

i'll believe in anything

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76561196) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76561196>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	F/M , M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Hayden Pike/Jackie Pike , Troy Barrett/Harris Drover , Kip Grady/Scott Hunter
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Hayden Pike , Wyatt Hayes , Troy Barrett , Harris Drover , Jackie Pike , Svetlana Vetrova , Scott Hunter (Game Changers) , Zane Boodram , Kip Grady , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander , Dallas Kent
Additional Tags:	Pre-Relationship , Masturbation , Jealousy , obscene amounts of cuddling
Language:	English
Series:	Part 3 of The GCU Factor
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-02 Words: 11,994 Chapters: 3/3

i'll believe in anything

by [getalittleclosey](#).

Summary

“Shane. Towel?” Shane didn’t understand the question. Yes, a towel would be good. Many towels would be good. Preferably covering all of Ilya immediately.

~

the x factor live shows with lots more hollanov than actual singing

Notes

each week’s song is what they sing that week! taking suggestions in the comments for hollanov-coded songs from the 2000s to use for future weeks!

Chapter 1: Weeks 1-3

Chapter Notes

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

Week 1: I'm Yours by Jason Mraz

The time between Judges Houses and the live shows passed in the blink of an eye. Before he knew it, Shane was hauling luggage for up to ten weeks into a house overflowing with people hugging, chatting, and singing as they unpacked their belongings, all hopeful they would be one of the few that would be here the whole ten weeks. There were thirteen acts; boys, girls, groups, and over 25s, each more talented than the last and all eager for their chance at singing stardom.

Shane honestly didn't care much about the other acts beyond what their skill level was. All he cared about right now was seeing his boys. He followed an assistant into a room on the second floor of the house that was packed full with two bunk beds, one single bed, and what looked like the door to a small closet. It seemed like he'd be getting used to Wyatt's snoring real fast or he wouldn't be getting any sleep for the next ten weeks. He was just trying to figure out which bed to take and where to store his bags, when a warm weight fell onto his shoulders from behind. The scent of cigarettes came with it and Shane had half a mind to turn and scold Ilya, but he was too distracted by the feel of light brown curls pressed to his neck to bother.

"Good boy Shane first here. Ready to unpack? We will be here long time, da?" Ilya's immediate confidence that they'd be lasting far into the live shows had Shane grinning just as much as the arms around his shoulders did. He turned and grinned big at Ilya.

"Bad boy Ilya wasn't the last to get here? You've got a reputation to maintain! What are the people going to say!" Shane teased Ilya for actually being on time somewhere for once. In the short time Shane had known him, Ilya had consistently been late to his job at home, English practice phone calls with Shane, and band Skype calls.

"Had to see best friend. Come early for good boy Shane." Shane's face went warm and Ilya's eyes focused in on his cheeks, which only made him blush harder. He was sure his freckles were on fire. Before he could process that or think of a response, Hayden rushed in with a whirlwind of energy. He tossed his bags onto one bed and flopped onto a second.

“What’s up dudes! We are HERE, can you believe it?” Hayden’s shoes were still on while he was on the bed and Shane fought between wanting to shove his feet off or pull his friend into a hug. Wyatt and Troy shuffled in after Hayden and all five of the grinned stupidly at each other until Ilya pulled them all into a big group hug.

As happy as Shane was to be here and be back with his boys, he needed to figure out this bed situation because it was quickly becoming a problem how little space there was in this room and how much stuff they all had. He cleared his throat softly.

“So, umm, I was thinking we should decide who’s sleeping where?” He hesitantly asked the room, flicking his eyes around at each of them and trying very hard not to stare down the shoes and bags that were already everywhere.

“Man who cares! We can just crash wherever it’s no big deal,” Hayden responded. Troy shrugged in agreement with that, and Shane began his plan to quietly dissociate each time he had to sleep in a bed that someone else had used the night before, but Ilya caught a glimpse of his face.

“No. We choose now or Wyatt will snore on all of us. Plus I need top bunk all nights,” Ilya declared and suddenly everyone was nodding in agreement. Hayden got a top bunk with Troy in the bottom bunk, Wyatt took the solo bed, and Ilya was on top of Shane. Well, in the bunk on top of his, he meant. Shane mentally thanked Ilya for fixing this and keeping him from spiraling. Sharing space like this was going to be hard enough without his own safe space bed to retreat to when it all got too much. He still didn’t know how Ilya always seemed to know exactly what he needed.



That night after settling in, Shane tied a towel around his waist and went to take a shower, but made the devastating mistake of forgetting he was in a shared house and entered the bathroom without knocking. Shane froze in a panic when he realized the bathroom was occupied, but before he could stutter out an “I’m sorry” and close the door, Ilya was stepping out of the shower. Naked. Very, very naked. And wet. Did he mention naked? Shane meant to avert his eyes, but it’s like they were glued to the slow path a drop of water was making from Ilya’s collarbone, down to his chest, past his belly button, and-. Fuck. Shane had seen other

guys naked when changing for gym in school, but none had ever caught his attention more than a passing accidental glance and he didn't know why this was so different, but he couldn't draw his eyes away.

Ilya's foot squeaked on the wet floor and Shane's eyes flew up just in time to see Ilya's move slowly from somewhere around Shane's pecs up to his eyes. They stared at each other and breathed in the humid bathroom for what felt like full minutes before Shane could start to see goose flesh spread across Ilya's shoulders and he cleared his throat.

"Shane. Towel?" Shane didn't understand the question. Yes, a towel would be good. Many towels would be good. Preferably covering all of Ilya immediately.

"Hmm?" He responded, quite intelligently he thought, given the situation.

"Towel. Behind." The words made it through the haze in Shane's brain that time and he blinked twice and mentally shook himself. The towels were hanging behind him and Ilya couldn't reach them without Shane moving. Right. He shifted to the side and Ilya grabbed a towel and wrapped it around his waist and started to exit the bathroom. He looked back at Shane one last time and he could swear there was a slight smirk on Ilya's lips as he closed the door behind him.

Shane attempted to take a very clinical, normal shower, but he couldn't escape the thoughts of the water droplets running past the glimmer of Ilya's cross necklace, down his chest, the curl of the hair from his navel down to his dick, the pink of his nipples. Shane wanted to lick them. Fuck. He had thought it. Before it could be stopped, his dick, which had already been semi-alert since stepping into the bathroom and seeing what greeted it, began to harden against his will. Fuck.

Shane reached down slowly, knowing there was no other option at this point. He cycled through mental images of Jessica, a girl in class that everyone said was pretty and that he sort of dated, Rose Landry in a bikini for a photo shoot, Christine from work. But his brain kept coming right back to Ilya's dick right in front of him in the bathroom, hanging there like it was waiting for something. Shane's mouth watered. He muffled a moan in his arm as his hand moved faster. Ilya's constellation of moles across his back at the beach, Ilya's strong thighs in shorts, the weight of Ilya's arms around his shoulders. Fuck. He bit down on his forearm and came.

The water attempted to wash away his shame along with his come, but Shane knew he'd have to live with the fact that he'd finally made a best friend for the first time in his life and now he had gotten off thinking of him.



Week 2: My Moon My Man by Feist

So apparently they aren't talking about it. Which works great for Shane. He was prepared to wake up to an awkward Ilya who didn't want to be his best friend anymore. An Ilya who had seen the way Shane couldn't stop staring. An Ilya who somehow knew exactly what he'd done in the shower afterwards. But he had woken up to an Ilya who handed Shane a carton of eggs from the fridge and asked him to cook breakfast for the both. All week it had remained the same as it ever was and Shane had settled right back into Ilya's warm presence.

This was all great, because time in The X Factor house moved at a different pace than anywhere else. He blinked and the first week was done and they had made it through. Wyatt had convinced the whole house to watch a marathon of X Squad for "research purposes" and had bonded for life with Zane Boodram, one of the contestants in the boys category. Troy was always found chatting with the camera guys; Shane was pretty sure he must have wanted to go into camera work with the amount of interest he showed. And Hayden had found a girlfriend.

On day two, he came up to Shane exclaiming about some girl named Jackie, and by day five they were official and walking around the house holding hands and sitting on each others' laps. He'd even seen them do a video segment about "finding romance in the midst of competition". And Jackie seemed just as on board as Hayden clearly was. They were currently celebrating their "weekaversary" by eating pasta on a table separate from everyone else and staring into each others' eyes the whole time.

Ilya looked over at Shane and heavily rolled his eyes, "She will find better. Be ready for Hayden tears."

“C’mon man I know you love to tease Hayden but that girl clearly is just as obsessed with them. It’s cute,” Shane watched as they each grabbed one side of a noodle with their mouths and ate it like it was Lady and the Tramp. “Okay never mind it’s disgusting. There was nothing cute about that.” Ilya cackled and Shane bit back a smile. He loved making Ilya laugh.

“What Shane, you do not want to be dogs? We could do!” Ilya placed a noodle into his mouth and held out the other end towards Shane. Shane blushed. He was doing way too much of that this past week and a half. His blood must be so confused as to why it was called up to his cheeks so often. He knocked Ilya’s hand out of his face before Ilya convinced him to really do it and Shane would be forced to suffer having Ilya’s full lips that close to his own mouth.

“You know, you two are almost as sickening as those two are,” Scott Hunter commented.

“What- no- we’re not- what are you talking about man,” Shane stuttered. He’d honestly forgotten anyone else was even in the room.

“Nothing dude! Just saying, I mean, look at how you’re sitting.” Scott responded. Shane looked down at how Ilya was pressed up against him on the bench seating and frowned.

“Is easier to hear stupid Canadian accent when close. Is nothing Scott Hunter.” Ilya stared the man down and refused to shift his leg.

“I just meant you’re just as attached at the hip. Annoying teenage best friends.” Scott looked so confused at the fight he was suddenly involved in.

“Annoying teen?! So you are sad you are in over 40s category, yes?” Ilya leaned back and crossed his arms.

“Man, you know the category is over 25s and I’m only 27!”

“Keep pretend Scott Hunter.” Ilya went back to eating his food, having successfully moved the teasing from being about Shane and Ilya to being about Scott Hunter.



When they finished singing for the live show that week, they walked off stage to Jackie kissing Hayden, Wyatt and Troy letting out their anxious energy by doing jumping jacks, and Ilya being tackled by a girl. Wait. Ilya being tackled by a girl? Sure enough, some girl Shane had never seen had her legs wrapped around Ilya’s waist, was kissing him loudly on the cheek, and speaking quick, excited, Russian. She came down from Ilya’s arms but continued holding him around his waist as she held a conversation with him. Shane had never wished he knew Russian more. Maybe he should add it to his and Ilya’s English lessons.

He tried very hard not to glare at where this girl’s hands were now tapping a rhythm on his best friend’s biceps. Who was she and why didn’t Shane know who she was and *fuck* why didn’t he know Russian. Last week he and Ilya had a post-show break down of all the notes they hit the best and where they maybe messed up and what they could work on, and Shane was hoping for the same this week. This girl was throwing off the routine he had been building.

Ilya turned away from the girl and saw Shane and excitedly waved him over, apparently clueless to the emotions running rampant through Shane’s mind. “Shane! Meet Svetlana, she is friend I stay with in Canada. Father is Sergei Vetrova.” Shane was momentarily distracted from his...whatever...that he was feeling by that news.

“You’re friends with the daughter of one of the judges?!” He spoke in a hush.

“Yes, but I do not know her dad. She lives alone. I never met him until show.” Ilya explained.

“Couldn’t you still get in trouble? Or have people think he’s playing favorites?” Shane worried.

“We sing very good and no one think that. So sing good Shane, da?” Ilya’s confidence once again bit back any argument Shane could’ve had about the situation. So now he could shift

his focus to why this Svetlana still had her hand on Ilya's arm.

"Shane Hollander! So nice to meet you I have heard lots from Ilya about you!" Svetlana disconnected herself from Ilya's arm and reached out to hug Shane. Oh fuck, so she was nice. Well, fine, Shane could be nice too. Ilya was allowed to have other friends or girlfriends or whatever she was. There would still be room for Shane, he had to believe that. He wasn't used to having a best friend, so he definitely wasn't used to having to share one. He awkwardly hugged Svetlana back. He wasn't good at physical touch with people he just met, but figured she had Ilya's stamp of approval so she must be okay. Anyway, it's not like she would be around besides at live shows when friends and family were allowed to visit, right?



Week 3: Kiss Me Thru the Phone by Soulja Boy Tell 'Em

They've been filming video diaries each week that get posted on YouTube for the fans (FANS) to get to know them better. They tend to start with genuine real questions about the band, but already have a habit of devolving into chaos. It usually ends with some form of wrestling, laughing, or Hayden slapping Ilya for something he's said.

This week, they're sitting on a staircase, Troy at the top, Wyatt and Hayden on the stair below, and Ilya and Shane below that. Ilya's hand is a distracting presence on Shane's thigh as they set up the shot.

"Okay boys, this week our question is the hot topic on everyone's mind: girls!" said the young guy behind the camera. Shane thinks his name is Harry?

"Okay Harris, let us give girl fans what they want," Ilya said with a wink. Right, it's Harris; Shane totally knew that.

"It's fangirls, Ilya, not girl fans, I've told you this." Wyatt responded.

“What is difference?” Ilya turned his head to look at Wyatt.

“I’m not explaining this again, it’s just different, don’t worry about it.” Wyatt said.

“I’ll go over it later, Ilya, I know they sound the same,” Shane whispered to him.

“English stupid,” Ilya whispered back.

“Okay boys focus back in, let’s go! Your question is *what do you look for in a girl?* Remember to use the question in the answer!” Harris instructed and began filming.

Hayden didn’t even have to think about his answer, he just grinned and looked sappily into the camera, “I like girls who are fun, and beautiful, and hold my hand all the time. So I like Jackie. That’s my answer. Jackie.” God he was ridiculous, but Shane had to admire his dedication to his two week long relationship.

“I like girls who can keep up with my comic book knowledge. Like, we have to have shared interests, you know?” Wyatt answered.

“I like someone who is passionate about what they do and what they like,” Shane looked behind him and saw that Troy’s focus was focused slightly above the camera as he answered. Maybe he was picturing a girl back home and was lost in thought about her.

Fuck Shane should probably have an answer by now shouldn’t he? He looked to his right at Ilya’s encouraging smile and the words were spilling out before he could think about them, “I like a girl with a nice smile.” Before he could get stuck thinking about Ilya’s crooked front teeth, because it was the most recent smile he had seen, Ilya was taking his turn.

“I like girls who fight stupid Canadian wolf birds.” Shane cracked up.

“They’re just loons Ilya! There’s nothing to fight!” Ilya gave him an incredulous look.

“Do not make smaller thing than is! They howl like wolf. Must attack like wolf too!” Ilya exclaimed and waved his arms in the air, wide-eyed. Shane rolled his eyes and laughed some more at Ilya’s antics.

The video diary wrapped up soon after that and the boys parted ways to get ready for bed that night. When Shane was alone in his bunk, he thought back to Ilya’s answer. Was he talking about *him*? They had that whole phone conversation last month where Ilya kept him up through the night going on about loons. Shane could fight a loon, probably. They’re just birds. He smiled at the bunk above him. He would fight one if it made Ilya happy. Then he had a thought that immediately turned the smile he had into a contemplative frown.

Ilya was probably talking about Svetlana wasn’t he? That’s who he stayed with between auditions and the live shows. It was loons in her backyard. At her house she lived alone. Where she probably greeted Ilya with a hug and a cheek kiss every day. And made meals together, and watched tv on the same couch, and got to speak Russian all the time. She looked like she could fight a loon; there was something fierce and confident in her eyes when Shane met her.

Fuck, why would he even have let himself think for a moment that it could be about him.



Chapter End Notes

next chapter will be weeks 4-7. be prepared for even more jealous Shane!

Chapter 2: Weeks 4-6

Chapter Summary

“And I would be Ilya, so that hopefully I could learn all the Russian he knows and keep it when I go back to being Shane,” Shane nodded, pleased with his own answer.

“Boring answer. Want to be me to STUDY? Not because I am cool and funny and good looking?” Ilya rolled his eyes towards the ceiling. Shane elbowed him, but Troy interrupted before a full blown play fight could break out.

“Same as Shane, I’d definitely be Ilya for the day, but so that I could see what it’s like to be that handsome,” Troy winked over at Ilya. Shane’s face dropped into a frown.

Chapter Notes

enjoy weeks 4-6! rife with jealousy and cuddles.

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

Week 4: Disturbia by Rihanna

Every time Shane goes to find Ilya, he’s busy whispering with Troy. They’re a band, what secrets are they keeping from the rest of them? And even better question, what is Ilya sharing with Troy that he can’t share with *Shane*? It’s Halloween theme week for the show and yet this possibility that he’s losing two of his new friends to each other is the scariest thing he can think of.

Shane never knew he was a person that got attached easily, but this whole band thing is teaching him so many new things about himself. And he’s definitely never been possessive? Like, yes, he’s an only child and never really had to share growing up, but he never had a problem letting classmates borrow pens or paper as long as they returned them in good condition. But Shane doesn’t want Ilya returned in good condition, he wants Svetlana and Troy to never have borrowed him in the first place. Which all makes him feel insane, because objectively there’s nothing wrong with Svetlana or Troy; he likes them both. Troy is even his friend! He’s the only one from their band besides Shane that ever cooks anything, and he and Shane have enjoyed sharing recipes with each other.

Well, Shane would just have to remind Ilya why he's his best friend. He had a plan: dinner, English lessons, then he was asking to be taught basic Russian. Ilya deserved to have someone who he could speak to in his native tongue besides Svetlana who wasn't with him every day. Shane could be that person. He already knew English and French; how much harder could adding a third language be? And then he wouldn't have to feel so left out next time Svetlana visited.

He headed to the kitchen to get started on mashing potatoes and putting chicken in the oven. He had a plan to enact.

"Shane! What is menu tonight?" Ilya came bounding up to the stove and linked his arms around Shane's waist. Shane smiled into the potatoes and turned his head to look back at Ilya.

"Chicken with a side of mashed potatoes all topped with cheese!"

"Chef Shane Hollander; what a sweetheart," Ilya's use of this new pet name was making Shane blush. He hoped he could blame the hot stovetop.

"I make dinner almost every night, and when I don't, Troy does! This is nothing new," Shane defended himself.

"Da, but still have to thank you," Ilya smacked a loud kiss on his cheek and stepped back before pushing himself up to sit on the countertop. Shane was pretty sure his cheeks were permanently red. But it seemed like, so far, plan Remind Ilya That Shane Is the Favorite was going well.

"Okay let's practice English while everything cooks," Shane turned to face Ilya. Ilya was sitting with his legs slightly apart up on the counter and all Shane wanted in that moment was to fill the space between them and be as close to Ilya as he could get. He wanted to tip his head up and kiss Ilya's full lips, move his hands from golden brown curls down to the thick spread of his thighs. He maybe wanted to get down on his knees and get his mouth in between said thighs. He wanted- nothing. He wanted none of that because they were weird thoughts to be having about a boy. To be having about his *best friend*.

Shane shook himself out of it and hoped he hadn't been zoned out for too long. He spent the rest of the time dinner cooked going back and forth singing English song lyrics with Ilya. This week they were doing Halloween themed songs; Ghosbusters, This is Halloween, Monster, Haunted. Shane ran through anything spooky he knew, no matter how silly it was. They all helped Ilya practice words he hadn't heard before. They'd focus on their song for the live show when the whole band got together.

After a night of good food and staring at Ilya's mouth as it wrapped around English vowels, Shane was gearing up to ask for some Russian lessons.

"Ilya...you've been doing so much learning English; I really want to learn some Russian, so that it's fair,"

"Oh fair? Is that reason? So polite and perfect must learn Russian now? English and French not enough?" Ilya teased and poked Shane in his side.

"I just want to know the basics!" Shane said.

"Fine, say *ya vtoroy luchshiy pevets v gruppe*." Ilya spoke slowly.

"Ya vuh roy lunch she puh vets vee groupy-ah," Shane attempted to repeat. Ilya threw his head back laughing and Shane crinkled his brows.

"Whaaat? Was it that bad? What did I say!"

"You say *I am second best singer in the band*," Ilya continued laughing.

"You're such an asshole!" Shane pushed Ilya down onto his bunk, laughing as he did so. Ilya yanked Shane down with him and their laughter petered out as Shane rested his head on Ilya's chest. He fiddled with the chain around Ilya's neck.

“But for real, I want to learn some things. I don’t want you to have to be the only one pushed out of your comfort zone. You promise to teach me?” Shane was close to begging, unfortunately. Being able to feel Ilya’s heartbeat was not helping his self control.

“Da, yes, I will teach. Student become teacher,” Ilya ruffled the hair on his head. Shane wished his hand would stay there. Then he wished he wasn’t having those thoughts and that he could just enjoy being close to his friend without wanting more. He forced himself to just live in this moment, at least for tonight.



Week 5: Girlfriend by Avril Lavigne

Shane was going to burn Troy’s stupid chopsticks with his mind. How could Ilya go from making jokes about sharing spaghetti noodles with Shane, kissing him on the cheek, and cuddling with him in bed one moment, to eating off of Troy’s chopsticks the next? Shane was so confused and frustrated and *god* will Troy and Ilya stop fucking *giggling*?

“I no more have to lift hand. Troy will feed me always!” Ilya cheered. Like hell if Shane would let that happen. He glared harder.

“Bro, you have got to chill out,” Wyatt whispered to him.

Shane flicked his eyes away from the god forsaken chopsticks and over to Wyatt on his right, “Huh? What are you talking about?”

“Dude you look like you want to straight up murder Troy. And we need his high notes to make it through another week, so you can’t do that.”

“What? No, I just zoned out man,” Shane brushed him off.

“It’s okay, Shane, everyone knows you’ve got a whole obsession thing with Ilya,” Wyatt continued whispering.

“I don’t have an obsession thing with Ilya!” Shane whisper-shouted back, slightly panicked, “Do people think I have an obsession with Ilya?”

“I mean, you two are never more than an inch away from each other and you both lose your heads a little if someone takes up too much of the others’ time,” Shane looked down to where Ilya’s foot was pressed against his own under the table. Wyatt may have a point.

“It’s just fun having a best friend for the first time; it’s no big deal,” Shane continued to defend himself.

Wyatt rolled his eyes but conceded, “Whatever you say man.”

“Hey what is secret telling happening?” Ilya nudged Shane’s shoulder and glanced suspiciously over at Wyatt. Wyatt raised his eyebrows at Shane as if to say “*See? Can never let anyone else take away from Ilya’s Shane time.*”

“Nothing, dude, just talking about how sick our song this week is going to be,” Ilya grinned at Wyatt’s response and reached across Shane to high five him. After they slapped hands, Ilya’s hand settled on Shane’s thigh and stayed there the rest of the meal. He guessed Troy could feed Ilya, as long as Shane’s leg was the one Ilya was absentmindedly drawing patterns on.



“I’m in love with her, bud,” Hayden was whining in Shane’s ear, “She’s so beautiful and perfect and I don’t know what I did to get a girl this cool to like me.”

“I don’t know either dude, who would want to be around your mess?” Shane responded.

“Yeah, Jackie do way better. Should dump you,” Ilya put in not-so-helpfully.

“She’s too pretty for you man; better lock that down,” Troy added.

“You all SUCK. Wyatt is the only band member I still want in The Centaurs,” Hayden threw his hands up in annoyance as the rest of them laughed. “Fuck all of you, let’s just do this video diary.”

After a small scuffle about who was sitting where, they assembled on the staircase to find out what question Harris had for them today.

“Alright Centaurs, if you could be another member of the band for a day, who would you want to be and why?” Harris asked behind the camera.

“Well I’d want to be Wyatt, because the rest of these guys are assholes,” Hayden said.

“Hayden, bud, we gotta do that without the swearing. Go again,” Harris sighed, “In three, two, one,” he pointed at Hayden to tell him to say it again.

“I’d want to be Wyatt, because he’s the nicest in the band and I’d love to know as much about music as he does.” Harris gave him a thumbs up.

“I think I’d want to be Troy because anything he cooks turns out amazing,” Wyatt went next.

“Hey! You say bad about my boy Shane’s cooking?” Ilya glared over at Wyatt.

“I’m just saying, Troy adds in the best spices!”

“Well Shane cooks with most love,” Shane was going to die of over-blushing. “I would be Shane, because I want to know what is like to have freckles,” Ilya said in a goofy voice paired with an eyebrow raise at the camera, then reached over and brushed his thumb along the top of Shane’s warm cheek.

“And I would be Ilya, so that hopefully I could learn all the Russian he knows and keep it when I go back to being Shane,” Shane nodded, pleased with his own answer.

“Boring answer. Want to be me to STUDY? Not because I am cool and funny and good looking?” Ilya rolled his eyes towards the ceiling. Shane elbowed him, but Troy interrupted before a full blown play fight could break out.

“Same as Shane, I’d definitely be Ilya for the day, but so that I could see what it’s like to be that handsome,” Troy winked over at Ilya. Shane’s face dropped into a frown.

“You already are handsome, you do not need be me for that,” Ilya responded, “right Harris?” he directed his question at the man behind the camera. Shane was getting sick of this whole Ilya and Troy thing. It was bad enough that the fan girls that camped outside the house brought signs talking about how hot Ilya was, he didn’t need Troy going on about it too. Like, yes, Ilya was objectively a good-looking guy, but couldn’t they all just shut up about it?

In the midst of his spiraling, he didn’t hear Harris stuttering out an agreeing response to Ilya’s question about Troy.



Week 6: Behind These Hazel Eyes by Kelly Clarkson

“Shaneeeeeee why you so grumble kitten with me?” Ilya sighed as he plopped down into Shane’s bunk, where they were spending more time than not at this point.

“Grumble kitten?”

“Da, yes. Like angry cat, but cute.”

“I am not a grumpy kitten!” Shane crossed his arms over his chest and stared at the bunk above them with a crease between his eyes.

“Grumpy kitten! Yes that is the face! You do when sad at me.” Shane valiantly attempted to relax his face into something not resembling an upset cat.

“I’m not upset with you for anything, what are you talking about Ilya?” Shane was even more confused now.

“Is like. When I talk to Troy you make face.” Oh god Wyatt was right, he did need to chill the fuck out. This was so bad, Ilya was definitely going to find out he had these horrible possessive feelings about their friendship. He tried to think of the best way to go about this that would not end in Ilya being grossed out and ditching him as a friend and the Centaurs finding out and kicking him out of the band entirely.

“I dunno? Sometimes there’s just so much going on in the big rooms that I phase out for a minute and I guess I make weird faces,” Shane thought that sounded realistic.

“No, no. Is when with Troy. Or with Svetlana. And one time with guy Kip who left two weeks ago. You get this lines right here,” Ilya dragged his thumb across the spot between Shane’s eyebrows back and forth until they entirely relaxed. “See? Then no more grumble kitten! So tell me how make it never happen.” Ilya left the humor behind and looked seriously at Shane, tucking a strand of hair behind his ear and urging him to be honest with his lethal hazel eyes.

“Fine okay okay. Fuck,” Shane sighed and covered his face with his hands, “I like being your best friend and I get worried that you’re going to replace me with someone cooler like Troy or Svetlana. Even Kip,” Shane half mumbled it all into his own hands.

“Shaneeee, sweetheart, could never replace my personal chef and full time English professor!” Ilya’s voice switched from playful to something more heartfelt, “You are best friend Shane. No one else. Svetlana is friend I stay with, but she is only visit to secretly make out with Rose Landry. Troy is friend because I know his secret and I tease him about it.” He looked deeply into Shane’s eyes as he said all this, and in a moment of pure embarrassment about how badly he’d misread the interactions he’d been caught glaring at, Shane’s eyes began to water. “Shane you are friend because we same. Like magnets pull together,” Shane shoved Ilya’s head down onto his own chest at that to stop him from being able to see the now fully formed tears fall.

“Ilya you can’t just say stuff like that holy shit,” Shane ran his fingers through Ilya’s curls. “I’m sorry I thought you would ditch me for them. I guess I’m just not used to being anyone’s favorite, so now I don’t want to lose it. You’re so important to me Ilya. I’ve never had a friend like this before.”

“Me neither Mr. Grumble Kitten Shane, is special to me too.” And at that, it seemed like the worst of the serious talk was done. Shane felt a bit like he was waiting for the part where he gets called a loser or a freak or worse, but it never comes, not from Ilya.

They spend the rest of the evening going back and forth between English and Russian, Ilya keeping his head on Shane’s chest because “I hear better when head on chest” and who was Shane to argue with that logic. It meant plenty of time for Shane’s fingers to make a home in Ilya’s hair. He tugged absentmindedly at one that was tangled and heard a moan come from Ilya’s mouth.

“Oh my god are you okay? I didn’t mean to pull so hard, I was just trying to get the tangle out!” Shane panicked.

“No, no, was, ummm, was good.”

“What do you mean it was good! I yanked your hair!”

“Yes, well I like. I like too much,” and oh. Ohhhhhh. So Ilya was into things a little rough when he- oh Shane needed to stop this train of thought right the fuck now. Ilya was still on

his *chest*. He could think about the implications later, in private. If private existed in The X Factor house.

Instead of focusing in on this revelation, he decided to circle back to Troy's secret, which he'd been on and off trying to get out of Ilya the whole night, "Tell me. Tell me what it isssss. Telllll meeeee!!!" Shane whined as he begged. He hated being left out and wanted to know whatever it was that Ilya was being tight lipped on.

"Fineee I tell you but only because you are best friend. You tell no one else, da?" Ilya looked very serious for a moment, until Shane nodded a yes to him, then he split into the smile of a high school girl about to share some juicy gossip. "Troy is totally in love with Harris and Harris is too but Troy do not believe me. I know these things! He must believe me!" Shane's head spun. Troy was gay? And he liked the guy who filmed their video segments?

But the most important thing that clicked into his mind from this outpouring of information was the Troy was not trying to date Ilya. That role was still open. Not that Shane was taking it, it's just...nice that it's open...one less person to share with. Yeah.

"So how do we get them together then?" Shane was immediately on board. Sweet, quiet, goofy Troy deserved someone just as sweet, caring, and passionate about life. They could make this work. Every famous boyband secretly or not so secretly had a gay member right? That could totally be Troy! He's hot enough and Harris is a ball of sunshine; who would be able to say anything bad about that!

"Ah a man who give me exactly what I want," Ilya stared deep into Shane's eyes, his lips parted, and he gulped. He was tempted to do something really stupid until Ilya completed his thought, "A secret plan make together! My dream!"

"Yes, ha," Shane shook himself out of it, "A plan to get Troy and Harris together born from wanting more cuteness in the world!" They spent the next several minutes coming up with plans that mostly involved locking them in rooms or closets together and hoping for the best. They'd have to continue workshopping.

Another thought came to Shane, "Wait! Did you say Svetlana and Rose are dating?" he asked.

“Da. Yes, but very hush hush. Only me, and now you, know. Sometimes Sveta sits on my lap or kiss cheek to make confuse anyone who might think about her and Rose together.” Shane was finding out so many people he knew today were gay and it was sending his mind on an adventure through interactions he’d had and what he’d missed. But the better news was that he not only didn’t have to share with Troy, the sharing with Svetlana was all *fake*.

It was all this that inspired Shane’s next words, “Ilya, you and me should get a house together when this is done. I could cook every day, and we could sing together, and have the rest of The Centaurs over for game nights. We could get some place in the city, close to the studios so we don’t have to travel far. And there will be no terrifying loons in the city,” Shane punctuated his pitch with a soft loon sound blown in Ilya’s hair that was still curling all over his chest.

Ilya flinched at the noise, then laughed, “I do not know Shane. I may have to go back to Russia when this ends. Visa expire if no work,” Shane was sure his face looked ridiculously downtrodden, and Ilya sighed when he propped his chin on Shane’s chest to be able to see him, “Would love to, if possible. So maybe.”

Shane kind of wanted to cry; he hadn’t even considered the possibility that Ilya would have to go back to Russia if they didn’t get signed. But he’d take that maybe and hold it close. And in the meantime, he’d show Ilya how good living with him would be. He started by softly humming songs in Ilya’s ear and rubbing the top of his back until he fell asleep. Shane should probably wake him up and have him go up to his own bunk, but after all the emotions of the last hour of talking, he wanted Ilya as close as possible. So, instead, he slipped off to sleep under the heavy weight of the bigger man on top of him.



Chapter End Notes

leave some suggestions for what 2000s songs they should sing for weeks 7-10!

Chapter 3: Weeks 7-10

Chapter Summary

He focused hard on reading aloud without his voice cracking whenever Ilya shifted. It was a harder task than one would think. One of his hands drifted, without permission, into Ilya's curls. Yesss. He carded his fingers slowly through them and very consciously did not let them get stuck in a tangle, even though a part of him really wanted to pull, just to see if it had the same reaction as last time.

"Oh come on, this is just getting ridiculous," Hayden's voice broke the peace, "Can you not hear from your own bunk, Ilya?"

"Understand English better when feel the words," Ilya grumbled. Hayden looked incredulously at both of them, like he had never heard such a level of bullshit in his life.

Chapter Notes

songs at the beginning of the week are what they're singing for the live show!!

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

Week 7: Bad Day by Daniel Powter

The cuddling was becoming a thing. Shane had laid down in his bed to read A History of Pop Music and Ilya had immediately interrupted by flopping down directly on top of Shane. He perched his chin on Shane's chest and looked up at him with wide hazel eyes, "Shaneeeee I am bored. Read to me."

"You're going to call what I'm reading boring," Shane said.

"Yes, probably. Is fine, will maybe fall asleep then. Or will learn more English by listening," Ilya responded and wiggled around until he was situated exactly as he pleased; head on Shane's chest, one arm tucked under him, and a hand fiddling with the hem of Shane's t-shirt. Shane might die, actually.

He focused hard on reading aloud without his voice cracking whenever Ilya shifted. It was a harder task than one would think. One of his hands drifted, without permission, into Ilya's curls. Yesss. He carded his fingers slowly through them and very consciously did not let them get stuck in a tangle, even though a part of him really wanted to pull, just to see if it had the same reaction as last time.

"Oh come on, this is just getting ridiculous," Hayden's voice broke the peace, "Can you not hear from your own bunk, Ilya?"

"Understand English better when feel the words," Ilya grumbled. Hayden looked incredulously at both of them, like he had never heard such a level of bullshit in his life.

"Whatever man, I still think online English lessons would work better," Shane shrugged in response to that, "Anyway, came to ask if you guys want to play Just Dance with us."

"I'm good, man, thank you for asking though," Shane replied. Ilya hummed in agreement and closed his eyes again. Hayden rolled his eyes and left.

Shane picked up the book again and continued reading until Ilya's breathing evened out and he fell asleep. In the silence, Shane got lost thinking about what he would do if they went home this week. He was getting far too used to this. Shane wasn't sure he could go back to falling asleep without the sound of Ilya's breathing or the feel of his curls against his chest. He had to find a way for Ilya to stay in Canada, to stay with him, to live with him. But for now, he was just going to enjoy the moment where he had Ilya warm in his bed. He closed the book and curled his arms around Ilya's back, and minutes later he had fallen asleep.



"Guys what am I going to dooooo? I should just leave with her. That's romantic right?" Hayden slurred. Jackie had gone home that night, so The Centaurs were drinking in solidarity with Hayden.

“Dude you can’t leave, we need you here!” Wyatt protested.

“It’s only three more weeks til the competition’s over anyway,” Troy added.

“Yeah what would I do without my best bro?” Shane uncoordinatedly slapped his hand on Hayden’s shoulder.

“Excuse! I am best friend!” Ilya over-dramatically put his hand to his chest and gasped at the idea of Shane calling anyone else his best friend.

“Oh? You and Hayden are best friends now?” Shane raised his eyebrows at Ilya and smirked.

“No- I mean- fuck off Hollander,” Ilya scowled, then flopped himself down onto Shane’s lap, “Play with my hair to make up to me,” he demanded. Shane rolled his eyes but complied. There’s no world in which he’d turn down feeling Ilya’s curls through his fingers.

“I’m gonna- I’m gonna propose. I have to marry her. I can’t lose her,” Hayden said.

“Okay dude, why don’t you go sleep on it and we’ll talk about it in the morning,” Shane tried to be reasonable, as the least drunk band member.

“I just love her so much,” Hayden expressed as he stumbled his way from the floor of their room and into his bed and promptly passed out.

Soon after, Troy left to go shower and Wyatt navigated his way downstairs to grab a snack, leaving Ilya and Shane alone. Ilya’s head was still in Shane’s lap and his lowered inhibitions from the drinking compelled him to move his fingers from their home in Ilya’s hair, lightly down the side of his neck. Ilya shivered, but stretched his neck out to give Shane more room to work with. He drew his nails in swirls from Ilya’s neck to his bicep and back up again, over and over. Something about the drinks and the pattern drawing was lulling Shane into a hazy state of mind.

“Ilya, we’ll still be best friends even if we don’t win, right? Or if we don’t stay in the band?” Shane worried.

“Best friend always Shane, no worry,” Ilya focused on his eyes and turned serious, “Even if I go back to Russia.”

“We’re going to get signed, even if we don’t win. Top five always get signed. All we have to do is make it through next week, which I think we can do,” Shane had researched and there was no way he was letting Ilya leave Canada. Leave *him*.

“Easy! We just need beat asshole Dallas Kent,” Ilya nodded like it was already a done deal, “then I stay in boring Canada with boring Shane.”

“Don’t act like it’s not exactly what you want,” Shane was brave enough with the alcohol in his system to call out Ilya’s posturing.

“Ugh fine you catch me! I want boring Shane,” Ilya said and turned his face into Shane’s lap, biting his thigh. Shane probably should have slapped him away, or yelled in protest, but instead, he had the horrifying realization that he was getting hard. Hours of Ilya all over him and him all over Ilya, the sweet words, and now Ilya’s mouth on his thigh? There was no way he could keep his body from responding to the boy he couldn’t stop thinking about being that close to his dick.

Shane faked a triumphant smile and shoved Ilya off his lap as he pretended to accept an invisible trophy, resulting in a myriad of protests that he ignored.

“I’d like to thank my mom, for raising me to be so polite, and my dad for passing down all his boring hobbies, without which I may never have been boring and polite enough for Ilya Rozanov to want as a best friend,” Ilya laughed at Shane’s antics and finally got up from the floor. He stretched his arms above his head and Shane’s eyes caught on the sliver of skin between his shirt and his boxers.

“Bed time for me. Next week become Canadian,” Ilya yawned and headed for the bathroom, walking in despite Troy’s protests that he was showering.

Shane shook his head and grinned, resolving to make sure they got through week eight so they would make the top five and get signed. He wondered when his priorities shifted from being about winning, to being about keeping Ilya as close as possible.



Week 8: Gives You Hell by The All-American Rejects

They stepped off stage that week, having made it through again, somehow. All the fangirls, or “girl fans” as Ilya still called them, came through for The Centuars again. Before they could celebrate, Dallas Kent, who got knocked out, came stalking towards them.

“You assholes are cheats! Everyone knows you bunch of faggots only got through because Rozanov is sleeping with Vetrov’s slut of a daughter! It should be you leaving not me!” Dallas was practically spitting with anger. Shane took a step back and held his hands over Troy and Hayden’s chests. He was about to suggest they all just get the fuck out of there before it got worse, but it seemed Ilya had other plans.

Ilya stepped forward, showing his off his size for once. His crossed arms displayed bulging muscles and the fierce frown on his face was nothing to be messed with. The imposing presence of Wyatt behind him added to the picture.

“Ilya, just leave it alone, he’s not worth it,” Shane pleaded.

“No. He say we can not win from talent. We can and we do!” Ilya snarled in Dallas’ direction. Shane had never seen this look on Ilya and he was feeling a weird mix of scared and aroused. Strong men defending him apparently did something for him. He couldn’t be blamed. “Svetlana is good friend and you call her nasty names. Fuck off, Kent, you need to go before I make you.”

Dallas rolled his eyes and took another step towards Ilya. Before he could open his mouth to spew more hateful bullshit, Svetlana appeared from the friends and family waiting area.

“I will say this one time, and never again should I have to; The Centaurs have gotten where they are in this competition due to skill alone. I have no relationship with my father and have not spoken to him in a decade. He would sooner vote The Centaurs out than deign to help me,” Svetlana spoke harsh and quick, “As for fucking their way to the top- I have a girlfriend and unlike some people,” she pointedly looked at Dallas, “I respect my partner and would never sleep around.”

Silence filled the backstage area as they processed this dump of information. Dallas Kent didn't seem to have a response at the ready and didn't pull a comeback out of that empty head of his before multiple assistants came over and pulled them all off to different interviews.

Shane couldn't believe he had ever wished terrible things on Svetlana. She was maybe the coolest girl he had ever known and they were lucky to have her in their corner.



Ilya's hand was down his pants. Shane had been trying hard to watch the Mario Party game that Ilya, Troy, and Hayden were playing, but in his peripheral vision he could still see Ilya's sweats pushed down low on his hips with his hand stuck right in there. Shane couldn't tell if he was wearing boxers under, but he had the horrible feeling that he was not.

He was mesmerized by the subtle shifts of his hand. He maybe wanted to see what it looked like just a few inches to the right. He maybe wanted to put his own hand there. He definitely wanted Ilya to take his hand out of his pants. And put his fingers in Shane's *mouth*. Fuck he wanted him.

And you know what? He was going to admit it. He *wanted* it. He wanted *him*. It didn't matter any more that he was a guy, Shane could admit to himself that he wanted Ilya despite him being a guy. Maybe even because he was a guy. He just felt like there would be something different, something better than his fumbles with girls, if there was another dick involved. If there was a firm chest and hair leading down from his navel and a hard crotch to bury his face in.

The second Shane let himself think about it, it was like the floodgates had opened. Everything he'd been trying to pretend he wasn't thinking about Ilya was out there and rushing through his head at hyper-speed. Shane licking up Ilya's chest, pulling his necklace into his mouth, sucking hard over his nipples, working his way down until he was exactly where he wanted to be. Shane on his knees, waiting for Ilya to give him what he'd been begging for.

Because there was no way Shane wouldn't be begging. He thought Ilya would probably like that, would like knowing how riled up he got Shane. He liked winning, and Shane sucking down his dick would probably feel like the ultimate prize for Ilya. But Shane knew he'd be the real winner. Finally feeling the weight on his tongue, smelling the natural musk of Ilya, nosing his way into the curls he'd seen down there once before.

Shane abruptly got up from his spot on the couch and headed straight into the bathroom. He slammed the door behind him and sat down on the cold tile ground, pressing his head into his knees. *Fuck* this was so bad. How was he supposed to continue being Ilya's friend, continue cuddling with him in bed and letting him kiss Shane on the cheek? All when Shane was having these inconvenient thoughts. Ilya didn't sign up for this when he became Shane's best friend. He didn't deserve to have Shane mentally objectifying him.

A soft knock came on the door. For a moment, Shane was terrified that it would be Ilya. Then he remembered that if it was Ilya, the closed door would've been disregarded and Ilya would already be inside the bathroom with him. Shane slowly opened the door and found Wyatt on the other side. He ushered him in, then collapsed back onto the floor. The coolness of it was helping him be able to breathe again. Wyatt gently took a seat next to him.

"Hey man, what's going on? You really rushed out of there. I think everyone else was focused on the game, but you worried me," Wyatt said.

Shane looked over at him with tears pooling in his eyes, and whispered words he barely dared to admit to himself, "I like him. Like I really like him, Wyatt."

"Oh bud, I know you do. I know," he put his arm around Shane's shoulder and pulled him close, "but that doesn't have to be a bad thing! Why the tears?"

“He’s my best friend! I can’t ruin that by wanting more than he does,” Shane said.

“And what makes you think he doesn’t want the same thing,” Wyatt looked genuinely confused, “He looks at you the same way you look at him. I really think you two will be fine.”

“Even if, in some crazy world, he *did* like me back, we’d be two guys in a boyband dating each other. The fangirls would all leave us and we’d be so hated,” Shane let out his deepest worries in the safety of the bathroom.

“Let’s think about that later. Go one step at a time; step one, get out of this bathroom. Step two, find out if Ilya feels the same. Step three, convince the fangirls that this is actually cuter than if they got to date one of you,” Wyatt laughed a little at the last one and Shane couldn’t help but let out a small huff of a laugh as well. He had a good friend by his side through whatever this was. There was maybe hope out there yet.



Week 9: Sweet Talker by Carly Rae Jepsen

“So what role do each of you play in the band?” Harris asks behind the camera.

“Well I’d say Wyatt’s definitely the smart one. He knows all the X Factor stats AND comic book storylines. Best of both worlds!” Troy said.

“Aww thanks man, maybe I should get some glasses to complete the image,” Wyatt clapped Troy on the shoulder. Troy looked a little too intrigued by this idea, and behind the camera Harris cleared his throat to move them along to the next member.

“I think Hayden is funny one. Not on purpose, just because he does dumb thing and we all laugh,” Ilya smirked. Hayden shoved him and exclaimed a drawn out, “heyyyyy” right before

his foot slipped off the stair below him and he almost fell over. They all laughed, proving Ilya's point immediately.

"Shane is definitely the pretty one. The freckles? Beautiful, get all the girls," Ilya switched his voice from goofy to sincere as he looked at Shane and brushed his thumb along the freckles on Shane's cheek. Shane blushed and tried to move away, but was caught in the orbit of Ilya's gaze.

"Nah, Ilya is the one who gets all the girls. It's the curls, man!" Hayden interrupted the moment, "Shane never knows what to do when a girl compliments him." Shane glared at Hayden. He wasn't sure if he was more upset by the insinuation that Ilya was getting the girls, or that Shane was an embarrassment.

"Yeah, but Ilya can't be the pretty one, he's got to be the leader. He's the only one that gets us all to do anything. He's like our dad," Wyatt said. He wasn't wrong. They all nodded and even Hayden conceded.

"Well if Ilya's the dad, Shane's definitely the mom. Dude does all the cooking and cleaning," Hayden said.

"That's not fair I do the cooking sometimes too!!" Troy defended.

"What, so you want to be the mom, Troy?" Wyatt asked.

"Nah Troy's busy being the quiet, mysterious one. You never know what he's thinking about," Shane said. Ilya and Harris both snorted at that, and Shane looked at them, confused. He sure didn't know what was going on in Troy's head until Ilya told him, "Also hey! Calling me the mom just because I like cooking is so misogynistic."

"I do not know word," Ilya directed at Shane, "miss-ah-jan-iz."

"It's like saying certain things are only for women to do," Shane explained.

“Being mom because cooking good is not bad thing,” Ilya insisted, “I could cook too. Shane just cooks so nice for us. Is hard for dad to say no to lovely wife.” Shane turned beet red at the idea of being Ilya’s band-husband.

Harris made a wrap-up signal by twirling his finger in the air.

“Before we go I say something,” Ilya turned very serious, “In old diary I say I like girls who fight loons. I now have been given many, many loons by girl fans. I also like sports cars, so maybe send me many, many sports cars now,” Ilya broke out of his serious frown and winked at the camera. Shane was very glad to not be on the receiving end of the wink, because even the side view was debilitating.



“I am making lunch,” Ilya stated to Shane.

“Okayyyyyy, are you sure about that?” Shane responded.

“Yes! I show you I can be good husband and not miss OJ,” Ilya said. He needed to cut out the husband and wife thing for Shane’s health. Or maybe, possibly, never stop doing it. Shane could be a good wife for him if that’s what Ilya wanted.

“Misogynist. And alright, fine, let’s see what you’ve got,” Shane doubted this could go well.

“No, you must take cold ginger ale and sit on couch while I slave over stove,” Ilya grabbed a can out of the fridge and handed it to Shane, “Will call when ready.”

Shane raised his hands in surrender and went to join Wyatt who was watching Troy attempt to throw popcorn into Hayden’s mouth. There was much more popcorn on the couch than anywhere else. Shane sighed, knowing he’d be the one cleaning up.

Twenty minutes later, Ilya walked into the living room to hand Shane a plate with chips and a tuna melt on it. He was shocked Ilya had made something that involved more than a microwave and he raised his eyebrows in response. "This looks amazing Ilya! You did real cooking; used the stove and everything," Shane could swear he saw a hint of blush on Ilya's cheeks.

"Yes, am very good husband. Now eat and tell me is good," Ilya's confidence extended into all aspects of life, apparently. Shane took a bite of his tuna melt as Ilya watched intently. He nodded and gave a thumbs up as he chewed, which seemed to appease Ilya, who then began his own meal.

"What so we're just chopped liver now?" Hayden complained.

"No. Is tuna, not liver," Ilya replied, confused.

"It's a saying," Shane patted Ilya's thigh, "like meaning that they don't matter."

"Oh! Well then, yes. Shane does all cooking and cleaning. He gets meal," Ilya said. Troy rolled his eyes and got up to go make his own lunch, while Wyatt made eyes at Shane as if to say "*see, he could feel the same.*"

"Fine. Troy will make me lunch then," Hayden said.

"Umm excuse you, no Troy will not?" Troy called from the kitchen, "Not if you don't even bother asking and just assume!"

"The children are fighting, sweetheart," Ilya whispered to Shane, "Your turn, or mine?"

"Hayd, there's leftover pasta salad in the fridge; have that for lunch," Shane said.

“Oh score! Thanks momma Shane,” Hayden cheered and headed towards the kitchen with Wyatt in tow. Ilya and Shane both burst into giggles, then continued their meal.

“So did you like?” Ilya asked when they finished their sandwiches.

“Yeah you did a great job, thank you Ilya,” Ilya looked weirdly relieved at Shane’s response. Was he expecting Shane to say he hated it?

“Good, want to do nice for you,” Ilya said seriously. Shane softened completely.

“You do so many nice things for me! You help me clean dishes and keep our bunks neat, you entertain the boys when you can tell it overwhelms me, and you always go through how we can become better singers with me when no one else will,” Shane had to stop before he got too deep in, “You’re the nicest Ilya and I’m so lucky to have you as my best friend.” The word friend felt wrong on his tongue, but he powered through.

Ilya threw himself on Shane in a full body hug, knocking him down onto his back on the couch, “What would I do without my sweet Shane. You say nicest things,” Ilya’s voice had gone soft and quiet in the haze of the late afternoon. His face was very close to Shane’s.

Shane’s eyes darted from warm hazel eyes to plush lips and back again. When he next looked at Ilya’s eyes, they were looking down. At *Shane’s* mouth. His heart stopped and he tilted his head a touch upwards, and their lips were touching.

Shane’s world tilted as his mouth found a new home on the softest lips he’d ever felt. He clutched tight to the back of Ilya’s shirt, and pressed harder against his lips, praying for a response. He went to pull back when he got none, but before he could, Ilya was *kissing him back*. Shane’s mind went blank and he let his body take over.

Their kiss shifted quickly from soft to slightly desperate. Ilya’s hands moved from their resting spot on Shane’s chest, to tangling in Shane’s hair. He used this new placement to tug Shane exactly where he wanted him. Shane gasped at the sensation and was all too happy to go wherever Ilya wanted to pull him. Ilya kissed with skill that had to come from practice

(Shane tried not to think about who he might have gotten that practice with) and Shane hoped he giving back as good as he was getting.

Shane dared to swipe his tongue across Ilya's bottom lip and Ilya's mouth parted with a sigh. Shane took this as the invitation it was and licked into Ilya's mouth. He had a fleeting thought that there was no point in ever eating dessert again when he had now tasted the best dessert of all; the inside of Ilya's mouth.

Ilya tugged again on Shane's hair to shift the angle and Shane let out a slight moan in response. Ilya's kissing became messier and his mouth parted from Shane's. Before Shane could protest, Ilya was kissing and licking his way down Shane's neck. His whole body flushed hot and he tilted his head back to give Ilya more access. A kiss turned into a wet suck on the tenderest part of his neck and Shane *whimpered*.

"*Shane*," Ilya groaned softly into his neck, his accent thicker than Shane had ever heard it before.

Ilya pulled back and looked down at Shane with a look on his face he had never seen. Shane froze and started pushing Ilya off of him. Oh god he had ruined this. Ilya was upset with him. He had forced Ilya into kissing him and Ilya kissed back out of pity, or Ilya had kissed back because he hadn't had anyone in weeks and Shane was there and willing, or, worst of all, Ilya was only kissing him for some fun and didn't actually care the way Shane did.

"Fuck, Ilya, we can't- I didn't mean to- fuck," Shane scrambled up into a sitting position and breathed heavily. He held the back of his hand over his mouth and looked around in a panic, "I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have done that. I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

Shane stood up from the couch and started backing away. He had kissed his *best friend*. He had kissed a *boy*. They were in the middle of a public living room where anyone could walk in. Accepting that he wanted to kiss Ilya and actually doing it were two totally separate things. His head was spinning and the whole world felt like it could crash down at any moment. Ilya was still sitting on the couch, staring confusedly at Shane. He had to get out of here.

"Shane-" Ilya started to speak, but Shane didn't want to hear about what a mistake they had just made. He didn't think he could bear it. He turned and left before Ilya could finish

speaking. He barricaded himself in the bathroom yet again, and sat down on the cool tile floor to hyperventilate in private, Ilya's taste still on his tongue, and his spit still drying on his neck.



Week 10: Untouched by The Veronicas

They lost. Well, Shane supposed coming in third wasn't really losing, but it sure felt like it. Elena and Scott Hunter were both excellent singers and deserved second and first place, but so did The Centaurs and it fucking hurt to have come so far to lose it all in the end.

It didn't help that Shane was off his game this week; his voice cracked during his solo and he wasn't as strong and passionate of a singer as he usually was. Everything with Ilya had led to this horrible distraction and a knot in his stomach that he couldn't untwist. If only he hadn't kissed Ilya, then they could've been still standing on stage accepting the applause that Scott Hunter now was. This was all his fault and he had let The Centaurs down.

When he left the stage, he was relieved to see his parents already there with their arms wide open for Shane to bury himself in. He had known Yuna and David were coming for the finale, but in all the chaos of the last week, he had managed to forget. But now he was grateful to be comforted by warm cashmere and cotton hugs and have the scent of home surrounding him.

"Shane, baby, you did amazing; you boys made us so proud," Yuna was saying, but Shane shook his head in disagreement.

"No, mom, I fucked up, I'm so sorry you had to see my worst performance," Shane mumbled into her shoulder.

"Now that's just not true. I've heard a lot of music in my day, and what you did up there was amazing, son," David responded, rubbing Shane's back.

“And it’s fine anyway, honey, I’ve already got multiple offers coming in from labels wanting to sign you,” Yuna stepped out of the hug and began going full business mode, “Coming in third hardly matters- the fans love you and the music companies want you and I will be making that happen,” Shane huffed a wet laugh before Yuna continued, “Now introduce me to the rest of The Centaurs, especially this Ilya I haven’t stopped hearing about.”

Shane’s body went cold. Just a week ago, he would’ve been so excited for Ilya to finally meet his family, but now he felt awkward and uncomfortable at the prospect of forcing Ilya to meet the parents of the boy who kissed him when he didn’t want to. Hopefully Wyatt, Troy, and Hayden could ease the discomfort as they unwittingly had been the last couple days.

The boys were all downtrodden, but they straightened up in the presence of Shane’s parents. It was something Yuna tended to inspire.

“It’s so nice to meet you all, I’ve heard so much from Shane, but it’s good to put faces to the names,” Yuna said, “And the famous Ilya Rozanov! I’ve heard more about you than about Shane the last few months.”

Ilya laughed, “Nice to meet you Mr. and Mrs. Hollander.”

“Please, call us David and Yuna,” David said.

“Yes, I hear you and our son are planning to move in together, that makes us practically family,” Yuna added.

“Oh, mom, that’s not, that was just an idea-“ Shane stuttered.

“Yes, this is true,” Ilya nodded seriously. Shane whipped his head towards Ilya.

“What do you mean, yes?” he demanded.

“I mean correct, yes, da, is true, we move in together,” Ilya looked at Shane, “am I using right English?”

“You said maybe when I asked!” Shane didn’t understand. Why would Ilya want to move in with him after he had ruined their friendship?

Before he could pull more explanation out of Ilya, there was commotion coming from the stage. Scott Hunter, in the middle of his winner’s speech, was pointing over at the side stage, then making a motion for someone to come over. Shane didn’t know who he’d be calling; he’d never spoken about a girlfriend or family or anyone, really, now that Shane thought about it.

Onto the stage walked Kip Grady, who had been voted out weeks ago. Shane didn’t even have a chance to be confused when Kip reached Scott and suddenly they were kissing. Like, *really* kissing. Kip grabbed Scott’s face in his hands and Scott dipped him backwards as tears ran down both their faces. Shane was sure his own face was frozen in shock. Out of habit, he turned to look at Ilya, but Ilya was already grabbing his hand and pulling him out of the friends and family crowd, down a hallway, and into an empty dressing room.

And Ilya’s lips were on his. Shane kissed back automatically for a moment, almost letting himself get lost in the feeling of warmth and joy flooding through him, before he remembered what happened last time and pushed Ilya gently away.

“Ilya what is going *on*, we haven’t talked in days and now you’re kissing me and telling my mom we’re moving in together?” Shane asked.

“Shane Hollander, you do not let me talk,” Ilya looked frustrated, “I do not know all English words but I,” he huffed, “you kiss me and I like it and try to tell you, and you run away. Then for days I try to get you alone but you run away more.” And oh.

“Wait you *liked* it?” Shane exclaimed, “You made this face, so I thought you were mad at me for kissing you. Then I tried to give you space so I could stop feeling this way and just be your friend again.” Had Shane read this all wrong? There was a ball of light in his chest that was growing warmer the more Ilya spoke.

“Shane. You are so smart but also so dumb,” Ilya sighed, “How you not know I want you? I do not make mad face, I make face that is wanting you!” The ball of light was fighting its way out of his heart.

“Oh. Oh god, so I made everything worse, somehow?” Shane worried, “I could have just been kissing you the last few days? I could have not fucked up our final performance because I was too busy thinking about you?”

“If we were kissing for days, you still would be thinking about me,” Ilya smirked. There was the Ilya he knew. Shane laughed at the mess he’d made out of nothing.

“So just to be sure. I need to be sure. You want to kiss me, and we’re moving in together?” Shane asked, just in case he’d missed something else.

“Yes, my Shane. Now kiss me before someone comes to find us,” Ilya said.

Shane stepped forward and kissed Ilya as hard as he could. He felt relief and joy and maybe a touch of something he was too scared to name so soon, but mostly he felt happy to be exactly where he was. Maybe third place didn’t feel like losing after all. The ball of light exploded out of him and filled the room with fireworks.



Chapter End Notes

thank you so much if you read and enjoyed this!! i had so much fun writing it and maybeeee have some ideas for some more, if people want!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!