

Sweet Cinnamon

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Sweet Cinnamon

by [Caraphernellic](#)

Summary

Shane is only days away from his heat when he finds a strange, hurt Alpha on his property. He feels inexplicably drawn to him, but he needs to think about his hockey career, not a mate.

Chapter 1

There's been a blizzard rolling through Ottawa. Shane doesn't normally come back to his cabin in the middle of the hockey season, but his parents were coming to check on their own cabin during the blizzard, and Shane volunteered to come along. It was perfect timing. He was off for two weeks on heat leave.

"Are you sure you want to stay at your place alone, honey?" His mom asks.

With the alternative being staying with his parents during his *heat*? Yeah, he's absolutely sure. "Yes, I'll be fine." Shane insists. "I'll call you tomorrow for proof of life."

"Well if you need anything, don't hesitate to call!"

"I'll be fine, you're ten minutes down the road, fifteen with the blizzard."

He grabs his bag of clothing and the paper bags of groceries they'd stopped for on the way. Everything else he should already have inside.

Shane normally lives here during the summer, but he loves this place, so spending a heat here isn't actually a bad idea. He'll be comfortable here. Well, as comfortable as he can be.

His heat doesn't start for a few more days, so he will have time to settle in first.

Shane is reading a book on the couch later that evening when he hears a noise. "Mom? Dad?" He calls out. It almost sounded like it was coming from the porch, maybe. He stands up. It could be snow falling from the roof, maybe.

He walks closer and listens. There it is again. Actually, it sounds like it's coming from the garage. Maybe an animal got in. He really should check. He unlocks the adjoining door and

flicks on the light. The garage is pretty clean, and Shane's car isn't in it because he didn't drive this time. He walks further in and frowns. He doesn't see anything. He doesn't hear anything anymore.

And then-

A growl.

Shane turns slowly around.

An Alpha is crouched between the empty yard waste cans at the back of the garage. He bares his teeth at Shane.

Shane flinches in surprise. He backs up a few steps. He's days away from his heat and there's a strange Alpha in his garage. This is not good.

Suddenly though, he realizes several things at once. This Alpha is not dressed properly for a blizzard. This Alpha is injured. This Alpha is growling to protect himself, not as a threat to Shane.

Did he break in to get out of the cold?

"Hey." Shane says stupidly. "Do you...need help?"

The Alpha growls again.

"I can get you some warm clothes. Blankets." Shane tells him. The Alpha moves, slinking out from his hiding place. It's obvious that he's going to try to leave.

“Please! Don’t leave.” Shane surprises himself by saying. But he knows he wouldn’t feel right letting this stranger leave without any help. It’s a damn blizzard outside, and it’s freezing.

The Alpha collapses with a pained whimper.

Without thinking, Shane rushes forward, but stops abruptly when the Alpha cowers and makes another hurt noise.

Oh my god. *He’s* scared of *Shane*.

“I won’t hurt you.” He says softly. “I’m not upset that you’re in my garage. I promise. I just want to help.”

The Alpha doesn’t move, so Shane walks cautiously up. This is a really stupid idea. He kneels on the cold concrete. Up close, he can see a lot of old scars on the Alpha’s skin. Some new ones too, judging by the dried blood smeared on his body.

Shane reaches out to touch him, but thinks better of it and lets his hand fall back down. “We should go inside. It’s warm. You can get cleaned up.” At having invited a strange and possibly feral Alpha inside, Shane’s logical brain is screaming at him, but the other part of him is telling him that he needs to help this man.

The Alpha blinks up at him, his expression apprehensive.

“Can you stand?” Shane is strong, but this Alpha is definitely bigger than him. He stands up, and thankfully the other man stands too, immediately hunching in on himself. He limps slightly as they walk.

Shane leads him to the downstairs guest bathroom. “Wait here, I’ll bring you some fresh clothes, okay? They might not fit the best, but…” The man is practically wearing rags, so

Shane doesn't think he'll mind some too-short sweatpants. He hurries to his room and grabs the softest and warmest clothes he can find, and a pair of fresh boxers and socks.

He's relieved when the other man is still where he left him. He still looks apprehensive, eyes darting around as if assessing for threats. His shoulders are slumped and his arms are wrapped around himself. Now that they're in better lighting, Shane can see that even with the dirt and the injuries that cover him, he's actually quite handsome.

"Feel free to use anything in here. There are new toothbrushes in that drawer." Shane rocks back on his heels. "Well...I guess I'll leave you to it."

He paces the living room the entire time the shower is running. He has no idea what he's doing. His parents would kill him if they knew.

When the bathroom has been quiet for a little while, he knocks on the door. "Um, are you all done in there?" He waits a minute and doesn't hear anything, so he tries the doorknob and finds it unlocked. He pushes the door open slowly.

The Alpha is standing in the same spot. If he wasn't clean and dressed in Shane's clothes, Shane would think he hadn't moved at all.

"Um. I realized I never even introduced myself. I'm Shane." The man says nothing. "Do you need to call someone?" He gets a vigorous head shake in response, the first acknowledgement he's gotten at all that other man hears him.

"Okay...well, I bet you're hungry, I'll make you something to eat." The man hovers between the hallway and the kitchen, and Shane motions to the kitchen table and the stools at the counter island. "You can sit if you'd like."

He makes some baked chicken and rice, nothing fancy. He makes up two plates and grabs three water bottles from the fridge, giving two to the Alpha. He's probably very thirsty. Who knows how long he was out in the elements. He eats very fast and low to his plate, and it makes Shane sad. It's painfully obvious that something awful happened to this man.

“Here.” He slides his own plate with the rest of his food on it over to him. “I’m not very hungry anyway, finish mine.” The man’s eyes flick to Shane’s for a long second, but he accepts.

“Do you need any pain meds? Or help with your injuries?” Another head shake. Okay, Shane’s getting through to him! That’s helpful.

“You’re probably exhausted. You can sleep in this room here. Everything is clean. Use whatever you need. Or want.” He adds. The guest room is nice, it should be suitable. It’s not very late, but again, Shane guesses the man is thoroughly wiped out. “Please don’t leave.” Shane says again. “I’ll help you, I promise. I’ll be upstairs if you need *anything*.” Assuming he isn’t going to get an answer, he goes to walk away, when the Alpha speaks.

“Thank you.”

Chapter 2

Shane is almost startled, as he hadn't been expecting him to speak. The man has a thick accent, Russian, it sounds like. Maybe he doesn't know a lot of English, and that's why he hasn't been answering Shane. Now he feels a little embarrassed. He'd just been chattering away.

"You're welcome." He says softly. He closes the door and goes to his own room. He goes through his nighttime routine and lays down, but he doesn't sleep. He can't stop thinking about the man downstairs. His heat will start in about 2-3 more days. What is he going to do? He can't stay here with an Alpha, a strange Alpha, while he goes through his heat. Assuming the other man doesn't sneak out in the middle of the night.

He will have to go back to his parents' cabin after all. His heat will last about four days, and then he can come back, and that will give him about a week, give or take, to figure out a different solution before he goes back to Montreal.

Shane could let the other man use his home. Is that insane? To let a stranger live here for a while? Especially when Shane doesn't know anything about him. He could be robbing him right now, for all he knows. But this man clearly needs help, and Shane has the capacity to give it. He has a perfectly nice house that he doesn't even use half of the year.

He must've been thinking hard enough to lull himself to sleep, because he jolts awake an indeterminate amount of time later. The sun is streaming in through the windows. Shane sits up quickly, straining to listen. He doesn't hear any noise coming from downstairs. He gets up quickly but quietly, and goes to the guest room. The door is still closed, so he pushes it open lightly. *Please still be here*, He thinks fiercely.

Oh.

The scent of pine, cinnamon, and something earthy fills his nose. The Alpha's scent. Shane couldn't smell it underneath the fear emanating from him last night. Now, the Alpha is relaxed, deeply asleep from the looks of it, buried under a mound of blankets on the bed.

Shane smiles to himself and closes the door quietly.

He does his normal routines, expecting the Alpha to wake up at any minute. However, the morning comes and goes, and then afternoon does as well. Shane peeks in on him a few times, and he seems to still be asleep. He must've been so bone-weary. So Shane cleans, and reads, and does his yoga. He makes lunch for two just to pack away one of the portions.

He's making dinner when the Alpha finally makes an appearance. "Mr. Shane?" He hears in that low, accented voice.

Shane turns around from the stove. "Hi! Oh, um, you don't have to call me Mister. Just Shane is fine." He shifts his weight. He mentally chastises himself, because there's an injured and traumatized man in front of him, yet his inner Omega is thinking about how handsome he is and how appealing his scent is. He blames it on his impending heat. "I'm making dinner." He says needlessly. He made triple the portions from last night, so the Alpha could have double.

The Alpha puts a hand on his own chest. "Ilya."

Ilya. His name is Ilya.

Shane smiles shyly. "Thank you for telling me your name." He gives him two more water bottles, then a heaping plate of food a few minutes later.

"Do not eat much." Ilya says, gesturing to Shane's considerably smaller plate.

"I'm an athlete." Shane responds. "I need to keep in shape. Plus, I don't think Omegas need to eat as much as Alphas." Ilya looks like maybe he wants to say more, but he doesn't. They finish eating in silence, and then Shane gathers up all of his courage. "I wanted to talk to you about something."

Ilya gives him a flat look that he assumes means 'Go on.', so he continues. "I don't live here full time. And I...well, you can probably tell that I'm going into heat soon." His cheeks flush

and he clears his throat.

“Ah. You need me to leave now.” Ilya nods. “Is okay. You have done me great service.”

“No!” Shane says, too quickly and too loudly. “Actually, the opposite.” Then he realized that sounds like he wants Ilya to stay for his heat. God, he’s really screwing this up. “I mean, I want you to stay here as long as you need. I’m going to go to my parents’ place down the road for my heat. And then after a few days I can come back and make sure you’re alright.”

“I do not have money to give.” Ilya says sadly.

“I don’t need anything in return.” Shane tells him.

Ilya cocks his head as if confused.

“You need help, and I can give help.” Shane says simply.

“I break into home. I am scary Alpha. You are Omega. You invite me in to help.” Ilya says skeptically.

Okay, when he puts it like *that*, Shane sounds insane.

“Yes. And for the record, you aren’t scary.”

Ilya gestures to his face. “I don’t look nice. Scars.”

Shane frowns. “I think you look great. Handsome.” He’s so stupid, why does he keep saying these things?! “If you don’t want to stay, obviously you don’t have to. I just thought...” Saying “that you had nowhere else to go” seems tactless, so he trails off.

“I am safe here?” Ilya checks, and Shane’s heart fissures inside his chest.

“Yes. Completely safe. No one will know you're here.”

Ilya looks conflicted. His jaw muscles flex. “I...would like to stay.” He admits.

“I have to leave tomorrow night.” Shane states. “But I’ll just be down the road, and I can come back in like four days.”

Ilya nods. “I take care of home.” He nods at the falling snow outside. “Shovel snow. Clean up.”

“You really don’t have to.” Shane says, but he’s pretty sure that Ilya is going to do it regardless.

Shane is pleasantly surprised when Ilya stays near him for the rest of the evening. It’s not overbearing, he keeps a respectful distance and is polite. It’s nice to have another person near him, as he so often spends so much time alone. Just to have company is nice. His inner Omega is especially pleased by this, so close to his heat.

Shane gives him a whole folded pile of clothing to put in the guest room, and they bid each other goodnight. This time, Shane actually falls asleep at a reasonable hour.

He wakes up with telltale cramping in his lower abdomen. Yeah, he’ll definitely have to leave tonight. His heat will be in full swing by tomorrow morning. He calls him mom around 9am.

“Hey, mom. Actually, I was thinking it might be nice to stay with you guys during my heat. Is that alright?”

“Of course, honey! Are you sure? Is everything okay?”

“Yes. I just thought I might need the extra help with meals.” He lies. It can be hard to get proper hydration and sustenance during a heat if you’re alone, but Shane usually manages alright.

“Okay, I will get your room all set up.”

“Thank you. Pick me up tonight?”

“Can do. I’ll see you later, love you.”

“Love you too. Thanks, bye.”

Shane finally gets out of bed, muscles protesting. He always got achy before and after a heat. He’s surprised to realize that he can smell and hear the sounds of food being cooked.

He finds Ilya in the kitchen, frying eggs and flipping pancakes made from the protein powder Shane buys.

“You didn’t have to do this.” Shane says, sitting at the counter island.

Ilya shrugs. “I figured I would be useful.”

“You’re a guest, you don’t have to.” Ilya ignores him. He hands Shane a plate that’s a lot more full than what Shane would’ve served himself. That’s probably the point. Still, he only eats maybe half of it. Ilya insists on cleaning up too, so Shane goes to the couch.

He would normally be more productive, but with his heat so near, he's tired and not feeling the best, so he just turns on the tv.

He half dozes to the sounds of Ilya washing dishes in the kitchen. He's only barely aware when a blanket is draped over him a little while later. He snuggles deeper into the couch, curling up. Ilya has only touched the blanket for a moment, so his scent barely clings to it, but Shane unconsciously sought it out anyway. It's nice, calming. He rarely uses Alpha scents to get him through his heat. His Omega thinks this is a rare treat, and he's too tired to resist.

Shane wakes up a little while later, needing to use the bathroom. He stretches, then stands, only to be immediately accosted by a sharp cramp.

He groans and grips the side of the couch for support. Fuck. He hates this. Sometimes his muscles cramp so harshly, it hurts like something being stabbed into him.

Suddenly, Ilya is there, looking worried. "Shane?" He touches his elbow, and the feeling is electric, like sparks between them as soon their skin brushes. It momentarily distracts Shane.

"I'm okay." He says, a little breathless for multiple reasons.

"Can I get you something?" Ilya asks. He looks so earnest. Shane realizes this is the closest they've been to one another since the other night when Shane had kneeled beside him. Already, barely two days later, Ilya looks so much healthier.

"No, no. I'm alright, I promise." Shane finds his voice to say. He reluctantly pulls away from the man's warmth and touch and goes to the bathroom. He spends a minute staring into the mirror at himself. That was...weird. He'd felt a sort of magnetic pull to Ilya that he's never felt before. It felt like more than an Alpha and an Omega, somehow. He couldn't understand it, couldn't explain it.

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Shane has just showered with scent blocking soap, so he won't get into his parents car smelling like a strange Alpha. He's standing by the door with his bag packed, mostly with blankets and scented clothing for the nest he'll make at his parents house.

"Four days." He reminds Ilya. "Lock the door behind me and don't open it for anyone. Although I doubt anyone will come here."

"You will be okay?" Ilya asks. He had been so worried all day after Shane had cried out in pain this morning.

"Yes." Shane reassures him. "And you will be here when I get back, and we can talk more."

"Da."

They both hear the crunch of tires in the driveway.

"Well...I'll see you, Ilya."

"Goodbye, Shane."

Chapter 3

His heat was brutal, agonizing, even. Maybe one of the worst Shane has ever had. His body cried out for an Alpha, begged him for one, and Shane wouldn't give in. The best he could do was drink up the stale scent of Ilya from the blanket on the couch at the cabin that he had brought with him.

By the end of the four days, he felt like a wrung out cloth. He was sore in every aspect, his muscles protesting from days of contorting himself into positions to take a fake knot and from locking up with every orgasm.

"Are you sure you want to go back so soon, son?" His father asked him, concern evident in his voice.

"Yeah, I'm fine now dad, just tired. I'll probably just sleep."

His parents shared a look. "You can always stay the last week here." His mom reminds him for at least the third time.

"I know. Really, I'm fine though." Shane insists. He wonders if his parents think he's acting weird. He probably is. He's very anxious to get back to check on Ilya. He tries not to limp too much on the way back out to the car.

"Thanks, love you both, I'll call you tomorrow." He hastily gets his bags and goes to the front door. He knocks first. "It's me, Shane!" His heart pounds in his chest.

In less than 30 seconds, the door swings open to reveal Ilya. He stayed! Shane is so relieved.

Ilya looks-

He actually looks like he's barely keeping it together. He's clean and dressed in a new combination of Shane's clothing, but his eyes look haunted.

"Ilya?" Shane asks, setting his bag down.

"You came back." Ilya whispers.

"Of course I...yes." Shane reaches out and grabs his wrist lightly. "I'm here." He looks up at him, feeling a sudden swell of emotion. Ilya bites his lip and nods, and then Shane pulls him into a hug. They both need it.

Ilya's arms wrap around him firmly but not aggressively. Shane's face is pressed into his chest, and he finds himself breathing in deeply.

Ilya's face tucks into the side of his neck, and his legs almost turn to gelatin when he feels the man scenting him, ever so gently. Ilya is the most gentle Alpha he has ever met. "You smell nice." Ilya rasps. Shane's heat smell is probably still lingering, and he tries not to blush.

"So do you." He says honestly. He's glad to smell this scent right from the source instead of the blanket from his nest. He lets himself be tugged to the couch, where they sit close enough that their knees brush.

"I'm sorry I had to leave." Shane tells him, as if it was his fault.

"Is okay. I mostly sleep." Ilya says, seeming a little embarrassed about it.

Shane doesn't know how to tell him that he's leaving again in a week, this time for months. "Ilya...why did you come here? Where did you come from?" He asks softly. He wants to understand how and why he came here, to Shane's cabin.

Ilya looks down at his hands. They're nice hands, big and warm, but they're also scarred on the knuckles. "I come here from Russia. They say is..." He appears to be searching for a word. "Good opportunity. Lots of money."

Shane gets a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach.

"I get here, is fighting ring. No money. Cannot leave."

Shane wants to vomit. "What?" He whispers, horrified.

Ilya's eyes flick sideways to him. "Alpha fighting. Bad men. No one is allowed to leave."

The scars on his body. The fresh injuries he had the night Shane first met him. Shane's hands start to shake and he feels cold all over. It must show on his face or in his scent, because Ilya reaches a hand out and Shane takes it.

"I escape. Run for long time, through forest. Then the snow comes. I see shelter." He looks at Shane with a wry half-smile. "I think no one home, but I plan to stay in garage. Warmer than outside, yes?"

Shane's lips wobble.

"Then someone comes out to find me. I think, this is it for me."

Shane squeezes his hand.

"But then, it is sweet smelling Omega. So beautiful. I think maybe I already died."

Shane flinches at those words. "Don't..."

It's Ilya's turn to squeeze his hand in acknowledgement. "I was scared, but I knew I was not well."

"What made you stay? You could've snuck off. You had no idea who I was or what I was capable of."

"This is true. Cross my mind. I felt very sick and weak, I did not know if I would even survive anyway, after being outside. But I was at home of nice, pretty Omega. I lay down to bed and I think, "This is not such bad way to die."

Shane is crying openly now, silent tears rolling down his cheeks.

"No, please do not cry. You save me." He pulls Shane into his chest and Shane doesn't resist. He lets himself breathe in that scent again. How has it been less than a week since he's met this man, and he feels more comfortable with him than people he's known for his entire life? His inner Omega sighs in relief. He lets himself be held, lets himself relax. He *trusts* Ilya. With everything in him, he just intrinsically knows that Ilya would never hurt him.

One of Ilya's hands stroke down his spine soothingly, the other one coming up to rest in his hair. "I did not know if I would survive the night. I felt sick and weak. The bed was so comfortable, I have not had that in so long. I fell asleep not know if I wake up. I was a little surprised when I wake up the next day."

"I kept checking on you." Shane admits. "You looked peaceful."

"No dream. That was nice." Ilya's voice is rumbling in his chest where Shane's forehead is pressed against it. "I feel...so sad when you go. I wanted to protect you."

Shane gets flashes of Ilya hovering around him in the days before he went to his parents' cabin. How worried he was the day Shane left. This man, who was tricked into a *fighting ring*, and he has been nothing but gentle and protective over Shane, a virtual stranger.

Shane sinks lower until his upper half is sprawled across Ilya's lap. He's so exhausted, physically and mentally. His entire existence has been about being perfect, doing things that people expected of him. From the beginning, Ilya has been his one selfish thing. Something that people would not expect, or likely agree with. Shane doesn't care. He *wants*, and he lets himself have it.

Ilya makes a surprised but not upset noise, and lets one hand fall to his lower back, while the other stays in his hair. Shane closes his eyes and lets himself be held and doted on. He almost wants to cry again with how good it feels. His sore muscles welcome the gentle touch, and his Omega feels soothed by the presence of the Alpha it had been wanting.

He must fall asleep, because when he becomes aware again, he's being carried to bed. He wants to ask Ilya to stay, but he's so tired and his mouth isn't forming the words. The blankets get tucked up against his shoulders, and a gentle kiss pressed into his hair, and then he's drifted off again.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

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

Shane wakes in the morning, immediately recalling last night's events. He makes a sad noise at the realization that he's in bed alone. The way he wants to be near Ilya all the time is something that his logical brain is still trying to figure out, but his Omega brain thinks makes perfect sense.

At his noise, suddenly a head pops up over the side of the bed.

Ilya slept on the floor beside his bed.

Shane smiles at him. "What are you doing?"

"I keep you safe."

Shane peers down and sees some pillows and blankets there. "You could've slept in the bed."

Ilya shakes his head. "You were asleep. Not right for me to assume."

Even though Shane would've loved waking up in his arms, he loves how sweet Ilya is even more. "I'll make us breakfast." He says with a yawn.

"Is more like lunch." Ilya says, pointing at the bedside clock.

Wow, Shane never sleeps in this late. They head to the kitchen with sleep-mussed hair and creases from the pillowcases still on their cheeks.

Shane decides to break his news while he's cooking. "Ilya...I have to leave at the end of the week. I'm a professional hockey player, we're in the middle of our season."

"Where do you play?" Ilya asks after a moment.

"Montreal. But we travel a lot, you know?"

Ilya nods. "I have just found you." He says sadly.

Shane feels his heart stutter. "I know." He says softly. "You could stay here. You'll be safe. I can come back and see you whenever I'm able."

Ilya still looks unbearably sad, and Shane's Omega hates it. *Make Alpha happy*, it demands. *Please Alpha*.

"Ilya, are those...are people going to be looking for you?" The thought dawns on him, that the bad men might be looking for Ilya since he escaped.

"I do not know." Ilya admits. "They probably assume I die outside."

Shane doesn't know what to do. He could ask Ilya to come with him, but to what end? So he can sit in a hotel room most of the time, while Shane is out on the ice or at practice? Shuffling from city to city? Both of them showering multiple times a day with scent neutralizing soap?

This is complicated. Shane's gut churns.

"I used to play hockey. Back in Russia." Ilya says suddenly.

“Really?” Shane asks.

“Da. I like it.”

Shane smiles. “Hockey is my life.” That’s kind of an understatement. Hockey is really the only thing he has. Well, he has two great parents too, but he doesn’t really have friends, or a life outside of hockey.

The subject of what will happen at the end of the week gets dropped for a while. They eat brunch together, and have just finished cleaning up when there’s a knock at the door.

Ilya starts growling immediately, standing in front of Shane protectively.

“I’m okay, let me see who it is, okay?” Ilya reluctantly trails behind Shane to the front door. Shane peeks through the unfrosted part of the glass and sees that it’s the groundskeeper. “Hey, it’s just the groundskeeper who takes care of the property during the winter, I’m going to answer it.” Shane tells Ilya.

Ilya stands just behind the door as Shane opens it, close by but hidden from view. “Hey, how are you?”

“Oh, hi Shane. I wasn’t expecting you to be here but I saw lights on, I was a little worried.”

“Yep just me. Thanks for checking, though.” He can probably smell the scent of an Alpha wafting out, but he’s kind enough not to mention it.

“No problem. Have a good night.”

“You too.” Shane closes the door. “Maybe I should tell him about the Alpha who broke into my garage.”

Ilya balks at him. “Mr. Funnyman. You have jokes?”

Shane laughs at the look on his face, secretly proud. “Yes I do.”

~

“You are kind of boring.” Ilya says later, apropos of nothing.

Shane looks up from his book and this time, it’s his turn to balk. “Oh I’m sorry, should I throw a circus instead?” He throws his bookmark at Ilya.

Ilya sticks his tongue out at him.

“What did you do for fun...before?”

“Ah, back in Russia, I drink, I smoke, I go to party. I fuck.”

Shane’s mouth drops open at his casual admission.

“What?”

“Nothing, nothing.”

“Don’t tell me you...” Ilya wiggles his eyebrows suggestively. Geez. Where is the shy Alpha from a few days ago?

Shane's ears turn red at the implication that he's a virgin. "I've had sex." He insists. "Plenty of it." Okay, that's an exaggeration. He needs to shut up now. "Like, a really good amount of it, I would say." He's rambling. Please, someone send a strike of lightning down from the sky to shut him up. "So much sex."

Ilya is biting his lip, but then an honest to god giggle escapes, and he bursts out laughing, and despite himself, so does Shane.

"Come on." He whines. "But seriously, I'm really not a virgin." He's had sex exactly twice, with Beta women, and it was...fine.

"With those glasses, I believe it. So beautiful. Just put on glasses and get so many Alpha at your door." Ilya says, gesturing to Shane's reading glasses.

Shane flushes again and looks away. "That's not..." He huffs and fidgets.

"Hm?"

"Alpha's don't...like me, like that."

"I like you like that, and I am Alpha." Ilya says like it's obvious. And okay- Shane was pretty sure Ilya liked him, as a person. Was thankful to him for saving his life, and felt connected to him. Had called him pretty a few times. But did he really find him attractive like that?

He squirms.

"You don't believe me?" Shane shrugs, still avoiding his eyes. Ilya's big hand comes to rest on the side of his neck, fingers grazing his jaw. He gently turns Shane's face to look at him. "Can I kiss you?" Ilya asks, eyes searching Shane's.

“Yes.” Shane whispers, not fully trusting his voice at the moment. Ilya leans in to kiss him tenderly. It’s not a means to an end, it’s a promise.

~

The rest of the week passes in a domestic haze. Eating their meals together, watching hockey together on the couch, Shane diligently cleaning Ilya’s wounds daily. He feels bad about the four days he was away, even if Ilya assures him that he took care of them just fine on his own. Shane should’ve been here, taking care of his Alpha.

That might be a problem, the way his brain keeps thinking of Ilya as *his*. But Shane is being selfish and indulgent right now, and he will deal with the repercussions later.

A lot of Ilya’s wounds were old and mostly healed. Shane was the most worried about his nutrition and his mental health. Ilya was beautiful and well-built, but it was obvious that they had not fed the Alphas well.

“We were meaner when we were hungry.” Ilya had said, far too casually.

Ilya hadn’t minded when Shane asked him a lot of considerably probing questions.

“How did you trust me so fast, after everything?”

“You are not Alpha.” Ilya had said simply. “All of my bad experiences come from Alpha.” Then, “Plus, you look like little kitten.”

Shane had blushed at that.

“Your family isn’t looking for you?” Shane had asked another time.

Ilya's face had closed off immediately. "No." He did not elaborate.

Eventually, Ilya starts asking him questions in return. "Why did you let strange Alpha into home?"

"You needed help." Shane shrugs.

"I could be dangerous." Ilya says thoughtfully. "Eat little kitten up." He smirks.

Shane grumbles under his breath. "Maybe *I'm* dangerous." He counters. "Maybe I lured you here."

"To make me eat bland chicken?"

Shane's mouth drops open but then they both dissolve into laughter.

~

It feels like Shane blinks and then it's the day he's set to leave. He's put it off long enough, his parents need to come collect him at any minute if they're going to make it back to Montreal in enough time for him to be ready for his game tomorrow.

Why does he feel like he's leaving a piece of him behind?

"Do you have everything you need?" Shane asks Ilya for perhaps the third time. He's shown him how to order groceries, and he has a cell phone coming in the mail so he can call Shane.

"Da." Ilya says, looking and smelling sad but trying to pretend like he's not.

“I’ll see you in a few weeks, okay? I think I can swing coming back for the weekend in three weeks.”

“I will be here.” Ilya confirms. “I wait here for you.”

“Feel free to use whatever you want. Even the practice rink out back, okay? Just order skates on my credit card.” Ilya ignores him in favor of pulling him into a hug. Shane doesn’t even care that his parents might smell Ilya’s scent. He thinks he would collapse into sobs without this last hug from the Alpha.

“будь осторожен”. *Be safe.*

Shane bites his lip to keep his emotions at bay and grabs his things. “It won’t even feel like a long time. You’ll be relaxing and enjoying yourself so much you won’t even know I’m gone.”

Ilya doesn’t respond to that.

“Goodbye, I’ll see you soon.” Shane walks out the door and into his parents' waiting car, and wills himself to ignore the ache in his chest that gets stronger with every mile.

Chapter End Notes

SO. The idea here is that this is the first part of this story, while also being a complete work on its own. If this story is well-received, I plan to do the following:

- 1.) Write a oneshot with Ilya's POV and more of his backstory
- 2.) Write a sequel about what happens after Shane leaves!

If you enjoyed this fic and/or are interested in the above, please let me know!

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