

breaking the matchmaker curse

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breaking the matchmaker curse

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Summary

Shane has been watching Ilya kiss strangers for years. Sometimes it's because someone is either brave—or foolish—enough to try and prove the fabled curse of the matchmaker wrong. Sometimes it's because no one can help themselves, because it seems like such a harmless thing to do; stealing a kiss like it will give them some sort of guaranteed assurance in the universe. It makes Shane's stomach curl every single time. He can see the way Ilya stiffens, how he swallows too late, too polite or too jaded to ask them to stop. The world doesn't see how he hates it, because the world never sees. They see a legend, they see a myth and nothing more; not the person who has to put up with it.

Shane does.

He sees Ilya's mouth, of course. Not because he's greedy, because he's in it for a stroke of luck or faith or whatever delusion people want to buy into. Shane wants to taste those lips because they're Ilya's, because he knows...

or

Ilya suffers from a curse where whoever kisses him falls in love with their true soulmate (it's never him)...Shane wants to kiss Ilya bcuz he's already fallen in love with him

Notes

so this is my other submission for Shane's Secret Flufftober which i took cuz since the first time i saw cursed on the list i wondered how that would work for fluff and well this is what i came up with for that lolz

hope ya enjoy!!!

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



Shane has been watching Ilya kiss strangers for years. Sometimes it's because someone is either brave—or foolish—enough to try and prove the fabled curse of the matchmaker wrong. Sometimes it's because no one can help themselves, because it seems like such a harmless thing to do; stealing a kiss like it will give them some sort of guaranteed assurance in the universe. It makes Shane's stomach curl every single time. He can see the way Ilya stiffens, how he swallows too late, too polite or too jaded to ask them to stop. The world doesn't see how he hates it, because the world never sees. They see a legend, they see a myth and nothing more; not the person who has to put up with it.

Shane does.

He sees Ilya's mouth, of course. Not because he's greedy, because he's in it for a stroke of luck or faith or whatever delusion people want to buy into. Shane wants to taste those lips because they're Ilya's, because he knows the way they curve up when he grins after a well-timed shot, the way they soften when Ilya is caught off guard, caught smiling. Shane imagines kissing them, imagining the feel of them under his own lips, not for a curse or some kind of promised insurance, but because he simply can't bear the thought of another man doing it.

It's not just his mouth, either. It's the whole damned face, really. The precise angles of his cheekbones, the straight line of his jaw, the fierce and steady eyes that have pinned Shane down more times than he can count when all he really wants to do is stare. Shane's hands itch to run over it, to map it out on his own skin, to draw his fingers over the angles until he knows them by heart. And then there are Ilya's arms, built from hours of stickhandling and years of learning what it means to use your body as a weapon on the ice. Most people don't think about it, they don't really notice the kind of strength and skill it takes to do what Ilya does, but Shane does. He thinks about it, too much—what it would feel like to be trapped in those arms, in between his hands and his thighs; held tight like nothing in the world could pry him loose.

Shane's been watching him for years. Enemy on the ice, cordial stranger in the halls of life, always with the same distance between them. No one ever seems to expect for that invisible line to snap. But this year is different. This year, they aren't rivals. They're on the same team. Breathing the same locker room air, dripping with the same kind of sweat after every drill

and learning the way to move as one. Learning the way their eyes meet and lips tauten and stomachs flip, the way teammates become friends and friends become so much more than.

Shane doesn't know what he expected, really, because he didn't expect it to feel like this. Not to notice every way Ilya's hand shakes in his when he passes a stick, not to hear his pulse stutter when their knees bump in the tunnel. Didn't expect that something like desire can have a pulse of its own and live under Shane's skin like a second heartbeat.

Shane doesn't think he expected this, either—not after last year. Not after everything with his old team, everything ugly that came after he was forced out of the closet. But it's here, and Shane is safe. Wanted. Playing the best hockey of his life, in all ways. And he supposes he never expected that of himself either. None of it can quite compare, really, to the way it feels to have Ilya by his side, so close and constant that Shane can't quite imagine a day when he won't have to pretend to be blind.

For now, all he can do is wait. Keep his head down in the locker room and pretend to himself like his eyes aren't burning every time he sees Ilya lace up his skates, tie up his pads, run his hand over his stick. Pretend to laugh with the guys like he doesn't have half his attention strung out between every movement Ilya makes, so deliberate and slow that Shane could spend hours just watching the way he moves. It's torture and it's bliss and it's everything because every minute of it is proof that Ilya is real, that he is here and breathing and maybe he likes it too.

Sometimes Shane thinks he knows. That Ilya can see it in the way he goes suddenly quiet when he leans too close to pass a stick, in the way the air between them sizzles with unspoken things every time their eyes catch. Sometimes he thinks Ilya knows and it makes his blood sing because he can read it then, that hard edge to his gaze like he's trying, waiting, daring Shane to cross some sort of line.

He will, Shane thinks. He will.

But not yet. Not while they have a whole season to play, not while one bad word, one poor play or one mistake could cost them everything, between the ice and everywhere else. For now, Shane keeps the wanting tucked low in his stomach and lets it burn; enough to get by, but not so much that it shows.

Because someday, Shane tells himself, it won't be strangers with their lips on Ilya's.

Someday it will be Shane, and he will get to do it, and he will get to keep doing it.

They're in practice and Shane can't seem to take his eyes off Ilya's lips. Last night the whole team was out and no less than three people had come up and laid their lips on his. Until Shane took the initiative and pulled him to the dance floor with him, some of their teammates

followed and they practically built a wall around them on the floor. Dancing with Ilya had been so good, and Shane had not wanted it to stop. Eventually, the need for water called them back to the table, and Shane swore he saw Ilya's eyes on his lips for once. They hadn't stayed much longer.

Now something seemed to be off with Ilya, and Shane was taking the lead and finding out what. Or at least he had planned to, but there he is standing in front of Ilya and trying to find his words. Because he's not sure he heard that correct.

"I'm sorry, what."

"I know you want your turn at the lips." Ilya repeated, and Shane wondered how he could tell him that he did but not for the reason that everyone else did.

He didn't have time to think about it, though, as Ilya's lips were pressing against his. And holy fuck, it was everything he ever hoped it would be, and more. When Ilya moved to pull away, Shane pulled him back in, desperate for more.

He opened his mouth just enough, and then Ilya's tongue slipped between his lips. It was like fucking heaven on earth, and Shane never wanted it to stop. Of course, they had to breathe, so it had to. But they rest their foreheads together, and Shane saw the tears at the corner of Ilya's eyes that matched the ones he felt in his own.

Shane can't help himself and whispers, "You won't be kissing anyone else. We'll take out a front-page article in every paper if need be. I can't watch anymore lips touch yours, that aren't mine."

Ilya laughs, low and shaky, "Hollander, I've never wanted any lips but yours to touch mine."

Shane's breath leaves him in a huff that is filled with every emotion in his body. Relief, hunger, awe—like the ground has shifted under his skates and finally steadied in the same breath. His hands are still fisted in the fabric of Ilya's jersey, knuckles white, like letting go might undo the whole thing.

He pulls back enough to look at him—really look at him. Ilya's eyes are rimmed red but bright, almost defiant in their shine. And Shane realizes in a rush that he's been right all this time: Ilya has been just enduring the kisses. Enduring, waiting, saving something of himself, like he knew this moment would come.

"You should've said something," Shane breathes, voice cracking around the words.

Ilya huffs, shaking his head just slightly, their foreheads still pressed together. "Said what? That I wanted my rival to kiss me? That every time you glared at someone else's mouth on mine, I wanted to shove them off and tell you to do it instead?"

Shane's chest goes tight. He lets out something halfway between a laugh and a groan, because holy shit, he's been starving for this, and Ilya has been starving just the same.

He kisses him again—quick, fierce, like punctuation—and then again, slower, lingering. He tastes salt from Ilya’s tears, feels the steady press of Ilya’s hands braced against his ribs, anchoring him.

The rink noise buzzes distantly in the background—sticks clattering, coaches barking—but it all feels muted, like the whole damn world has tilted and decided to let them have this moment.

Shane leans back just far enough to whisper, raw and certain, “Then we’re done with everyone else. It’s you and me now.”

And for the first time, Ilya smiles like the curse isn’t on his shoulders anymore. Like maybe it never was. And Shane kisses him again.

They part when there is a throat clearing at their shoulder. Shane can’t help the heat that blooms across his cheeks. He just kissed his best friend and his teammate on the ice, in the middle of practice, and well. He can’t think about anything other than the fact that he wants to do that again.

Coach Wiebe huffs, “Get the hell outta here. The two of you are going to be worthless to me if you keep up like that. You better have figured your shit out before you come back to practice tomorrow.”

Shane swears there is a hint of a smile playing at the corner of the coach’s mouth, but it’s too quick to be sure. Either way, he doesn’t need to be told twice. Ilya is already tugging on his sleeve, herding them towards the tunnel and Shane complies, heady with adrenaline.

They end up at Ilya’s house and the space of it is steady and quiet in the way Shane imagined it would be. He hardly notices when he drops his skates and gear by the door. The only thing that matters is the way Ilya’s hand rests at the small of his back, guiding him towards the couch.

And then there are more of those kisses that he wants.

It starts slow, like they’re still testing the water, making sure that it’s real and that the ice isn’t just going to crack. But then Ilya makes this noise, part sigh, part growl and Shane is done for. Their mouths fit together like they belong, pulling him under like every kiss unravels a little more of the knots that are tied across the years.

They talk in between kisses, words tumbling out in gasps and half chuckles.

“I don’t know when it started,” Shane admits, forehead pressed against Ilya’s. “Maybe the first time you knocked me on my ass in juniors.”

Ilya laughs, lips trailing his jaw. “Maybe the first time you glared at me across the ice. I should have known.”

Shane grins against his mouth and kisses him again, soft now, a long press of their mouths together. It’s like every moment is sewing together the want of the years they lost, every “what if” they hid.

Shane has to admit that Ilya’s couch is made for cuddling and kissing his boyfriend – because he’s not going to let him be anything less than that, not when they can finally have this. He tugs Ilya down beside him, long and sprawled, legs tangled, heat shared. Ilya fits into his side like a puzzle piece that is shaped just for him. His weight is solid, grounding, everything Shane didn’t know he’d been missing until this moment.

Slow kisses stretch on and on – languid, unhurried, lips on lips in a rhythm that makes them both breathe. Shane cups Ilya’s jaw, thumbs brushing over his cheekbone and he kisses him like he’s memorizing him piece by piece.

There’s no rush, no audience, no curse. Just them. Just the silence and the taste of Ilya’s mouth and the low thrum of his laugh when Shane whispers, “Mine. Finally mine.”

Ilya only replies by kissing him again, deeper this time, until words are an irrelevance.

They remain that way for a long moment, foreheads pressed together, breathing in sync. Shane can feel the strong pulse of Ilya’s heart beneath his hand, and he can hear the quiet hum of the city outside his windows. It’s as if the rest of the world ceases to exist.

Ilya shifts, curling closer so that his shoulder is pressed to Shane’s chest. Shane’s arm comes around him on its own, tugging him closer so that there’s no space between them. His hand comes to the back of Ilya’s neck, thumb brushing soft circles on the skin there.

They slow their kisses. Shane doesn’t pull away, doesn’t want to. He just presses his lips to Ilya’s over and over—soft, slow, reverent. They taste like quiet laughter, of shared breath, of something they can’t name but both have been holding onto for years.

“Ilya,” Shane murmurs, low, “I don’t want to stop.”

Ilya hums against his mouth, a sound that makes Shane’s chest ache. “Then don’t.”

They allow themselves to melt into each other. Shane’s free hand wanders over Ilya’s arm, down to his waist, clutching him close as if he could anchor him here, to him, for all time. Ilya hums again, tilting his head to press another soft kiss to Shane’s lips. It’s slow, deliberate, almost shy—like he’s enjoying the moment as much as Shane is.

Shane laughs quietly against him, warm and breathless. “This feels like coming home.”

Ilya smiles into the kiss without pulling away. His hands come to rest on Shane’s shoulders, fingertips light, holding him still. “It does.”

And for the rest of the night there is no rush. Just soft kisses, quiet laughter, and the comfort of having finally found what they have been looking for in each other. Shane curls his legs

around Ilya's, Ilya resting his head against Shane's chest, and they let the world slip away.

Shane can't stop thinking this is where he's meant to be.

End Notes

okay i luv them in all universes

what about you?

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