

**but I am a good dog running halfway home**

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# **but I am a good dog running halfway home**

by Anonymous

## Summary

The morning after Shane's heat breaks, he wakes up in an empty bed with a deep, throbbing mark on his neck and a text on his phone from Ilya that says, *I am sorry. We should break the bond.*

*Or, a bite in Vegas ruins everything, for a while.*

# Chapter 1: Summer 2014

## Chapter Notes

I cannot stop thinking of ways to torture my beloved omega of all time Shane Hollander.

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

Ilya is late.

Shane scuffs his Reeboks against the white linoleum floor of the clinic and keeps his eyes down so he doesn't have to make eye contact with the nurse who let him into the private waiting room, doesn't have to see the pity in her eyes.

He can't open his text thread with Ilya—Lily—to ask where he is, doesn't want to be reminded of—it doesn't matter. Ilya's going to show up soon and this will all be over. Shane will have fixed it.

There's nothing more painful than breaking a bond. Shane knows this, even without the pages of documents he's had to sign before even showing up to this appointment, acknowledging the risks. It's been drilled into him for forever, health class lectures, comments from coaches, reminders from his well-meaning parents, ever since he first presented. Omegas have to be careful. Have to protect themselves. A bond can ruin you if you're not careful, because you don't break one unless you have no choice. Unless not doing it is so unbearable you'd rather tear yourself apart. Lose half of what makes you whole.

It's why Shane hadn't cared, really, when the Metros put into his contract that he wouldn't bond with anyone for at least ten years, that he would time all his heats for the summer so it wouldn't interfere with his game. He had been eighteen, chomping at the bit to play for a competitive team, and it was what his mom wanted, too.

"You're not like those other omegas, Shane," she'd say, offhand, and Shane understood what she meant. The kind of omega who was bonded by twenty, ready to settle down, have babies, waste their potential. He wasn't like that. He just wanted to play hockey. It was the only thing he'd ever wanted.

But that was of course before he knew what it would be like to fall into the endless trap that was Ilya Rozanov, to be ensnared by that magnetic, infuriating energy, to want, for the first time, something that no amount of discipline or hard work could get him.

It didn't matter how good he smelled, how much he made Shane laugh, how hard he made Shane come, how badly Shane wanted to lick the sweat off his neck after playing against him. Shane was going to be the most decorated hockey player of all time one day, and Ilya would find someone beautiful and soft and sweet to mate with and be with forever.

So Shane let the impossibility of Ilya simmer in the back of his mind, always, took all the pills his trainers gave him, timed his heats for summer break, and tried to remind himself that he didn't need Ilya—didn't need anyone—to get him through those unbearable days. The Metros had offered, that first summer, to hire a professional for him, and the idea of it had sickened him so deeply he'd thrown up right there, in front of his poor agent and the team's communications manager. It must have worked though, because they didn't bring it up again, after that.

And it had been okay. It was always okay for almost six years, because he was playing, and winning, and Ilya was still his—something, sometimes. But then, they were in Vegas after six months of silence, Ilya looked at him again, and it all went to shit.

Shane felt it as soon as he got off the stage, that something was wrong. But he didn't think—it had never happened before. He thought maybe he was just dehydrated, or he was sick, or it was the stress of finally seeing Ilya again catching up to him. It felt like all the heat of the city was pressing down on him, even inside the air-conditioned building, choking him as he dragged himself into the closest bathroom.

He knows he made a fool of himself in there, knows he shouldn't have agreed to Ilya's stupid bet, but he never guessed—and then he was in Ilya's hotel room, and his alpha was telling him what to do, and the sick, empty sensation that he wasn't supposed to be feeling until August was undeniable, and it was too fucking late. He can still recall the way Ilya's breath had caught, when he finally had Shane under him, the way he asked, "Your heat?" And Shane had thought if Ilya walked out now he might die. Maybe he said it out loud too, he doesn't know. He just knows Ilya had stayed, had pressed Shane down exactly like Shane needed him to and—

Shane digs his right thumbnail into his thigh to try and stop that train of thought. It's the only thing he's been able to think about all week. He wants to forget. He wishes he remembered it more. Even though it's the worst thing he has ever done, probably. He remembers the sound of his own voice, pathetic and scratchy, begging Ilya to—and Ilya had. Because Shane made him, because Shane always needed more than he was supposed to take.

And of course it had been good for Shane, so much better than anything he had ever imagined. He remembers how the mere touch of Ilya had soothed the fire burning through him, how happy he'd been when Ilya said, on the second day, "Hollander, Hollander. I think—my rut," because it meant Ilya wanted him just as badly, even though outside of heat Shane knows it was just. Pheromones, or whatever. That his body had tricked Ilya into reacting, into—

The morning after Shane's heat broke, he woke up in an empty bed with a deep, throbbing mark on his neck and a text on his phone from Ilya that said, *I am sorry. We should break the bond.*

The sound of a door opening startles Shane back into the present, and he looks up to see Ilya stepping into the room, saying, "Sorry, sorry, I could not find—there was no sign—"

The nurse glares at Ilya, and Shane knows that she must think—think that Ilya is a bad alpha. For being late. For wanting to break the bond. She doesn't know that this is all Shane's fault.

He's the reason Ilya has to do this, is still stuck in Vegas instead of back home in Russia.

It's a shock to the senses to see Ilya again, to be in the same room now with the bond screaming through his veins. He's spent the last week hiding out in a Bellagio hotel room booked under a fake name, shaking through cold sweats and desperately Googling where to go to break a bond. They obviously couldn't do it in either of the cities they played in, and there's probably no clinic in all of Canada where Shane won't be recognized, so in the end, it made sense to stay in Vegas, do it in a city that has probably seen a million bonds created and broken. Two days ago, Shane responded to Ilya's text with a screenshot of a reservation for a discreet off-strip clinic, and now his alpha is here, and the bond is lighting up, and it is the worst day of Shane's life.

Shane can't look at Ilya's face, can't meet his eyes. He stares at Ilya's hands instead, the picked-raw edges of his cuticles, the twitch of his fingers, and tries to stop himself from remembering how it felt to be held.

"Are you okay?" Ilya asks, and Shane glances up to see him unsmiling, eyes serious. He looks a little gray and sick under the lights. He looks like the best thing Shane knows, still.

Shane wants to whine, wants to get on his knees and promise Ilya anything, anything, please. He can be good. He can learn to be something Ilya wants. He wants to beg. Not even to be loved, just to be kept. The mark on his neck stings, a sweet-painful reminder of who he belongs to. He doesn't want to stop feeling it.

He wants to cry thinking about how the anonymous penthouse suite has already been perfunctorily and clinically cleaned, aired out, every trace of the two of them wiped away. No evidence left of his heat or Ilya's rut or the bond at all. It didn't even happen in Montreal, in Shane's own room, where he could live in the smell of it for a little longer. And after they do this, it will really be like there was never a bond to begin with. It will all be over.

"Yes, of course," he says instead. He tries to smile, but it probably doesn't work. He doesn't know how to tell Ilya how sorry he is. He can only grit his teeth and go through with this, give Ilya what he wants, what he deserves from Shane.

"Okay, we just have to run some final blood tests before we start the procedure," the nurse says. She turns to Shane and asks quietly, "Do you want to be in separate rooms?"

"No—I mean. It's okay. We can—together." He's selfish, wanting to soak up every last second of being close like this while the bond is still thrumming under his skin, while he's still something to Ilya.

The nurse nods and leads them into an empty room, sits them down, starts flipping through some forms and checking over the equipment. She draws Ilya's blood first, and Shane can't stop himself from staring at the strong line of his arm, his shirtsleeve rolled up. There's some urgent fear in him, telling him he needs to memorize it all now, because he will never have any of this again.

He barely registers it when the nurse draws his own blood, sitting in oppressive silence next to Ilya. The bond is still singing, stronger now with the physical proximity. It takes

everything in Shane not to reach out, not to touch.

The nurse leaves the room with the vials and Ilya turns to Shane as the door closes behind her, says softly, “Hollander, I—” He clears his throat. “Fuck, I’m sorry.” Shane flinches. He doesn’t want to hear how sorry Ilya is, how much he regrets all of this. He’s already made it clear enough. “I should not have—done this to you.” Ilya huffs, the way he does whenever he’s frustrated with the English language. This time, Shane can feel Ilya’s frustration under his own consciousness. Can feel the disgust and anger, too. It makes him nauseous. “Fuck. I know it is not good enough, but—”

“You don’t have to be sorry,” Shane says, so Ilya will shut up. “I’m the one who’s sorry.” He can give Ilya that much, at least. Because it’s true. Ilya helped him out and Shane was the one who ruined it all, by needing it.

He hears Ilya inhale, ready himself to say some other stupid, useless thing about how much he hates being bonded to Shane, but the nurse walks back into the room before he can. It’s a relief. It pisses Shane off.

“Mr. Hollander,” the nurse beckons. “Please follow me. It’s time to start the procedure.” He stands up, legs numb, and she starts leading him out of the room. When he looks back, Ilya is staring right at him. In that moment, Shane wonders if Ilya can feel it through the bond, the way Shane’s mind is screaming *stop me, stop me, don’t make me do this*. But he must not, or not care, because he blinks at Shane once, stone faced, and looks away.

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They were right. It’s the most painful thing Shane has ever felt. He shakes and shakes, feels the bond bleed out of him one burning second after another, cries as he thinks of Ilya enduring this same torture in an adjacent room, blacks in and out as he screams himself raw, screams himself bloody.

Twelve hours later, he wakes up alone for the second time in seven days. He doesn’t have to ask to know Ilya is long gone.

## Chapter End Notes

Those with the eyes to see all know Shane was in pre-heat during the Vegas bathroom scene 😊

## Chapter 2: Summer 2015

### Chapter Notes

Shane Hollander I've built one million saw traps for you in my mind ❤️

Content warning for some passive suicidal ideation/thoughts about self-harm and a touch of dubcon(?) (in the sense that there is no actual nonconsensual activity but a character gets very distressed and changes their mind about going through with a sexual encounter off screen).

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

Moscow hasn't felt like home in a long time. Since he moved to Boston, since his mother died, there's been a wrongness to it, like wearing too-tight skates from a season ago and being told to get on the ice anyway. But Ilya always comes back, because what other choice does he have? And these days North America is too small to escape the feeling of—well, distance must be good, if only so he can substitute one miserable discomfort for another.

The bond has been dead for over a year now, but he still feels Shane like an itch at the base of his skull, an ache in the back of his teeth. He wonders if Shane can feel him too, wonders himself into a real madness on his worst days. But each time they've played against each other in the last season Shane has come onto the ice smelling of nothing and refusing to look Ilya in the eye. He knows it's for the best, if this is just his cross to bear. If Shane feels nothing, that would be a relief.

And ultimately, it doesn't even matter anymore. Bond or no bond, Shane's already burrowed himself under Ilya's skin. This is his penitence. He'll die with that man still imprinted on his bones. He'll die still regretting it all.

It was the worst moment of his adult life, waking up in that penthouse suite and realizing what he'd done, the evidence stark and bloody on Shane's neck. It was sickening, the way he could feel his alpha preening and sense Shane's own sleepy contentment through the bond. Ilya knew it wouldn't last. Soon, Shane would wake up too and Ilya couldn't be in the room when it happened, couldn't face the unforgivable mess he'd made of everything. So he had fled, like a true coward. Like the kind of alpha he'd sworn he'd never be.

He's replayed that night a thousand times in his mind. How he should have known that it was Shane's heat coming on from the start, how he should have walked away. But in that Vegas bathroom, Ilya had wanted him so badly, and Shane had smelled exactly like he always did—blooming and wanting and so, so irresistible.

The very first time they fucked, eighteen and stupid, Ilya had thought Shane was maybe going into a heat—the way he'd gasped and begged, his desperate obedience, how wet he got

—but when Ilya asked, Shane had shut it down immediately, red-faced. It was just how he was, Ilya realized in time. So needy. His perfect little omega, like something out of the pubescent fantasies freshly presented alphas dream up. Ilya couldn't imagine what Shane was really like in heat, then, if every encounter outside of it was already like this. He knew he would never get to see it. Drove himself insane thinking about it, some nights. Told himself it was enough, to have Shane some ways, sometimes. That it was already more than what anyone else got of Shane.

Everyone knew about the non-bonding clause in Shane's contract. The highest drafted omega in MLH history—of course the Metros would put in a contingency like that. When Ilya's father heard about it, he'd laughed, "They think something like that will change his nature? Omegas like him are all the same. He'll be bitten and bred by the next season."

Ilya had bristled then. Hollander was beautiful and desirable, but he was also devoted to hockey and the best skater Ilya had ever played against. He wanted to keep beating him, to keep seeing him. What did it matter that the Metros slipped an extra line into his contract? Ilya knew Hollander would never put his position in the MLH in jeopardy.

But he'd been wrong ten times over. Every time Shane let Ilya drag him into one of their filthy little games, he was putting his position on the line. But it was never supposed to be truly dangerous, only brushing the edges of any real consequences. Ilya was supposed to be in control, was supposed to be something safe enough for Shane to be reckless with, but he'd failed spectacularly at that, obviously.

And even if the bite wouldn't have completely derailed Shane's career with the Metros, it wasn't like that was something he actually wanted from Ilya. Sure, he had begged and pleaded so sweetly in the throes of his heat, but Ilya should have known better, even after Shane cried and clawed at him and threatened violence on both of them if Ilya wouldn't give it to him, even after his rut began and the world narrowed down to just Shane, Shane, Shane—narrowed down to that spot on the back of Shane's neck, where he'd dreamt of leaving his mark every time he had his omega under him, and before that too, when he watched Shane walk away from him the first time, the blank skin peeking out from under his jacket collar.

Ilya was fucked from the start. He knew it. But it should have never gone so far. He liked the danger of what they did together, liked Shane more than he should, but he never wanted to ruin Shane's life over this. Over him.

He can't stop thinking about it, that day at the clinic. Some stupid part of him had hoped, when Shane texted, that he would tell Ilya no, and kept hoping, up until he walked into that waiting room. He'd sensed before he saw and smelled how sad and scared Shane was, the feeling stark through the bond, and Ilya knew it was his fault, and he was trying to fix it, and Shane might never forgive him either way.

He'd wanted to say something, anything to make it right, but there was nothing to say but sorry, and Shane hadn't wanted to hear it. Fair enough. Ilya didn't deserve his forgiveness, didn't deserve an ounce of his time or attention. He'd already given Shane enough pain, and all he could offer was more of it.

It haunts him, that final moment when Shane looked back at him from the doorway, the way he could feel Shane's fear pumping through the bond, the look on his face, like he was afraid of what Ilya would do, afraid of Ilya. In that moment Ilya knew he would do anything to free Shane from their ill-fated bond. He would slit his own throat right there if that was Shane's only way out.

And as he'd puked his guts up while the drugs meant to kill the bond coursed through him, he knew it was what he deserved, and relished in the pain, and hoped Shane was okay.

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So it's really no use, being a continent away. There's nowhere Ilya can run where Shane Hollander won't find him, no amount of time that could make him forget. Ilya bears it badly, like he bears all of his ghosts, is bearing it badly with a drink in hand in his empty apartment at three in the morning when his phone lights up with a call from Jane.

He thinks he must be hallucinating. He picks up immediately, still. "Shane? Are you okay?"

"Is this Ilya?" a stranger's voice asks. It's a man. He sounds angry. Ilya's blood goes cold.

"Who the fuck are you? Where is Shane?" A million terrible scenarios run through his head—a car accident, a horrible injury during summer training—but none of them make sense. Ilya would be the last person anyone would think to call if Shane was hurt.

"Jesus Christ, is this Ilya or not?" the man snaps. Ilya hears a scuffle in the background. "Okay, okay, I'm trying, okay?" And then back to Ilya, "Come on, just tell me, man, he's been asking for you."

Ilya's heart seizes, gives in immediately. "Yes. What—where is he?"

"Here, wait." More shuffling sounds, and then the audio expands, so Ilya knows he's on speakerphone, and he hears it.

A wet gasp, and Shane's voice, cracked and confused, "Ilya?"

"Yes, Shane, *sweetheart*." He can't help himself, in Russian. The fear is eating him alive. He knows something's wrong. He knows, somehow, that it must be his fault.

"Ilya—Ilya—" Shane moans, and he sounds like he did when— "No don't—" and the scrambling again, like the phone is being pulled away. This is Ilya's worst fucking nightmare. Shane is—and he's calling for Ilya—and there's this stranger with him, saying—

"Listen, man—"

"What the fuck did you do to him motherfucker?" Ilya is seeing red. He's going to tear this person apart. If he touched Shane—if he— "What the fuck is wrong with you?"

"What the fuck is wrong with me? What the fuck is wrong with you?" The guy shouts back. In the background, Ilya hears Shane whimper. Ilya is going to kill this motherfucker and then kill himself. "No one told me he was fucking bonded when I signed onto this gig!"

What? "What? What the fuck are you saying?" Ilya is going to throw up. He's going to lose his fucking mind. "He's not. He's not bonded."

"Don't fucking bullshit me. I'm a pro. know what it looks like when a bonded omega goes into fucking heat, and this was never discussed. I show up to do my job and he's been crying for three fucking days and asking for you and refusing to let me try and call you like some fucking—"

"What the fuck?" It would be less shocking to be shot in the chest. "If you fucking hurt him I will fucking kill you *I will end your life you piece of shit—*"

The man—the professional heat partner Shane apparently fucking hired—scoffs. Ilya wishes he could reach through the phone to fucking strangle him. "He wouldn't even let me touch him. I'm still here because I'm paid to take care of him, and I've been doing my fucking best, but I didn't sign up to be part of whatever fucked up game you two have going on. This is a breach of contract you know, you need to disclose these things beforehand—"

"Shut up." Ilya hisses. "Shut the fuck up." He needs to— "Let me talk to him. Please." The humiliation of begging is nothing compared to the fear of not getting to speak to Shane, not being able to try and fix this.

"Gladly, Jesus," the guy sighs, like he hasn't been hogging the phone lecturing Ilya about things he had no fucking idea about.

And then, Shane's voice again, "Ilya? Where are you?"

"I'm here, Shane, *baby*." He hears Shane let out a shuddering breath. The sound of it is enough to break Ilya's heart. "I'm right here. You—are you—what do you need?"

An awful little sob, scratchy through the speakers. "You—You—I—alpha—Ilya—Why aren't you here? I need—I want—"

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry, *sweetheart*." If a merciful god existed, he would strike Ilya down now. "I'm here. I'm staying here, as long as you need me, okay?" He wants to cry too, pacing uselessly in his living room, feeling sick with the way he's ruined everything, is still ruining things. Couldn't even do this right, break the bond right and give Shane his freedom. Can't give him what he needs, now.

Shane is really crying hard now, shuddering sobs that Ilya remembers could only be soothed with his hands on Shane's skin, his knot inside of Shane. And now he's helpless, more than four thousand miles away, clutching his phone so hard the metal body creaks. He feels like he can smell Shane through the phone, the sweet, desperate scent of his heat, even though it's impossible, just the memory of it that he's tried so hard to forget, will never fucking forget as long as he lives.

"No, no, I want you here. I've been waiting for you, please, I can be good. I'll be good, alpha, I'll be good for you." As if Shane has ever been anything but perfect for Ilya. He can't believe Shane would ever think—

"I know, I know, Shane, baby." Ilya stops his pacing. He needs to get it fucking together. "I'm coming, okay?" There must be some oligarch somewhere who has a plane that can get him to Ontario. Ilya will pay anything, will give anything.

"Really?" The broken open hope in Shane's soft voice will haunt Ilya to his fucking grave.

"I promise. Just wait, baby, I'm coming, okay?" He'll rip apart this whole world to get to Shane, if that's what it takes. The bond—the bond that never fucking broke—is singing sweet and strong, but Ilya knows it's not the bond compelling him, now. It's just him, and Shane, and oh god— "*I love you*, Shane. Just wait. I'm coming. I'm coming back."

## Chapter End Notes

Yes I had to add an extra chapter because I was too focused on putting my poor little meow meows through hell again 😊

## Chapter 3: Summer 2015 +1

### Chapter Notes

As prophesied, all roads do eventually lead to ABO smut 🙏

Some additional notes:

- Tags are updated to reflect my bravery as an omega Shane pussy truther. If our freaky frequencies are unmatched, please do not tell me because I am deeply sensitive lol.
- Content warning for unsafe sex in the sense that the characters have unprotected sex without discussing it. We are getting nasty with it. Sorry!
- I am taking whatever I want from both the books and the show, so in my world the cottage is in Ontario per the novel, not Quebec. Yes I know this literally does not matter at all.
- If previously unclear, all italicized dialogue is in Russian.

Shane paces the floor of the cottage and considers his limited options: leave, drown himself in the lake, turn on his phone and call Ilya to say so sorry, he actually doesn't have to come, Shane was overreacting, Shane will pay him back for whatever that private plane heading to Canada cost, just please forget everything Shane said on the phone before, thank you so much.

He does none of these things. He keeps pacing, panicking, straightening the curtains in the living room and the placemats on the dining table. He wants, stupidly, for Ilya to see when he shows up that Shane keeps a nice, tidy home. That this could be a place where they—oh Jesus, when Ilya shows up. Ilya is showing up. Because Shane asked him to. Because Shane couldn't help himself, in the depths of heat, to make more unreasonable demands. Because Shane's useless body couldn't even reject the bond properly.

He remembers the last stretch of his heat in bits and pieces, but he knows it had broken about two hours into Ilya's flight. Ilya had stayed on the phone with Shane the whole time, until Shane fell asleep, still hiccupping little sobs, but content in the knowledge that his alpha was coming, was heading towards him right now.

He'd woken up the next afternoon with a dreadful clarity at what he'd done, a dead phone he couldn't bring himself to charge, and a full spread of breakfast food from Mike, the guy from the discreet heat service Shane had shamefully asked the Metros to hire for the summer. When the medical staff had asked what changed his mind, after years of spending his heats alone and a full season of upgrading to industrial strength suppressants, Shane had just shrugged, said he wanted to try something different.

The back of his neck tingled then, as it did every time Shane thought of Ilya, which was all the time. The skin there was long healed, but Shane hadn't been able to shake the feeling, all year, that he was missing something, waiting for something, like Ilya was just around the corner waiting for him too.

He thought he was good at hiding it, had skirted past the prying eyes of the team, the fans, his parents, even Ilya, during the torturous Montreal-Boston games last season. It wasn't supposed to matter anymore, but then Mike had shown up, punctual right as Shane's pre-heat was setting in, took one sniff of him and said, "You're bonded? What the hell?"

He was a good guy, had kept a respectful distance while trying his best to keep Shane fed and hydrated as Shane spiraled deeper and deeper into his heat, and Shane knows the Metros had him sign a bulletproof NDA before he ever showed up at the cottage. The knowledge doesn't stop the red-hot humiliation from coursing through Shane's body when he thinks of how he acted—how he cried and begged for Ilya and refused to let Mike go through his contacts to find his alpha, until he really couldn't stand it anymore. Until he was sobbing down the phone for Ilya to please come, like the worst stereotype of a needy, overbearing omega.

Again, he's asked for too much, and again, Ilya has derailed his own life to try and fix Shane's mess.

Ten hours ago, Mike had checked in to make sure Shane's heat was truly over, that he didn't need anything else, and then said with a honest shrug, "Okay, I'm headed out now. I'm not going to stick around for when your alpha shows up here."

Shane had nodded, thanked Mike profusely, resolved to tip him an egregious amount of money, and proceeded to spend the rest of the day freaking the fuck out.

It's dark out now, more than a full day since Mike first called Ilya, and there's really nothing left for Shane to do but wait. He's cleaned every inch of the cottage, stripped his bed and washed his sheets, changed his clothes like ten times trying to find an outfit that says something along the lines of sorry I made you fly halfway across the world when I was being a needy whore but I'm actually over it now. He's settled on his most comfortable t-shirt and his nicest pair of jeans. He doesn't know what the hell he's doing.

He's on the couch, knee bouncing in restless anticipation, when he hears the crunch of gravel outside, a car pulling up to the cottage. His heart pounds in double-time. The back of his neck, which has been on fire all day, flares with the sharp sting of certainty. His alpha—Ilya.

There's no patience. He can't play it cool. Before he can even make the conscious decision, his body's already crossed the room, his clammy hands are fumbling with the turn lock. He throws the door open.

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Ilya stumbles out of the rental car, breathless with fear. He's been losing his fucking mind for the last twenty plus hours, first with that call from hell and then again when Shane's phone died and he never called back or picked up again. Every worst-case scenario has passed

through Ilya's mind—some medical crisis, a change of heart, Shane running away with that damn hired heat partner and quitting hockey to have the bastard's babies.

And now he's at the cottage, finally, and the front door is opening, and Shane is standing there, whole and real and bathed in light like an angel.

He's up the stairs in two seconds, and then his hands are in Shane's hair, smoothing over his neck, his shoulders, every part of his body Ilya can touch. He needs to make sure—

"You are okay? Are you hurt?"

"What?" Shane is blinking up at him, eyes wide. His body is solid and warm under Ilya's hands. He smells like the sweet air of late summer, the promise that another season of hockey is about to begin. It's enough to make Ilya's knees buckle.

"You are not hurt?" he asks again. He has to be sure.

Shane shakes his head. Opens his plush, pink mouth and licks his lips. Ilya is going to pass out. "I'm—I'm fine. But I—oh my god. I'm so sorry. Shit." Ilya can feel, under the hand he has cupping the side of Shane's neck, how fast Shane's heart is beating. "I'm so sorry I asked you to come all this way. I'm not even—my heat's over."

"Okay," Ilya says. He knows that. Can see that.

Shane shakes his head again, won't meet Ilya's eyes as he steps out of Ilya's hold to shut and lock the front door. Always so responsible. When he turns back around, his fists are clenched at his sides. Ilya can see his nipples through the thin fabric of his white t-shirt. His feet are bare. It's a little slutty. Very distracting.

"I mean, you don't have to be here. I'm sorry. I know I'm the one who asked, but I was being—I should have never—"

"Do you want me here?" Ilya is so tired of all their sorries. He just. He needs to know.

"I—"

Ilya steps back into Shane's space, reaches for his left hand, uncurls one brave fist, so he can bring Shane's palm to his chest, press it there. So Shane can feel he is here, too. "You asked me to come. Is it only because of your heat?"

"I—I always want you here," Shane breathes. He ducks his head, but Ilya can see the pink dusting his cheeks, making his freckles stand out. It is all so beloved to him. "Sorry."

Ilya sighs, tips his head forward, eyes closing, so their foreheads bump. He hears Shane's sharp little intake of breath. "I want to be here too." A confession for a confession.

"For my heat?"

Ilya can't help but huff a laugh. He pulls back just enough to look Shane in the eyes, so there's no mystery when he says, "For you, Shane."

“Oh.” God, those shining eyes. Ilya would die for them. “Ilya.”

Shane moves, or Ilya does. Either way, they meet in the middle.

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Ilya kisses like an ocean tide, like a force of nature Shane has no power to resist. It's a sweet relief, to let himself be swept away, to let Ilya lead him into that dark water he can't see the bottom of. One kiss, deep and sure, and that smoldering under his skin that's been driving him insane all year finally calms. One kiss, and Shane knows he is never recovering from any of this. He doesn't want to.

When Ilya pulls back, his crooked smile that Shane loves so much is hanging from his mouth, but his eyes are dark and serious when he asks, “What do you want, Shane? I will give it you.”

It's easy this time, to tell the truth, to say, “You.” Ilya's already heard it before. Shane's sure he'd said it a hundred times during his heats, begging and desperate. But he feels Ilya's relief through the bond, and knows his alpha needed to hear it again, hear it like this, Shane honest because he wants to be, not because he can't help himself. He smiles, brings his hands to Ilya's handsome face and says it again. “I need you. I want you. I want this.” He grabs Ilya's hand and brings it to the back of his neck. The scar from the bite is barely perceptible, but Ilya's thumb finds it immediately, brushes against where he claimed Shane, soft.

"You feel this too?" Ilya asks, a whisper.

“Yeah. I—I do. I didn't want to stop, I still don't.” More honesty, novel in its painlessness.

Ilya doesn't have to say a thing, Shane can feel it. The certainty, the desire. Ilya says it anyways, “I need it too. I want—I think, without you, there is nothing for me.”

It makes his heart squeeze, a glorious bit of pain. He can't help leaning back in, asking wordlessly for a kiss that Ilya grants immediately.

Everything else, he doesn't even need to ask for, Ilya just gives. Crowds him against the wall as he licks into his mouth, slips his hands beneath his shirt, slides a knee between his legs. Shane lets himself have it, nips at Ilya's mouth, tangles his hands in his hair, bucks up against the sweet friction from Ilya's strong thigh.

He's so fucking wet, just from this, wonders if Ilya can feel it, can smell it. Needs—

“Ilya.” A plead.

“Yes.” And his clothes are being pulled off, discarded as they stumble towards the stairs. He keeps getting distracted, with kisses, with the need to get closer, until Ilya growls and gives up wrangling him, pulls him up by his thighs, so he can carry him. It drags Shane's bare, wet cunt drag against Ilya's clothed dick, makes him moan.

“Where am I going?” Ilya asks, breath hot against Shane's ear.

“What?” Shane is trying so hard to be good. To not just ask Ilya to fuck him on the floor or against the wall.

“Where is your room? I have not been to your house before.”

“Oh my god. Up the stairs. First room on the left. Hurry up, hurry up.”

And Ilya’s laughing, still laughing when he carries a wriggling Shane upstairs, drops Shane on his bed, crawls between his open legs. The laughter only dies when his mouth lands on Shane’s clenching hole, and then they’re both moaning.

Ilya’s tongue is searching, prodding, determined to open Shane up, and Shane can do nothing but buck up into the feeling, crying out while Ilya gets him loose and open, when he sucks Shane’s little cock into his mouth and gives him two fingers to work his cunt around.

“More, more, please,” he begs, and then Ilya is curling his fingers, right where Shane needs it, and he’s coming, messy in Ilya’s mouth, down Ilya’s chin, around his still-moving fingers. It’s too much. It’s not enough.

When Ilya lifts his head, grinning and face shiny-wet, Shane can only whine, hips still moving against the air, asking.

“You need more?” Ilya asks. Cocky bastard. Shane loves him so much.

He nods, secure in the knowledge that his alpha will give him what he needs, will push his own pants down finally and—oh god—start rubbing the fat head of his cock against Shane’s ruined hole, still sticky with his own spend.

Every time Ilya’s cock catches against Shane’s cunt, it sparks up his whole body. He can’t stand to be teased, he needs it and if Ilya doesn’t give it to him he’ll—

He’s crying, he realizes with a start. He can feel the moisture leaking out of the corners of his eyes, the cool trickle sliding across his cheekbone, pooling in the whorls of his ear. Ilya presses a quick kiss to his temple, swipes away a stray tear with his thumb.

“You are okay?” he asks, nosing at Shane’s cheek.

Shane nods, quick. “Yes, yes, Ilya. Please.”

“Your little pussy keeps dripping on me,” Ilya observes, like an asshole. “I think it needs me.”

Shane is beyond shame. Will say and do anything to get Ilya in him, now. “It does. It does. I do. Please—”

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And how can Ilya resist an admission like that? His sweet omega is writhing and begging for him, and Ilya is only a man. He pushes in, slow, and the velvet squeeze of Shane’s hot cunt is heaven on earth.

He takes his time with it, even as Shane gasps and moans and shifts his hips, asking for more, for Ilya. He's never seen anyone like this, respond like this, so ripe for touch and love. When Ilya's finally all the way in, Shane is panting, open-mouthed. His wet, wide eyes are looking up at Ilya like he's the sun. His hands are by his head, on the pillow, obediently showing the delicate insides of his wrists. He's flushed pink and perfect all over, the sweetest thing Ilya's ever tasted.

"Good?" Ilya asks, even though he can feel the answer, through the bond. The endless feedback loop of his own want and pleasure mixed with Shane's.

"Uh huh," Shane nods. His hips are still working minutely, like he hopes Ilya won't notice his little pussy trying to suck Ilya in deeper. "Can you—you can—"

"I know," Ilya says. "*My perfect little slut.*" and then he's leaning in to catch Shane's pink, wanton mouth in his own, to swallow his gasps as he begins to thrust into that perfect heat between Shane's legs.

When he leans back to thrust harder, he slips his thumb into Shane's open mouth, feeling the heat and wet inside this place, too. When Shane thrashes, turning his head, Ilya's thumb slips out, leaves a shiny streak across the corner of Shane's mouth. He can't resist licking at the spot, before sliding their mouths together again, barely a kiss now, with them both panting and moaning.

"This is what you wanted, *sweetheart*, what you needed, yes?" He asks as he pushes Shane's legs up, gets an angle that has Shane mewling.

"I wanted—ah, ah—I wanted your knot—"

"You will have it," Ilya promises, but Shane isn't done—

"So you could—could give me a baby."

Ilya's mind whites out. Shane is still gasping underneath him, eyes glassy. "*Fuck*. Yes." It's punched out of him. He would agree to just about anything right now, but this, he needs Shane to know, he will give to Shane, as long as he asks. "You want my pups?"

"Yes, yes." Ilya can tell how true it is. From the bond. From how much wetter Shane's getting, just thinking about it.

"Then come for me, *baby*." And Shane, as obedient as ever, does, squirting around Ilya's cock and yowling, body working to pull Ilya in as deep as possible.

"Ah, don't stop," Shane begs, when Ilya tries to give him time to ride out his orgasm. "I still—your knot—"

So Ilya wraps his hands around Shane's waist, pulls him down on his cock as he thrusts harder, chasing his own release. Shane's cunt is a mess, amplifying the wet sounds of their bodies coming together.

“Ilya, Ilya, please,” Shane leans up, catches Ilya's bottom lip between his teeth and nips. “I need it, give it to me.”

And Ilya can't stop himself then, pushes in one last time and feels his knot lock into place as he comes, feels the way Shane's pussy spasms around him, and keeps clenching as Ilya rubs his fingers over his wet little cock, drawing out his orgasm, until Shane is squirming and gasping for mercy.

“Oh my god, oh my god, Ilya.”

“Yes,” Ilya agrees, panting, and turns their bodies carefully, so Shane is on top of him, a comfortable weight. His hand goes instinctively to the back of Shane's neck, where he can feel the barely-there ridges of the scar he left.

Shane hums, pleased, and pushes into the touch. “I should let you know, I'm on birth control.”

“I know,” Ilya says. He saw the pills in the medicine cabinet when he was snooping before his shower at Shane's condo.

“Oh uh,” Shane blinks down at him, shy again even with Ilya's knot still inside him. “I would though—in the future—if that's something you want.”

“I do want,” Ilya says. He wants everything with Shane. “You tell me when you are ready. But I think next year is good. The Metros will be very bad, I predict.”

Shane laughs, bright and loud. “Shut up. Asshole.”

Ilya grins up at him. The bedroom light shines above him like a halo. His little angel. He knows Shane can feel it, can feel all of him, but he needs to say it regardless. “I love you, Shane Hollander.” No mistakes this time, just Ilya's heart in Shane's hands.

The smile that blooms across Shane's face is a wondrous thing to behold. “I love you, too.”

The bond, evergreen and unkillable, hums between them, the sweetest song of all.

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