up at Shane, his curls tucked behind his ears, and Shane was flooded with so much love for him. It was a silly thing, just looking at his husband this way, seeing him like this hundreds of times since they’d been together.

But they’d come out the other side of this season stronger than before and Shane was so appreciative and proud of how well they’d done despite the adversity. It hadn’t been easy, but they had persevered.

So all these small moments together felt bigger. He appreciated them more.

“What?” Ilya asked, standing up, his lips tilted up in a little smile.

“I just love you.”

Ilya smiled wider, sweet and warm. “I love you, too.”

Shane shifted closer, wrapping his arms around one of Ilya’s and leaned up to kiss his bearded cheek.

“Let’s go,” Shane murmured and Ilya hummed, kissing his temple.

They left the house with the dog, though Ilya peeked out the door first, checking to be sure the coast was clear. They had had a few threats during the season of people showing up at their house. Nothing had come of them but it had still been scary.

They’d gotten a bit more at ease but the knee-jerk reaction to double check still existed. Shane hoped that that would ease up some over the summer.

The coast was clear and Shane felt Ilya’s body relax.

Their walk around the neighborhood was calm. They didn’t see anyone except their neighbors who greeted them as always. Cars passed by without incident. Anya sniffed around and did her doggy thing. Shane held Ilya’s hand like they always did on these walks. It was all blissfully normal.

They saw Willa, Andrew, and Kate on the way back, making a pit stop so the kids could say hi to Anya.

“How are you guys holding up?” Kate asked.

Shane looked at Ilya and Ilya looked back, understanding passing between them, before they turned back to Kate.

“We’re okay,” Shane replied. “Tired. It’s been a long season. We’re heading to Ontario tomorrow, which’ll be nice.”

“Good for you. You both deserve a nice rest.”

“Thank you,” Ilya said. “And thank you for all the support this season.”

Kate smiled at them, her expression one of soft understanding. “Of course. We’re rooting for you guys on and off the ice. And who isn’t excited about finally having a Stanley Cup in Ottawa?”

Ilya laughed warmly. “It took a while but we got there.”

“It was great. You guys did awesome. The kids were ecstatic. Especially because they know you. It was very cool.”

“Good, I’m glad.”

Shane blushed a little, smiling up at Ilya with pride. He appreciated Kate’s support, and how kind she had been to Ilya and by extension himself. She had become a huge support for them, just keeping things on their block feeling normal.

They chatted with her and the kids for a while longer before they went back to the house. Sneakers were placed back on the rack by the door and Ilya took Anya’s collar off, hanging the collar and leash up.

“Lunch?” Shane asked. “And maybe a nap?”

“Sounds perfect,” Ilya replied.

Shane made a salad with sliced strawberries and blueberries, sprinkled with goat cheese, and a vinaigrette he made, with sliced chicken breast he’d seasoned and was currently baking.

Ilya helped him with some of the fruit and it felt nice to just stand side by side, working in comfortable quiet.

Shane leaned his head on Ilya’s shoulder and Ilya kissed the top of his head. The alarm he’d set went off and Ilya turned to take the chicken out of the oven.

Shane cut the chicken up and added the slices to the salads that Ilya had spooned into bowls.

“Thank you,” Shane said as he set the pan back on top of the stove.

“Of course,” Ilya replied.

They decided to sit in the living room, turning on a movie. Ilya had given Anya some blueberries so she was pretty well-behaved as they ate their salads on the couch.

They cuddled for a bit once lunch was done and then went back to the kitchen to clean up lunch and breakfast. Ilya stood at the sink, rinsing things, handing them to Shane, who placed them in the dishwasher. He closed the door and turned the machine on.

They went about the kitchen, cleaning things out of the fridge since they’d be gone. Ilya held a garbage bag open as Shane went through the items. He hated food waste but it was even worse when they were gone and the food went bad. But there wasn’t a lot they had to get rid of which was good. Once that was done, they both went upstairs for a nap.

The rest of their day after their nap was cleaning up, packing, and taking Anya out.

Shane lay on the couch, watching Ilya with Anya on the floor. She seemed to get the idea that neither of them were interested in anything exciting and was happy to playfully paw at and lick at Ilya’s fingers.

Shane took several pictures on his phone, his social media apps disabled. He smiled at the sweet pictures of his husband and dog, looking warmly at his screen.

They ordered take out for dinner and just hunkered down to do nothing into the evening until bed. They were both tired and hurting and the idea of doing anything besides being horizontal was unappealing.

They ended up going to bed as soon as it was dark. They moved about their nighttime routine slowly. Ilya washed his face, his hair held back by a headband. He’d grown it out a bit this past season and it reminded Shane of how he’d had it when they were twenty-three. He put it up sometimes, in a little ponytail. It was cute.

Shane stood next to him, going about his oral hygiene routine. They finished up, Ilya turning off the light, following Shane to bed, where they carefully crawled in.

“You okay?” Shane asked as Ilya spooned against him.

“Fine,” Ilya replied and then yawned. “This is not my bad side.”

Shane chuckled. “That’s good.”

“Yes,” Ilya replied, kissing the back of Shane’s neck, nuzzling him, making Shane shiver pleasantly.

He patted Ilya’s hand and then threaded their fingers, snuggling deeper against the mattress, but careful not to bump Ilya too much.

“Sleep,” Ilya whispered, sounding amused, and Shane sighed. He was asleep in seconds.

Chapter 2

Shane hadn't realized the actual degree of stress he was at until they arrived at the cottage.

It had always been this way for him, to some degree. The relief and ease he felt being here, knowing that he and Ilya would be safe and alone.

Being at the cottage was always where he felt most himself, and while being out had offered him a lot of that luxury in his day-to-day during the season, the media had kind of ruined some of that.

His and Ilya's privacy had been consistently poked and prodded in ways Shane had never fathomed.

People making inferences about their life that wasn't anyone else's business and had no bearing on hockey. At all.

The positives had outweighed the negative most of the time but it was still hard when some of it was said to your face

But that was over. Things would be relatively quiet over the summer and Shane hadn't looked at any social media apps in almost 48 hours.

As they'd pulled up to the cottage, he felt all of the stress he'd been holding drain out of him.

He reached over, resting his hand on Ilya's thigh and squeezed.

"Home sweet home."

Shane pulled into the garage and cut the car engine. Anya poked her head over the barrier they had set up along the backseat so she wouldn't try to jump into their laps.

Ilya reached back to pet her, fiddling with her ears.

They got her out of the car and Ilya took her around to the back while Shane went into the house to check on everything, pulling back curtains, and then bringing things into the house.

He peeked outside, watching Ilya and Anya make their way back up to the stairs leading to the deck and the back entrance. He heard them on the deck and Ilya knocking on the sliding glass door.

Shane smiled, walking to the door. He unlocked it, sliding the door open, letting them inside. Ilya stole a kiss as he moved past Shane and Shane chuckled warmly.

They took their time unpacking; putting away groceries, feeding the dog, taking their bags upstairs to their bedroom.

Shane finished in the kitchen and went upstairs to find that Ilya had made their bed and was currently in the bathroom, unloading toiletries.

“Hey,” Shane said from the doorway.

Ilya looked up, turning to him, and smiled.

“I wondered where you went.”

“Here I am.”

Shane chuckled, making his way closer, wrapping his arms around his husband from behind.

Ilya rested his hands on Shane's, Shane's cheek resting between his shoulder blades.

They stayed like that for a long time, holding each other in the quiet, before finally pulling apart.

“I think I will shave,” Ilya said.

Shane pouted at him. “Noooo. Why? I love your beard...”

Unlike Shane, who had shaved almost immediately after their Cup win because he hated his patchy facial hair, Ilya had left his playoff beard.

Shane loved the facial hair if he was honest. It was very sexy and it suited Ilya.

Ilya wrinkled his nose and looked in the mirror.

“I don't know... is looking like too much.”

“You could trim it?” Shane asked with pleading eyes

“But then you cannot see my, um...” Ilya paused, tapping his chin. “I do not know what is this in English. Dimple? The um... like a butt? Crack, maybe? No.”

Ilya started chuckling and Shane followed, unable to help himself. He honestly enjoyed some of the conversations he had with Ilya, trying to discern certain words in English.

“Yeah! It's cleft. That's the more accurate word” He laughed again, snorting. “ *Butt chin* .”

“Cleft, okay.” He was smiling now, laughing. “Why is that so funny?”

“I don't know!”

They both dissolved into giggles, leaning into one another. It just felt so good to laugh like this. They laughed all the time together but this felt... better.

“You can shave if you want to shave,” Shane said, nuzzling against Ilya's bearded cheek. “I wouldn't mind seeing your chin. I like it.”

Ilya smiled, chuckling. “Okay. Thank you “

He turned toward Shane, resting his hands on Shane’s hips. Shane hummed, running his hands up Ilya’s arms, squeezing his biceps before cupping his face.

“Goodbye, beard,” he sighed. “Until next year.”

Ilya laughed and leaned in to kiss him. Shane smiled into it, kissing him back.

“Come find me when you’re done,” Shane murmured.

“I will.”

Shane made to leave the bathroom, glancing over his shoulder, watching Ilya pull out his electric shaver, repeating *cleft* to himself, to remember the word. It was ridiculously sweet and Shane bubbled with happiness.

He went back downstairs and made lunch.

Ilya came back down just as he was finishing, his beard shaven down to his signature stubble. Ilya was always handsome, regardless of the state of his facial hair, and Shane’s heart flipped just looking at him. He just observed his husband as he paused to say hi to Anya.

He seemed lighter, the set of his shoulders more relaxed, a bit more swagger in his step. Subtle things that Shane hadn’t been paying too much attention to because he was preoccupied with everything else.

Ilya had probably needed the shave, in more than just a maintenance kind of way. Getting rid of the reminder of the year. They’d won, in every sense of the word, and now they could have a fresh start to their summer.

And even after all this time, he still managed to make Shane all warm and gooey inside.

“Feel better?” Shane asked as Ilya came around the island, wrapping his arms around Shane from behind.

“Yes,” he murmured against Shane’s ear, his breath warm, ghosting over the sensitive area, making Shane shiver.

Shane giggled softly as Ilya dipped his head to kiss Shane’s neck, his stubble rubbing pleasantly against his skin, tickling him.

“I’m making lunch,” Shane said fruitlessly, laughing as Ilya’s hands slid up under his shirt, feeling him up.

“So?” Ilya replied. “I am hungry for something else...”

Shane snorted at the cheesiness of the line but felt his cheeks heat, Ilya’s voice gravelly with desire. He nipped Shane’s ear, fingers teasing over Shane’s nipples, pressing his hips up against Shane’s ass. Shane bit his bottom lip and pressed back against his husband.

He abandoned the cold cuts on the table, reaching around to rest his hand in Ilya's curls, turning over his shoulder to kiss him messily. Ilya's hand came up, holding Shane's face in his hand as they kissed.

Shane sighed into it, instantly turned on.

God, he'd missed this.

So much of the sex they'd had over the last year had been slow and comforting, a way to feel connected together when things felt so chaotic around them. Shane wasn't complaining, it had meant a lot to feel that closeness, and the sex was always good between them.

But he'd missed *this* sex. Messy, heated, impulsive.

Shane made to turn in Ilya's arms but Ilya didn't let him, carefully pushing a hand between his shoulder blades so that Shane was bent over against the countertop.

"Stay," he said, his voice commanding, but gentle. Shane whimpered softly, doing as he was told. Ilya pushed his shirt up so it bunched around his shoulders, undoing his shorts, pushing them down, along with his underwear.

"Fuck," Shane breathed and Ilya chuckled softly.

Shane felt Ilya carefully tug the hair tie holding his hair up free, his hair falling around his face. Ilya nuzzled into the long strands, before carding them back and over Shane's shoulder.

"So beautiful," Ilya sighed, leaning over Shane, pressing soft kisses to his exposed back. "So good for me. I missed having you like this."

Ilya palmed Shane's ass appreciatively with one big hand, before slapping one ass cheek, making Shane gasp. He hummed and sighed softly as Ilya smoothed the sting of the slap away with a tender caress.

"Don't move."

Shane closed his eyes, swallowing, and trying to regulate his breathing a little. He felt Ilya step away, heard him talking softly to Anya, and then the sound of a bag unzipping. He came back a few moments later, lube in hand, swaggering into the kitchen, smiling his sexy crooked smile. That was a relief, Shane didn't think he'd manage to hold it together if Ilya made him wait.

He was hard as granite and already dripping. The promise of sex was heady. He wanted Ilya to bury himself inside him and fuck his brains out. He *craved* it. Everything felt more heightened, desperate even, as if they'd been holding back over the last eight months.

"You are being so patient," Ilya said.

He came to stand beside Shane, leaning in to kiss him properly. The kiss was Ilya's signature; filthy and adoring and heated and deep. He pulled away and Shane chased his mouth, making Ilya chuckle.

“Stunning,” Ilya murmured in Russian, coming to stand behind Shane again. “My beloved.”

He’d placed the lube on the counter and Shane heard him taking off his clothes, dropping them to the floor.

“Ilya,” Shane huffed, a warning. He looked over his shoulder again and Ilya looked back, naked and smiling. It amused Shane, through the haze of desire, to see Ilya completely naked, while Shane had his shirt shoved up and shorts around his ankles.

Ilya just liked being naked and Shane considered that a perk.

“Gonna make me wait all day?” Shane asked, arching a brow.

“Maybe,” Ilya replied. “I could.”

His eyes dipped as they wandered over Shane’s back, to his waist, his ass.

“You are so pretty to look at like this.”

Shane felt his cheeks flush and he had to look away, desire rushing through him at the thought of being on display, of Ilya taking his time to do whatever he wanted with him.

Ilya hummed, the sound fond. He grabbed the lube, popping the cap. But instead of feeling the press of his fingers, Shane felt Ilya shifting behind him. His hands pulled his cheeks apart and Shane gasped at the press of Ilya’s tongue against his rim.

“Oh fuck. Yes,” he whimpered, closing his eyes, leaning his cheek against his arms on the island. Ilya was so fucking good with his tongue and Shane’s whole body flushed with want and need. He *loved* this.

He pushed back against Ilya’s tongue, making Ilya chuckle, his hands gripping Shane’s ass harder, going deeper.

Ilya fluttered his tongue softly against Shane’s rim, the way that Shane liked, the touch tantalizing and teasing, making sparks shoot up to the top of Shane’s head and the tip of his dick.

Shane leaned into the sensations, overwhelmed by the pleasure of it.

“Fuck, Ilya. So good.”

Ilya hummed, moving from gentle flutters to long, confident strokes. Shane bit his lip, whimpering. He could come like this he was pretty sure, if Ilya kept going.

“Ilya,” Shane whimpered.

“Mm?” Ilya replied, though he didn’t stop what he was doing.

“I—fuck,” Shane breathed. “Too much…”

Ilya stopped for a moment, then gave Shane a few more soft kitten licks, before pulling away. Shane tried to recenter a little, his whole body pulsing.

But Ilya didn't leave him waiting, Shane felt the press of his finger against him, circling, before sliding inside.

Shane moaned, the sensation absolutely perfect. Ilya made a noise of approval, kissing Shane's shoulder as he leaned over him, his weight comforting against Shane's back.

Shane loved the way Ilya opened him up. His strong fingers sank into him with the knowledge of years of experience. They curled and stretched and stroked and Shane leaned into it, rocking back against Ilya's fingers, seeking more.

Shane sighed and breathed and Ilya praised him.

"Good boy," he hummed, stroking his finger along Shane's prostate, making him jolt, and gasp.

"Did you miss this, too?" Ilya murmured against Shane's ear.

"Yes," Shane replied immediately. "So much. Fuck. Feels so good."

Ilya nibbled at his ear, working his fingers in and out of Shane, stroking his prostate. Shane had lost the capacity to use words, simply moaning and whimpering and panting. He was overwhelmed in the best way, complete putty in Ilya's hands.

"Do you want more?" Ilya asked, his cheek pressed to the side of Shane's head.

"Fucking... yes," Shane gasped out.

Ilya cooed at him, pressing kisses into Shane's hair, removing his fingers after one last stroke to Shane's prostate. Shane heard the lube cap again and a few moments later, the press of Ilya's cock against his hole.

He lifted his ass and Ilya chuckled, stroking his hand over his ass, before curling his fingers around Shane's hips, and pushing inside.

Shane made an involuntary noise of relief as he was filled up, the sound echoed by Ilya. He paused for a moment, fully inside Shane, and Shane shifted his hands, planting them against the counter as Ilya pulled out, and pushed back in.

He found a brutal place, fucking hard and fast into Shane, and Shane just moaned, eager and euphoric. He loved when Ilya fucked him hard; the intensity of it, knowing how much Ilya wanted him. Ilya curled his fingers into Shane's hair, gripping the strands, tugging Shane's head back.

"So perfect and beautiful like this for me. You take it so well."

"Fuck, Ilya. Jesus. Don't stop, don't stop."

Ilya held Shane there for a moment, before releasing him, resting his hands over Shane's on the counter, threading their fingers as he jackhammered into him. Shane squeezed Ilya's hands, making ridiculous, wanton noises, unable to help it. He wanted Ilya to stay inside him, to make him come again, and again, and again.

He was going to come untouched. He could feel it.

"Are you going to come for me, moy vozlyublenniy?"

"Yes. Fuck, yes. Ilya. I'm coming, I'm coming, holy—!" Shane came hard, gasping, knowing he was making a mess of the cabinets but not caring in the slightest because *fuck*, he felt so good.

Ilya groaned, stilling, pulsing inside him, and Shane felt so perfect and happy and blissful.

"Eugh," Ilya huffed, which made Shane laugh, his husband's head resting between his shoulder blades. He started laughing, too, and god that felt amazing.

Ilya pressed soft, adoring kisses to Shane's flushed, sweaty skin, and Shane hummed happily, shaking his hair out of his face.

He looked over his shoulder and Ilya smiled, reaching up to gently move Shane's hair out of the way, stroking his thumb over his cheek bone.

"Stay," Shane murmured.

Ilya kissed his shoulder. "Okay."

Shane leaned back against the counter, closing his eyes, basking in post-coital bliss, Ilya's comforting warmth, and the feeling of him inside Shane. They just breathed together and Shane felt so peaceful inside.

Eventually Ilya's softened dick slid out of him and Shane straightened, stretching out. Ilya kissed his shoulder, wrapping his arms around him, and Shane leaned back into him. He reached his hand up, touching Ilya's stubbled cheek, feeling the catch of it against his palm.

"Let's clean up," he murmured. "Then lunch."

"Okay," Shane sighed, smiling.

The rest of their day was spent unpacking and settling in. They napped, went on a long walk with Anya, and cooked dinner together; something easy that they had tossed into a crockpot.

After dinner, they sat outside on the dock, watching the sunset.

Shane sat with Ilya's legs bracketing him, leaning back against his chest, his arms wrapped around him. They'd slid into sweatshirts and comfortable shorts, just sitting together, watching the sun slowly dip below the horizon.

Shane closed his eyes as the dock gently bobbed and he listened to Ilya's relaxed breathing, feeling safe in his arms.

Everything was still inside him the way it always was when he was at the cottage with Ilya.

He was tired but relaxed and that in and of itself was immense.

While the cottage was important to both of them, Shane wasn't sure how Ilya was faring. He was good at hiding his emotions, at putting on a brave face. He had been extremely honest with Shane over the last year, especially when things were hard, but now that things were settling down, Shane was concerned that Ilya would say he was fine, even if he wasn't, in order to keep things "peaceful."

He shifted his head slightly on Ilya's shoulder, nuzzling his neck.

"Hey," he murmured.

"Hi," Ilya chuckled and Shane smiled, pressing a kiss to Ilya's warm skin.

"How are you?" he asked.

"Okay," Ilya replied. "Tired."

"Yeah? Just tired?"

Ilya huffed a soft laugh, going quiet for a moment.

"I am still a little... nervous," he replied. "Was a very weird year. Was a lot. Overwhelming. And I am tired."

Shane shifted a little to look at his husband in the fading light. He looked back at Shane, his eyes clear, though maybe a little concerned, his dark brows furrowed. Shane turned, resting his legs over Ilya's hips, which made Ilya chuckle.

Shane smiled, reaching up, and brushed careful fingers over the curls that fell in Ilya's face, softly touching his cheeks.

"It was a really fucking weird year," Shane replied. "And hard. It's okay to be tired. I got you."

Ilya smiled and nodded. "I know."

"I love you so much."

"I love you, too, Shane. So much."

Shane's heart flipped and he cupped Ilya's face in his hands, leaning in to kiss him softly. Ilya's mouth was warm, his lips soft, familiar, and it made Shane all fluttery.

“Thank you for being the best husband I could have ever asked for,” Shane murmured, his forehead pressed to Ilya’s. “Thank you for loving me and standing with me.”

Ilya rubbed his nose gently against Shane’s. “Of course. Always. I’m proud of us. We did a good job.”

“We did,” Shane replied, smiling. “We really fucking did.”

“Yes,” Ilya sighed, pulling Shane close, holding him tight. “I will always take care of you.”

Shane went easily, allowing himself to be swallowed up, tucking his face against Ilya’s neck. And as comforting as it was for him to be in Ilya’s arms, he hoped that his husband was equally as comforted.

“You sure you’re okay?” Shane asked. “It’s okay if you’re not...”

“I am okay,” Ilya assured. “Being here will help. I just need time to settle.”

Shane nodded his understanding, snuggling closer. “There’s no rush. Take your time. And I’m here if you need me.”

Ilya just hummed in reply, bundling Shane against his chest.

They stayed like that until the chill in the air was too much for them, using their phone flashlights to make their way back up to the house, hand in hand.

They stepped inside. Ilya wrapped his arm around Shane’s waist, stealing a kiss, and making Shane giggle. He smiled and winked and Shane blushed.

They both turned to Anya, giving her some pets, before Ilya let her out, turning on the deck lights, and standing outside with her.

Shane watched them, smiling fondly as Ilya gave Anya scratches, scooping her into his arms, and kissing her head, before they came back into the house. Shane closed and locked the door after them.

“Bedtime,” he said, chuckling as Ilya took Anya upstairs.

Shane turned off the lights and made sure the doors were locked, before heading upstairs.

He never used to be this concerned about locked doors at the cottage but this year had proven challenging in that respect. Maybe he’d start feeling better the more time away they had, time that was peaceful.

Upstairs, he found Anya in her doggy bed, Ilya in the bathroom. He’d stripped down to his briefs, and was brushing his teeth. Shane smiled, taking off his own clothes and dropping them in the hamper, before joining his husband in the bathroom.

“Don’t touch it,” Ilya said as he put his toothbrush back in its holder on the counter, side-eying Shane as he inspected Ilya’s bruised side.

“I’m not,” Shane assured. “Just looking.”

“It hurts,” Ilya sighed. “But better than it was.”

Shane looked up at him. “You sure?”

“Yes,” Ilya replied. “Don’t worry.”

“Fat chance of that,” Shane sighed and Ilya chuckled.

He went about his own bedtime routine, Ilya pressing a few kisses to his shoulder, his stubble a pleasant tickle against Shane’s skin, making him smile, before leaving Shane to it. Shane smiled to himself as he heard Ilya crawl into bed, groaning.

When Shane finished in the bathroom, turning off the light, he found Ilya, propped up on his pillows, one arm behind his head, accentuating the curve of his bicep, his phone propped on his chest as he scrolled.

“Thought you’d be asleep,” Shane mused, crawling into bed beside his husband.

Ilya glanced at him, smiling a little, his eyes sparkling gold in the low light of their bedside lamps.

“I was waiting for you.”

Shane chuckled. “That’s nice.”

“I can be nice.”

Shane kissed Ilya’s arm. “You can.”

Ilya chuckled, leaning away to put his phone on the bedside table, and turned off his bedside lamp. He adjusted his pillows and settled down, moving slowly to be mindful of his bruised side.

Shane smiled at him, brushing his curls back from his face, his heart melting as Ilya kissed his palm as Shane settled his hand on his cheek.

“Come here,” Ilya murmured and Shane nodded, turning off his own lamp, and rolled onto his side, Ilya spooning up against him. He hummed happily, taking Ilya’s hand in his.

Chapter 3

July

Ilya woke up to the gentlest kisses. Shane's breath was warm and familiar against his skin and Ilya blinked his eyes open sleepily, smiling.

"Good morning," Shane murmured, brushing Ilya's curls back from his face, dragging the backs of his fingers over his temple and cheek in a tender caress. His face was soft and adoring, smiling at Ilya as if he was the most incredible thing he'd ever seen.

It was almost overwhelming, to wake up to that beautiful face looking at him like that. Ilya's heart tumbled helplessly in his chest, knowing he was looking back with that same expression on his face. Completely smitten.

"It is." He grinned, kissing Shane despite his immediate protest, and rolled him over onto his back.

Shane squirmed a little, realizing that his resistance would get him nowhere, and relaxed. He laughed and sighed and wrapped his arms around Ilya, tugging him close. Ilya rested their foreheads together and Shane smiled up at him, adorably mussed from sleep, his cheeks all pink.

Ilya loved every iteration of Shane but one of his favorites was this one; all warm and snuggly and sleepy.

"Happy anniversary," Shane murmured and Ilya's whole body fizzled with delight at the words. He closed his eyes, rubbing his nose against Shane's.

"Happy anniversary," he replied. The words were new and a little strange on his tongue but in no way unpleasant. He and Shane had made it through a year of marriage and while the journey had been bumpier than expected, they had stayed rock solid.

Ilya sighed, pressing small, soft kisses all over Shane's face; a considerate, slow worship.

"Ilya," Shane murmured, his hands dragging down Ilya's arms, wrapping around his biceps. He opened his eyes and hummed in question, kissing the corner of Shane's mouth.

"Come here..."

Ilya huffed a laugh, resting himself mostly on top of Shane, his nose pressed to Shane's cheek, one leg tossed over Shane's hips. Shane made a happy noise and wiggled, arms wrapped around him, holding him.

He was so grateful for all of this. So grateful for the way Shane had shown up for him over the past year; reassuring and comforting and loving in all the ways that Ilya had needed.

It had been hard, at first, muddling through their anxieties, but they'd made a plan, gotten on the same page. They'd figured it out faster than he had anticipated.

Ilya knew he loved Shane. He had loved him for a very long time. He felt that after the season before last, they had gotten closer. Having the opportunity to sort out their concerns, get married, live together, play hockey together.

But he knew that this season had really solidified their relationship. It had shown them both how strong they were, how capable. They did well under pressure.

Being apart and hiding had been far more difficult than managing the obnoxious press and homophobic fans, but it was exhausting to feel that all anyone wanted to do was talk about and rehash the fact that he and Shane were married.

People loved to talk about their years of hooking up, of Ilya's long history of sleeping with women, of questioning his integrity.

Maybe one of the sexiest and bravest things Shane had ever done for Ilya was calling the press out. He'd been so angry, and not in the usual cute way but like, *dangerous*. It had made Ilya shiver.

Let's get the record straight. Ilya never cheated on me. I knew about his history and that he was hooking up with other people before we were together. He hasn't been with anyone else since we've been together. The biphobia is unbecoming. I'm done talking about it.

Ilya loved him so much. He'd been seriously tempted to just kiss Shane in front of all their teammates and staff and the press after he'd said that. He hadn't, but he had fucked Shane long and hard on the couch when they'd gotten home.

They had managed to navigate the ridiculous media, played incredible hockey together, and had brought the Centaurs the first Stanley Cup in franchise history. They had blown everyone out of the water and the best part was, they hadn't really had to change a thing.

They were just Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, doing what they always did.

The NHL's Power(play) Couple.

That was maybe one of the best slogans to come out of the season. Probably the most powerful, too.

Now, Ilya had every intention of spoiling Shane rotten this summer, just as much as it was about resting and recovering.

He knew that next season would be better.

They had shut the haters down. They had silenced the media. There was nothing more that could be said. They hadn't needed to prove themselves. They'd just needed to keep playing good hockey and to show how absolutely electric they were on the ice.

They had had a record breaking, award winning season.

Ilya was proud. He was proud of the team and his performance and of Shane.

He was proud of them, as a couple.

But the way the media had hunted them had been exhausting and all they wanted was to rest.

And now they could.

Ilya was just fine with laying here as long as Shane wanted.

He closed his eyes as Shane rested one hand on his head, stroking his curls, his other hand slowly running up and down his back in soothing circles. He could probably go back to sleep, but he didn't get the chance when Shane turned his head, kissing him.

Ilya smiled and opened his eyes, shifting up on his arm to kiss Shane back.

They were unhurried, kissing just to kiss. Ilya cupped Shane's cheek, brushing his thumb over his cheekbone, kissing his soft, perfect lips. He was pleased that Shane hadn't put up more of a fight around kissing without brushing their teeth.

He loved kissing Shane in the mornings without the silly interruption of oral hygiene.

Shane made a quiet little noise, sneaking his hand down the back of Ilya's briefs to squeeze his ass, which made Ilya chuckle.

"Do you want something?" he asked, lips brushing Shane's as he spoke.

"What do you think?" Shane asked, one brow raised in question.

"Seems like maybe," Ilya replied, letting his hand trail slowly down Shane's body; down his neck, over his clavicles, his sternum, his firm abs, turning to slide over his rigid cock, which twitched under his fingers at the touch. "That is a yes."

Shane bit his bottom lip, pressing against Ilya's hand, which made him smile, body buzzing with pleasure. He removed his hand, wrapped it around Shane's hip instead, making him whine from the lack of contact on his dick, which only served to amuse and arouse Ilya more. He loved making Shane beg.

Ilya kissed him; deeper and filthier this time, but still adoring. He loved kissing Shane like this, expressing how much he wanted him, how much he loved him. And Shane melted underneath him, hands roaming restlessly over Ilya's back and into his curls, scrunching them in his fingers.

Ilya broke the kiss and smiled as Shane chased his mouth. He nuzzled their noses instead, kissing Shane's cheek, his neck. His husband tilted his chin up, giving Ilya more access, and Ilya took the gift that was offered.

He kissed along the tendon in Shane's neck, appreciating the warmth of his skin, his familiar smell. He nuzzled just under his jaw, then picked a spot along his neck, sucking a mark into his skin.

Shane let out a soft breath and Ilya sucked harder. He pulled away, pleased with his work, and went on to leave a few more hickies all over Shane's neck.

"Ilya," Shane breathed and Ilya smoothed his tongue over one mark, kissing it, feeling Shane shiver.

"Mine," Ilya purred, in Russian.

"Yours," Shane sighed in reply.

Ilya continued his journey, pressing soft, slow kisses over Shane's collarbones, down his sternum, over his pecs. He paused, turning his eyes to look up at Shane.

"So beautiful," Ilya murmured, still in Russian. "My beloved."

Shane blushed in the way that Ilya loved so much, stroking his hand through Ilya's hair, his eyes fluttering closed for a moment, a small smile teasing his lips. He loved Shane so much, loved being with him.

Ilya turned his head down, catching Shane's nipple between his teeth, making Shane hiss and moan. Ilya ran his tongue over it to soothe the bite and lifted his face to look at Shane again, smiling up at him dreamily. He was turned on but he was all mushy inside, too.

"I love you," Shane said.

Ilya melted.

"I love you, too."

Ilya kept moving down Shane's body; leaving a trail of worshipful kisses over his firm abs, his hips. He slid his fingers into Shane's briefs, pulling them down, and tossing them aside. He kissed along Shane's groin, Shane's fingers tightening in his curls.

"You *are* gonna fuck me, right?" Shane asked, his eyes half-lidded, voice breathy.

"Maybe," Ilya chuckled, looking up at Shane as he positioned himself comfortably between his legs, one of which was placed over his shoulder. He kissed the inside of Shane's thigh. "If you ask nice..."

"Fucker," Shane mumbled and Ilya nipped his thigh in reply. "You like torturing me."

"Only a little."

Ilya smiled, turning his attention to Shane's cock. He loved that Shane was almost always hard when they were together. Like his dick couldn't help but be interested whenever Ilya was in the vicinity.

He honestly would have expected things to slow down a little between them, particularly after they were married. Not in a bad way. Just in the way that happened when you were comfortable with someone after many years together.

But it hadn't been that way.

Their sex life over the season had been a bit more *making love* than *fucking*, but the sex had still been incredible. They still turned each other on. They still had insane chemistry.

It was top tier shit.

Ilya dipped his head, kissing the tip of Shane's cock, teasing his tongue over the slit, raising his eyes to watch Shane's reactions. Shane was looking down at him, cheeks flushed, kiss-swollen lips parted, dark eyes bright with desire.

Ilya winked at him, turning his eyes back down, sucking the head of Shane's cock into his mouth.

"Oh," Shane moaned, long and low. "Fuck."

Ilya went slowly, taking his time, enjoying the feel of Shane, the way he lit up as Ilya teased him, his fingers tightening in Ilya's curls.

He traced his tongue over the head of Shane's dick, sucking lightly, his arm curved around Shane's thigh. He used his free hand to reach up and tease Shane's balls, rolling them carefully in his palm.

Shane gasped and moaned, rolling his hips and pressing up against Ilya's face. Ilya breathed out of his nose, taking Shane's deeper, throat flexing around the head of Shane's cock. Shane made a whimpery noise.

"Fuck, Ilya. So good."

Ilya hummed in reply, swallowing around Shane, working him up more. He put all his considerable blow job skills to work, loving the way Shane responded. He loved being able to do this for him but he had other plans.

He pulled off of Shane slowly, dragging his tongue along the length of him, letting him fall from his mouth.

"Turn over," he said, carefully sliding Shane's leg from over his shoulder, allowing him to move. Shane did as he was told, turning onto his hands and knees, looking like a cat stretching. Ilya appreciated the sight before him, Shane's strong back, muscles flexing, the perfect muscular peach of an ass being offered up.

Then something popped.

"Oh," he hissed. "That sounded bad."

Shane laughed. "My shoulder," he said. "I'm okay. Felt good actually."

Ilya chuckled, leaning over to kiss Shane's waist. "Good."

As long as he wasn't hurt.

He leaned over to grab the lube and slid his underwear off, leaving the bottle within easy reach, curving his hands around Shane's ass appreciatively.

Shane relaxed, sitting further back on his legs, pushing into Ilya's hands, which made Ilya chuckle.

He caressed Shane's ass, shifting closer, and leaned over his husband, pressing his weight against Shane's back. Shane reacted immediately, sighing, rippling against him. Ilya nuzzled against the back of Shane's head, kissing over his shoulder blades, down his spine.

Shane was mostly quiet, allowing Ilya to love on him the way he wanted. He was intent on making Shane feel special and sexy and loved.

"Gorgeous," Ilya murmured against his skin, feeling Shane shiver. He kissed his way down to Shane's ass, sinking his teeth into one perfect cheek.

"Ah—!" Shane gasped. "Ow!"

"Sorry," Ilya placated, licking and kissing the bite.

"No you're not," Shane huffed and Ilya chuckled, leaning away, and patted Shane's hip.

"Turn around. Let me look at you."

Shane turned again and Ilya settled next to him, patting his thighs. Shane grinned, straddling Ilya's hips. He wrapped his arms around Ilya's neck and Ilya sat up a little straighter to kiss him.

He reached for the lube, popping the cap, and heat rushed through him as Shane groaned in relief when Ilya's finger brushed against his hole. Ilya pressed inside, eyes locked on Shane's face, watching.

Shane was so expressive. Ilya loved all of his expressions, the way that he looked when he was being pleased, how he slowly unraveled and relaxed and let himself go. It was easier for him now.

Ilya remembered having to take so much time to open Shane up, trying to coax him into relaxation. It hadn't been a hardship, he had enjoyed it, and the last thing he had wanted was to hurt Shane. He was glad that Shane was so much more relaxed, that he was able to give himself to Ilya easily.

His trust in Ilya was something Ilya always appreciated and valued immensely.

Preparation didn't really take long at all any more. Shane was loose and relaxed. Ilya could tell he was happy, humming and sighing, biting his bottom lip. His dark eyes glistened with desire. Ilya practically purred as Shane pushed back against his three fingers.

"Not enough?" Ilya asked, stroking his prostate, making Shane moan. His cock was leaking between them, leaving a messy trail.

“No,” Shane huffed. “Want your dick.”

“Maybe I will not let you have it,” Ilya hummed in reply, pulling his fingers out, then pressing them back in. Shane made a frustrated noise. “Maybe I will just make you come like this.”

“Don’t.”

Ilya shrugged. “No?” He used his free hand to cradle Shane’s balls, rolling them carefully in his palm, and Shane let out a helpless moan. “So tight.”

Shane’s eyes were closed, his lips wet and kiss-swollen and parted. “Fucking hell, Rozanov. Jesus Christ.”

Ilya chuckled.

“You literally get off on this, don’t you?” Shane grumbled, opening his eyes to glare at Ilya.

“A little,” Ilya chuckled.

“Fuck you,” Shane said, rolling his eyes, but he was smiling.

Ilya laughed, taking pity, and withdrew his fingers.

He flipped Shane onto his back, making Shane gasp, before he wrapped his arms and legs around Ilya, trying to get him closer.

“One second,” he laughed, reaching for the lube. Shane relaxed his hold a bit and Ilya leaned back, lube in hand, blatantly admiring his husband. Shane’s face was flushed but he smiled, stretching his arms over his head.

“Little show off,” Ilya cooed at him. “So slutty.”

“Only for you,” Shane replied and then reached out a hand. “Give me that.”

Ilya chuckled and handed Shane the bottle, leaning over him again to kiss him. Shane kissed him back, popping the cap, undoubtedly slicking his fingers. He wrapped his hand around Ilya’s dick and Ilya sighed at the touch, pulling his lips from Shane as his husband stroked him.

“I thought you wanted me to fuck you?” he murmured.

“Close already?”

“I did not say that.”

“Mm.” Shane released him with a parting caress.

Ilya shifted slightly, pressing up against Shane’s rim.

“Come on,” Shane urged and Ilya smiled, pushing into him slowly. Ilya was lost in the incredible pleasure of it all. He would never get tired of fucking Shane. He was so warm and tight and perfect around him, his body welcoming him inside, knowing it was where he belonged.

There was nowhere else he wanted to be.

“Okay?” Ilya asked, watching Shane’s face for signs of discomfort, his eyes having closed, lips parted.

Shane nodded. “Yeah. I’m okay.”

He smiled, looking up at Ilya, wrapping his arms around his shoulders, as Ilya started a slow, easy rhythm. Shane would only tolerate this for so long but Ilya wanted to drag things out a bit.

“That’s so fucking good,” he sighed, spreading his legs wider, pulling his knees closer.

Ilya let him, pushing a little deeper, watching Shane’s eyes flutter closed, his kiss-swollen lips parted.

“You are so beautiful,” Ilya murmured, staring at Shane, blatantly admiring and adoring. Shane’s face was already flushed but he smiled and preened, making Ilya chuckle.

“So are you,” he breathed, opening his eyes, his thumb stroking over Ilya’s cheekbone. “Stunning.”

Ilya grinned, appreciating the compliment, and kissed him. He loved kissing Shane like this, deep and adoring and filthy.

“God,” Shane breathed. Ilya hummed, ducking his head to kiss Shane’s neck, licking over his Adam’s apple, moving his hand to caress Shane’s chest, teasing a nipple with his thumb.

Shane whimpered and Ilya picked up speed, pulling a soft groan from Shane, which pleased him.

“Fucking love having you in me,” Shane breathed, his eyes half-lidded and glazed with desire. “Love you so much.”

“I love you, too,” Ilya replied, in Russian. “So much. I love being inside you, being close to you.”

Shane looked at Ilya, his cheeks flushed, making the softest, most delicious noises of pleasure that only turned Ilya on more. He loved seeing Shane like this, lost in passion.

“Feels so good,” Shane panted and Ilya nodded in agreement, sucking Shane’s bottom lip into his mouth, loving the way Shane moaned in response.

“Yes,” Ilya cooed. “Perfect, Shane.”

Ilya kept up his steady pace, watching Shane's expression, lost in the feeling of him. Shane reached between them, stroking his hand over his cock, swearing and whining.

"Close?" Ilya murmured.

"Yeah," Shane breathed, bracing his hands on Ilya's shoulders. "Fuck, Ilya."

"I know. Do you want more?"

Shane nodded, biting his lip again. "Yeah. Want you deep. Fill me up."

Ilya loved when Shane asked for what he wanted; when he was no longer self-conscious, simply lost in the pleasure of the moment.

Ilya gripped Shane's thighs, pushing them back so Shane was more or less folded in half, allowing him to slide in as deep as possible. He whined and panted, arms tightening around Ilya's shoulders.

"Okay?" he asked, kissing Shane's ankle.

"Amazing," Shane replied.

Ilya smiled at him and Shane smiled back.

"I love you," he breathed. "I love this. So good, Ilya. Don't stop."

Ilya didn't have any intention of stopping. He sped up, thrusting into Shane hard and deep, his hips slapping against Shane's ass. Shane had reached between them, stroking his own cock, making the most delicious noises.

Ilya would never tire of this. Of watching Shane like this. He was enraptured.

He fucked him, hard and fast, the way he knew Shane liked it, wanting to give him what he needed.

"Fuck, Ilya, I'm coming," Shane panted, before moaning long and loud, come covering his fist and belly, his ass spasming so deliciously around Ilya as he fucked into the tight heat of him.

Ilya fell over the edge, emptying himself inside Shane, breathing hard, forcing his eyes to stay open, never leaving Shane's face.

As he resurfaced, he pulled Shane up into his arms, kissing him, and holding him close.

Shane hummed, wrapping his arms around Ilya, his mouth pressed to Ilya's shoulder.

"That was incredible," he sighed, kissing Ilya's neck, and nuzzling him. Ilya rested his cheek on Shane's hair, closing his eyes, and basking in having his husband this close. They were both loose and relaxed.

Shane snuggled closer and Ilya held him tighter, sliding his hand down his back, over the curve of his ass. After a few long moments, Shane leaned away, looking up at Ilya, brushing his curls back from his face.

“I want to make you pancakes,” he said and Ilya smiled widely at him, laughing, impossibly warmed by that statement.

“Okay.”

Shane smiled back, soft and sweet, kissing him, before shifting off of him carefully.

They cleaned up in the bathroom and got dressed, heading downstairs hand in hand.

Ilya made coffee and Shane went to the cabinets, pulling out ingredients for pancakes. He wouldn't let Ilya help, so Ilya just poured coffee when it was done, setting Shane's mug within easy reach for him.

He let Anya out and then made sure to feed her, watching Shane stack pancakes on a plate.

“How many are you making?” Ilya teased, resting an arm around Shane's chest, kissing his shoulder.

“Enough,” Shane replied.

Ilya chuckled, pressing a few soft kisses to the freckles at the back of Shane's neck that he only got to see when Shane put his hair up.

“Will you let me cook in peace?” Shane asked, but there was no vitriol in his voice.

Ilya smiled and stepped away, picking up his coffee mug. He sat at the kitchen island, sipping his coffee, and letting Shane finish with his pancakes.

He knew he looked like a total idiot, watching Shane with a sappy look on his face, completely smitten. Ilya just loved him so much. He loved all of these domestic moments they got to share. He had gotten better at not waiting for things to be stale, expecting that something would shift or change with years of exposure and comfort to one another.

Shane was just as beautiful and captivating to Ilya as he had been when they had first met. And he felt like every day there was something new he learned or discovered about Shane that just made him fall more in love.

And maybe one day, he would know Shane completely. There would be no more things to learn, no secrets, and he would feel so grateful to know someone so intimately. How lucky he would be, to be so trusted.

They ate pancakes on the deck and enjoyed the perfect sunny day. It was so peaceful and relaxed and exactly what they had both needed.

“What do you want to do today?” Shane asked, leaning back in his seat, his eyes squinted a bit as he looked at Ilya, the sun in his face.

“Nothing,” Ilya replied honestly. “I want to spend the whole day touching you and nothing else.”

Shane smiled and chuckled. “I think that can be arranged.”

“We can open up the champagne that we still have. Eat some cake for dinner.”

“No cake for dinner,” Shane argued.

“Why not? Is our anniversary. Special occasion!”

Shane’s face crinkled up in happiness as he laughed and Ilya’s heart was so full of love for him he wanted to weep.

Last year had felt so hopeless. He had been so sad and lonely and angry about their situation. He had felt like he might never be happy, that he’d never have the things he wanted. He would have never given Shane up but it had felt so hard to find balance.

Therapy had helped. Being out and marrying Shane had helped. The right medication had helped. It was so crazy to think how different things had been, how much happier and hopeful he was.

“I’ll think about it,” Shane acquiesced.

“Okay,” Ilya replied, hoping to hide the emotion in his voice.

Shane gave him a look, reaching out with a foot to brush his toes over Ilya’s ankle.

“You good?” he asked softly.

“Yes,” Ilya replied. “Just... thinking about how different things are now. Better.”

“They are,” Shane replied, nodding in understanding.

He leaned across the table, resting his hand over Ilya’s. He squeezed Ilya’s fingers, then stood up from the table, and came around to sit in Ilya’s lap. Ilya wrapped his arms around him, humming softly as Shane rested his cheek on top of his head, his arms around Ilya’s shoulders.

“I love you,” Shane murmured. “You’re the best.”

“I know,” Ilya replied.

Shane snorted, but it was belied by the soft kisses he pressed into Ilya’s curls and the way he held him.

Ilya snuck his hand up Shane’s shirt to touch warm skin and they stayed like that for a while, idly chatting, and debating whether or not they should have cake for dinner.

They eventually got up and went inside, cleaning up breakfast, before they went upstairs to get ready to take Anya out for a long, meandering walk.

Ilya watched Shane put on a pair of black shorts, the short, tight pair he had started wearing two summers ago that made his thighs and ass look incredible. He put on a navy blue muscle tee that exposed his obliques and after putting his hair into a low bun, slid on a backwards snapback.

Shane *was* a hot jock but he didn't usually dress like it, so when he did, Ilya's brain melted.

"You look hot," Ilya said, eyeing Shane up and down.

Shane blushed and wiggled his shoulder a little. "Thanks."

Ilya laughed, placing a hair tie in his mouth as he pulled his hair back. He'd grown it out this past season, which Shane seemed to be enjoying, so he'd keep it for a bit.

"Ready?" Shane asked when Ilya had finished tying his curls back.

"Yes," he replied. "Let's go!"

They took Anya out on a long, meandering walk. She was an active girl, keeping up with her dads, sometimes even giving them a run for their money.

Anya seemed happy as could be, snuffling around in the grass, checking back to be sure that Ilya and Shane were still there, her tongue lolling out of her mouth, making her look like she was smiling.

They were out for almost two hours, just walking one of the trails close to the property. They stopped here and there to rehydrate, and rest in the shade. They saw a few people, hikers, other dog owners, but not many.

Anya said hello to a few of the dogs and the owners chatted with them a little, though they were very chill, which was a relief. No one really made a fuss about who they were.

By the time they got home, Anya went straight to her doggy bed for a nap, and Shane and Ilya went outside to the hammock. Ilya got in first, laughing as Shane more or less flopped on top of him, wiggling around to tuck himself against Ilya's side. Ilya got his arm around him and Shane snuggled against him, his head on Ilya's chest, one arm resting over Ilya's middle.

"I'm probably gonna fall asleep," Shane murmured as Ilya pressed little kisses to his forehead.

"Sleep," Ilya sighed. "I will, too."

Shane hummed, kissing Ilya's neck.

Ilya shifted an arm under his head, looking through the leaves of the trees above him. A gentle breeze rustled them and he could hear birds twittering, the distant sound of water

lapping against the shore. Everything was calm and peaceful and he could feel the way Shane's body went limp against his.

He smiled, turning his head to nuzzle into Shane's hair, breathing him in. This was exactly what they had needed.

They'd had a few weeks to themselves, no social media, resting and resetting. Things had calmed down and they were sort of on socials again but not really.

As much as Ilya enjoyed posting things that only he and Shane would really understand on his Instagram, he was content to just enjoy the time with his husband without having to think about posting about it.

Though, Ilya did have a very sappy post he intended to post for their anniversary.

A series of his favorite pictures of Shane from the past year (most of them flattering, some not) and a heartfelt caption about how grateful Ilya was for him. How much he loved him. How he couldn't wait for the next fifty years worth of anniversaries.

One down... a lifetime to go.

Chapter 4

They ended up not having cake for dinner (Shane had won that debate) but he *had* grilled steaks and Ilya had made garlic mashed potatoes and broccolini, which had all been delicious, and they'd had cake for dessert.

Ilya had opened a bottle of champagne they'd been gifted on their wedding and they were nearly finished with the bottle, snuggled up together on the bench seat on the deck, looking out at the lake.

Shane shifted slightly and Ilya looked down, chuckling softly as Shane turned to face him, looking at Ilya with his dark, earnest eyes, framed by long lashes.

"What?" Ilya asked gently, reaching up to tuck a stray lock of hair behind Shane's ear.

"Are you happy?" Shane asked

Ilya blinked at him and his expression softened. "Big question."

Shane's cheeks flushed and he looked away for a moment, before lifting his eyes to meet Ilya's again. "I meant, like, now. In this moment."

"Yes," Ilya replied. "Very happy."

Shane nodded, shoulders relaxing.

"What are you worrying about?" Ilya asked, only lightly teasing.

Shane shook his head a little and sighed. "I'm not worrying. Just... thinking."

"Is the same thing," Ilya chuckled but Shane was looking at him with glassy eyes and his bottom lip trembled. Ilya was filled with concern at that look.

"Shane..."

"I'm just..." Shane started, chewing on his bottom lip, collecting himself. "I'm really happy, Ilya. I know this was a weird year but I wouldn't trade it for anything. I'm so glad that we got married because all I can think about is how I almost lost you..."

"Shane," Ilya murmured again, making a soft, soothing noise as tears slid down Shane's cheeks. His own eyes stung and he reached out, brushing his thumbs over Shane's freckles. "Sweetheart."

"I can't help it," Shane said, his voice trembling.

"I know. Come here."

He pulled his husband into his arms and held him, bundling him close. He kissed Shane's hair and gently rocked him. He loved this ridiculous man and all his big feelings so much.

"We are okay," he assured. "More than okay."

Shane nodded against his shoulder, sniffing.

"I am very proud to be your husband."

"I know," Shane sighed. "I'm proud, too. To be yours. Fuck. I'm sorry that it took you almost dying for me to get my head out of my ass. I'm glad we got here... and not ten years from now."

"Is okay," Ilya soothed, not for the first time. "We are here. We did it. We are fine. Happy." He leaned away to look at his husband and brushed away his tears with careful fingers. He cupped his face in his hands and kissed his adorable little nose.

"I love you so much," Shane sniffled. "More than anything."

Ilya smiled and kissed his mouth very softly. Shane exhaled and relaxed and Ilya kissed him again and again; giving him the tenderest, most adoring little kisses he could.

Their relationship had grown so much in the last year. They'd learned how to live together, how to give each other space, how to comfort and support each other. They'd gone on public dates, they'd held hands and kissed where people could see, they'd talked about each other in interviews and social media posts.

Ilya was maybe the happiest he had ever been. Some of that was probably due to the right antidepressant and therapy. But it was also being with the man he loved, openly, sharing a life with him.

He rested his forehead against Shane's, closing his eyes.

"I love you, too. Very much."

Shane nodded a little, turning his head so he could rest it on Ilya's shoulder, folding into him. Ilya opened his eyes and pulled him close.

Even with all the challenges that had come with this year, Ilya wouldn't have wanted things to be different. He had welcomed the challenge, in a way. It had been their opportunity to show the world how good they were together, how perfect they were for each other, on and off the ice.

There was nothing more that could be said, really. They'd won the Stanley Cup. They'd had yet another record-breaking, record-setting season.

Ilya was proud. He was proud of their relationship. He was proud of Shane. He was proud of himself.

He couldn't have asked for a better partner in all of this.

No matter where things went from here, Ilya was glad that he got to tackle it all with Shane.

FIN

End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!

You can follow me on [Tumblr](#) or [Bluesky](#) to get updates on what I'm working on!

Every kudo and comment is so greatly appreciated and treasured! Thank you for your support! <3

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