

Smoky Maple

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76611781) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76611781>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Ilya Rozanov Whump , Hurt Ilya Rozanov , A/B/O verse , Alpha Ilya Rozanov , Omega Shane Hollander , Hurt/Comfort , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Angst , Brief description of violence , mention of trafficking , Sweet Ilya Rozanov , Sweet Shane Hollander , Shy Shane Hollander , Protective Ilya Rozanov , True Mates , Ilya Rozanov Is Not a Hockey Player , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Mingling Scents
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-28 Words: 6,262 Chapters: 4/4

Smoky Maple

by [Caraphernellic](#)

Summary

Ilya Rozanov runs away from an Alpha fighting ring and ends up on Shane Hollander's property.

~

Ilya's POV/sister fic to 'Sweet Cinnamon'

Notes

Hi, if you're new here, this could technically be read as a stand-alone, but it is Ilya's POV of my other fic, Sweet Cinnamon. This is the second work in a series, the next work will be what happens after these events.

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

Chapter 1

Before

Ilya double checks the address on the letter in his hand. This was the right place. It looked a little ominous, a large and imposing, and frankly, dirty, brick building.

Congratulations, Mr. Rozanov,

You have been invited to participate in an exciting job opportunity! We have seen a copy of your resume and based on your skill set, we would like to extend this offer to you.

The letter went on to say that the job would be physical labor in a warehouse. Once Ilya saw the amount of zeros in the paycheck, it was a no brainer. That kind of money meant that he could get out of Russia and still have money to send back home.

He contacted the individual named at the end of the letter to accept, and it was a whirlwind from there. They arranged his flight and his work Visa, and gave him further information about where he would be living once he arrived in Canada. It would be a small apartment, a housing development where other workers from the same factory would also be living.

It sounded too good to be true.

That should've been his first clue. However, those who ran the operation were extremely smart. They did everything by the book so that it would seem real. After all, that's how trafficking works.

Ilya had stepped into the warehouse and they checked his I.D. and led him to a secluded room. There were a few others there, also Alphas, but Ilya didn't think anything of it. He was ready to check in here and then go see his new apartment.

It was when he was called back from the waiting room to another room, where they took his measurements; height, weight, etc., that he started to get a weird feeling. They assured him it was just to see where they could best place him based on strength, but something still felt off.

He was waiting in *another* room for a while, this time by himself, before he was escorted down a long hallway by an Alpha who smelled reminiscent of a dirty alleyway.

A sense of foreboding crept over Ilya like a vine as he walked down that hallway. Dread filled him from his toes to his skull. And somehow he knew, he just *knew* that once he walked through the final door, he would never be the same.

~

Punches. Kicks. Even bites. He had done it all and had it all done to him. He had to, they had to. There was no way of avoiding it.

Ilya had tried, at first. They all had. If you didn't fight, you got tased, or branded with a hot cattle prod, or starved until you complied.

The 'housing' that they were provided were cages in a cold and dark room. Like they were animals. Actually, Ilya could never even imagine treating an animal like this either.

Spectators paid to come and watch the fights. It was like gladiators in a Colosseum to these people. Entertainment and nothing more.

Ilya lost track of how long he was there. Days slipped away into each other. He doubted anyone back in Russia was even looking for him. He became resigned to a life of this. Maybe he would get lucky and be killed in one of the fights, and then he would be free of this pain and suffering.

He hated being violent, it was something he never got used to. He got used to the cold and the lack of comforts and the lack of fresh, tasty food. But the violence, he could never be

complacent with.

~

Now

It was a blizzard. They could all see from the small windows at the top of the walls of the room they were kept in. It was extremely cold, colder than normal. Maybe it was the cold, or the metal was brittle to begin with, but like a miracle, one day, one of the links on the chain of Ilya's cage snapped.

There was just enough room that he was able to squeeze out, barely, as he's a fairly large Alpha, but he squeezed himself through the small opening between the door and the walls of the cage, uncaring that the metal bit into his skin and scraped harshly.

The keys to the locks for their chains were hung on the wall. They never thought any of them would be able to get out, so the people who ran this operation were too confident with that placement. Ilya thought that they probably liked the psychological aspect of all of them being able to see the keys from their cages, but being unable to reach them.

Ilya's frozen fingers shook as he unlocked the cages one by one.

Someone busted out one of the windows and they helped each other up, some of them barely able to squeeze through but making it work- after all, this was a life or death situation. They all intrinsically knew that if they got caught, they would be killed immediately. This was their only chance to escape this prison.

Ilya was one of the last few. He shoved his body through the small window, ignoring the bruises that would surely be already forming as the window frame dug into him. The shattered glass also cut him in several places as well, but he could barely feel it. The adrenaline coursing through him propelled him forward.

He ran.

They all ran, scattering in different directions. It was much too cold to be out here in tattered clothes and shoes, but they had no choice.

Ilya's heart thundered in his chest as he ran. The snow coming down felt like tiny pinpricks of needles piercing his skin. The wind whipped his face and chapped his cheeks. He had no idea where to go, only that he couldn't stop. Stopping meant the possibility of being caught.

He had been running for a while when he felt like he might collapse. It could be frostbite, or malnutrition, or simply exhaustion. He slowed down but continued to limp along. Finally, he saw potential shelter up ahead.

A large house with an attached garage. Maybe it was a summer cottage and it would be unoccupied. He could just sneak into the garage, get some rest and figure out a plan. He didn't even want to break in or steal anything, not even food. He just needed rest and somewhere warm.

Ilya would even settle for a shed right about now.

The garage had a back door that he jimmied the lock on. He slipped inside as quickly and quietly as he could. He nestled between two garbage cans, huddling for warmth. He closed his eyes.

His eyes popped right back open as soon as he heard a faint noise from inside the adjoining house. Someone speaking.

Well, this was it. He had escaped Hell, but now he would likely be shot by the homeowner for breaking and entering/trespassing, or be hauled off to jail. At least jail would be better than where he just came from. Or maybe they would send him back to Russia. He wasn't really sure how that all worked.

He hoped it wasn't an Alpha. He had had enough of fighting Alphas for a lifetime.

The door from the house to the garage opens.

The scent permeates the air immediately. It's the best thing Ilya has ever smelled. Sweet maple, the slight tang of ginger, a hint of bonfire smoke.

An Omega. Ilya couldn't remember the last time he had encountered an Omega.

Still, he was afraid of what might happen next. He couldn't help it. He cowered into the space between the trash cans.

He growled involuntarily. That was so rude. He broke into someone's home and he has the audacity to growl at *them*. It's out of pure fear though, in truth. He's so exhausted and confused and in pain and he just wants to be safe and warm.

The man's scent turns a little sour with his own fear. Ilya is miserable. He's scaring the Omega, but he holds his ground. "Hey." The Omega speaks. "Do you...need help?" He's so brave. Ilya is in awe.

He involuntarily growls again. He's a mess. He doesn't remember how to act around kindness. Maybe he should just leave. It's probably better and safer for the Omega that way.

"I can get you some warm clothes. Blankets." The Omega tells him. Ilya moves a few steps toward the back door that he had come in from. "Please! Don't leave." The Omega's eyes are pleading. Big, beautiful brown eyes. The Omega is the most radiant thing he's ever seen. The light in the garage is dim, but he's muscular, with floppy brown hair and dark eyes and stunning freckles sprinkled across his cheeks.

Ilya collapses with a pained whimper. It's like he's a puppet with the strings cut and his body just gives out.

The Omega darts forward and Ilya flinches on instinct.

“I won’t hurt you.” The Omega says softly. “I’m not upset that you’re in my garage. I promise. I just want to help.” Ilya still says nothing, doesn’t think he could get his throat to properly form words if he wanted to, but the Omega walks slowly up to him. Ilya wonders what he’s seeing as his eyes track over him. The blood, the scars, the bruises. Ilya wonders what he must be thinking right now.

The other man reaches out to touch him, but lets his hand fall back down after a second of hesitation. Ilya almost wants to beg him to please lay his hand on him. It’s been so long since he’s had gentle touch, he’s starving for it. He thinks a warm and soft hand could remake him, could chase away the darkness that’s festering inside of him.

“We should go inside. It’s warm. You can get cleaned up.” Ilya blinks up at him. This Omega is very brave but also very reckless. Ilya could be anyone. He could be a predator.

Luckily for the Omega though, Ilya would never hurt him.

He has two choices here. He can leave and brave the elements in his malnourished and broken state. He will likely not survive. Or, he can go inside this Omega’s home and face whatever happens next. He could savor a scrap of comfort before facing the rest of his life.

“Can you stand?” The Omega asks. Ilya complies although it’s painful. He hunches in on himself immediately, trying to make himself less imposing. The least he could do is try to make himself look less threatening.

The Omega leads him to a bathroom. “Wait here, I’ll bring you some fresh clothes, okay? They might not fit the best, but...” Ilya is a few inches taller and broader than the Omega, but he relishes the thought of being *clean* for the first time in months. Maybe longer. He’d stopped keeping track of time a while ago, as the days bled into each other like watercolors.

He looks around while the Omega is presumably getting clothes. The bathroom, like the house- what little he’d seen of it so far, anyway- is very nice. Clean and expensive looking.

The only scents in the home are the Omegas and a few familial scents. No mate, then. Ilya can't imagine how, but that's not really any of his business, he supposes.

The Omega returns and sets a pile of clothing on the sink. "Feel free to use anything in here. There are new toothbrushes in that drawer." He says, shifting on his feet. "Well...I guess I'll leave you to it."

The shower is absolutely divine. Ilya almost cries. The water is warm and the spray is gentle, and besides, he's getting clean. With nice-smelling soap and no interruptions. No threats. How did this happen? How did he stumble upon this house? It's like an alternate universe.

He tries to be quick with his shower, even if he'd like to luxuriate for a while longer. He doesn't want to be rude. He brushes his teeth after, and then he spends several minutes just looking at himself in the mirror. He barely recognizes his own face. More angular than the last time he'd seen it, and full of cuts and scrapes.

Ilya hears the footsteps of the Omega outside the door. "Um, are you all done in there?" Ilya's voice is still not cooperating, so he says nothing. A minute passes, and then the door opens slowly.

"Um. I realized I never even introduced myself. I'm Shane." *Shane*. "Do you need to call someone?" Ilya shakes his head no immediately. He has no one to report his safety to. His family back in Russia has probably not thought about him a day since he's been gone. Or maybe they have, to lament that he never sent them money like he said he would.

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

Ilya watches as he moves around the kitchen with practiced ease. Ilya is extremely excited to eat, in truth. When the food is finished being cooked, he eats very quickly and hunched low to his plate, which is probably not very polite, but is habit at this point.

Shane notices. “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.” Ilya looks at Shane for a long second, but he accepts. He’s starving.

“Do you need any pain meds? Or help with your injuries?” Another head shake. This man has done enough for him.

“You’re probably exhausted. You can sleep in this room here. Everything is clean. Use whatever you need. Or want.” He adds. The room that Shane shows him to is very clean and nice, like the rest of the home. The bed looks very comfortable. Ilya can’t wait to use a *blanket*.

“Please don’t leave.” Shane says again. “I’ll help you, I promise. I’ll be upstairs if you need *anything*.” Tears prickle in Ilya’s eyes. He’s not sure if he deserves all the kindness this man has shown him, but he will do whatever it takes to repay him.

“Thank you.” He rasps out.

Chapter 2

Ilya lays down in the plush bed and covers himself up tightly, as if that can protect him. Just earlier today, he was in a cold prison with no hope. It feels impossible that he's *here* now. He feels better in some ways now that he's clean and has food in his stomach, but he's utterly exhausted and his injuries are starting to make themselves known now that his adrenaline has mostly dissipated.

He wonders if when he falls asleep, if he will even wake up. Maybe his body is too far gone. If he doesn't, he will die clean, warm, and with a flicker of hope that a sweet Omega has given to him.

It's not such a bad way to go.

~

He falls into a dreamless, deep sleep. He has no idea how long he's slept for, but when he wakes up, it feels like he's coming up through layers of molasses.

He's extremely relieved to see that he's still in the Omega's house. A part of him had been afraid to open his eyes to find that it was all something that his imagination had conjured up. He glances at the clock on the bedside table and is surprised to find that it's evening. Had Ilya really slept through almost an entire day? He should go find Shane and apologize for his rudeness. He should be a more helpful house guest. He finds his way back to the kitchen, where he can smell food cooking. The Omega is manning the stove.

"Mr. Shane?" He asks. He wants to be polite.

"Hi! Oh, um, you don't have to call me Mister. Just Shane is fine." He fidgets nervously, as Ilya has seen him do a handful of times now. Ilya plans to do everything in his power to make the other man feel comfortable around him. "I'm making dinner." Shane says, gesturing to the food.

Ilya should probably tell him his name, he thinks. The Alpha puts a hand on his own chest. "Ilya."

Shane smiles, and it's pretty and shy. "Thank you for telling me your name." He gives him another two water bottles like last night, and then a heaping plate of food a few minutes later.

"Do not eat much." Ilya comments, gesturing to Shane's smaller portion of food. He's noticed that the other man serves him considerably more than he eats himself.

"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 wants to protest that the Omega needs his strength, but that seems impolite, so he doesn't say anything.

"I wanted to talk to you about something."

Ilya watches him with rapt attention. "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. That explains the sweet undertone emanating from the man. Ilya had guessed, but he wasn't sure. He hadn't encountered an Omega in a long time, and he wasn't sure if he fully trusted his Alpha instincts anymore. Again, Ilya can't help but think of how brave Shane was for helping him, especially when he was days away from going into heat.

Ilya can't help but feel sad that he will have to leave so soon. He has no right to feel that way, considering Shane owes him nothing and does not have to continue to house him. There's a part of Ilya that wanted to stay though, to be here with the Omega for as long as he would let him. He feels drawn to the other man, and he doesn't think it's entirely related to the fact that he saved Ilya's life.

He tamps down his sadness and decides to make it easier on Shane. "Ah. You need me to leave now." Ilya nods. "Is okay. You have done me great service."

"No!" Shane says quickly. "Actually, the opposite. 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."

That's a nice offer, but Ilya has nothing to offer in return. "I do not have money to give." He says sadly.

"I don't need anything in return." Shane tells him.

Ilya cocks his head, 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. What reason could Shane have for wanting to help him completely for free?

"Yes. And for the record, you aren't scary."

Ilya gestures to his face. "I don't look nice. Scars." He's well-aware of what he looks like now. Maybe once he had been handsome, but now he could be Frankenstein's monster's estranged cousin.

Shane frowns. "I think you look great. Handsome. If you don't want to stay, obviously you don't have to. I just thought..."

Shane thinks he is handsome? That's high praise coming from someone so beautiful themselves. Ilya feels warm. He shifts in his seat. "I am safe here?" He checks. He's starting to dare hope that he could stay.

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

Ilya is conflicted. "I...would like to stay." He finally admits. He would actually like nothing more than to stay forever. Shane offered, and Ilya is too weak to resist. He wants this so badly. After everything he's been through, he's being offered sanctuary.

"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 feels a strong pang of sadness at the idea of Shane leaving, but he knows that he has to. He nods. "I take care of home." He nods at the falling snow outside. "Shovel snow. Clean up." It's only fair that he contribute *something*.

"You really don't have to." Shane says.

Ilya stays near him for the rest of their evening together. He feels overwhelmingly protective of the Omega. He wants to be sure he's safe, comfortable, and happy.

The next morning, Ilya makes sure that he gets up earlier than Shane to make him a hearty breakfast. He mixes protein powder into pancake batter and fries up some eggs. The Omega appears in the kitchen when he's almost finished.

"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. Shane only eats maybe half of it, but Ilya is still happy that the Omega liked his cooking and that he was able to provide for him. Ilya insists on cleaning up afterward too. These small things are truly the least he could do.

When he's finished, he finds Shane asleep on the couch. The poor man is probably so tired with the events of the last few days coupled with his impending heat. Ilya drapes a blanket over him and smiles in satisfaction when the man snuggles deeper underneath it.

He stays nearby just in case, but Ilya does his best not to creepily watch Shane sleep, even if he wants to make sure the other man is alright. His scent was noticeably a little more uncomfortable today. When he hears a sound of pain, Ilya darts back into the room. Shane is hunched over and gripping the arm of the couch.

“Shane?” He touches his elbow, and immediately sparks flow between them as soon their skin brushes. Ilya has never felt anything like it.

“I’m okay.” Shane says, taking a deep breath. Ilya feels wrong at the idea of Shane experiencing discomfort. He wants to fix it.

“Can I get you something?” Ilya asks. He would do anything the Omega needed.

“No, no. I’m alright, I promise.” Shane insists. He excuses himself to the bathroom, and Ilya is left in his wake, wondering about the electricity he felt between them.

~

Shane has just showered with scent blocking soap and is standing by the door with his bag packed. “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’s been so worried all day after Shane had cried out in pain this morning. He hates the idea of him being out of his sight, even if he’ll be safe with his parents.

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

“Da.” Ilya confirms. Shane wants him to be here, so he will be here.

They both hear the crunch of tires in the driveway. “Well...I’ll see you, Ilya.”

“Goodbye, Shane.”

Chapter 3

The days without Shane are long and arduous. Ilya sleeps a lot.

He has no right to feel as sad as he does, but it's all-encompassing. The bright light of the Omega is gone and his fresh scent is fading. Ilya's Alpha feels restless. He can only stomach about one meal a day. He does make sure he keeps the place meticulously clean, not that it's a particularly difficult task.

He wonders how Shane is doing and hopes he's alright. He knows a heat can be strenuous on an Omega if they don't have a partner. He hates the thought of the other man in pain. It makes his skin crawl and his instincts scream at him to fix it. He shouldn't be here, in this beautiful house, while Shane isn't, while he's somewhere else struggling with something that Ilya can't fix.

The alone time is bad for his mental health. Although the fighting ring was literal hell, he was never alone. Although they were pitted against one another, there was a sort of kinship between himself and the other Alphas. They were all in the torture chamber together.

Ilya wonders if he will ever see any of them again. He wonders how many of them survived.

On the day that Shane is due to arrive back, Ilya spends the entire morning pacing. He feels like his heart will explode out of his chest when he hears a knock at the door and "It's me, Shane!"

He crosses the threshold to the front door in two strides and swings it open. He just stares for a moment, overwhelmingly relieved to be looking at Shane's beautiful face. He's pale and his freckles contrast harshly, but Ilya still finds himself transfixed.

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

“You came back.” Ilya whispers. He can’t help it. His mind played terrible tricks on him the entire time Shane was out of his sight, telling him that the Omega would never come back, that this was all too good to be true.

“Of course I...yes.” Shane reaches out and grabs his wrist lightly. “I’m here.” Ilya bites his lip and nods, and then Shane pulls him into a hug. Ilya wraps his arms around him firmly but not aggressively. Shane’s face is pressed into his chest, and Ilya’s face tucks into the side of his neck, and he scents him softly. “You smell nice.” Ilya rasps. That’s an understatement, the maple notes in Shane’s scent are thicker with his lingering heat scent. He smells sweet and smoky and like everything Ilya has ever wanted.

“So do you.” Shane says. Then, “I’m sorry I had to leave.” Shane tells him, as if it was his fault.

“Is okay. I mostly sleep.” Ilya says honestly, wondering if Shane will think he’s lazy.

Shane looks at him for a beat. “Ilya...why did you come here? Where did you come from?” He asks softly. He looks curious. Ilya supposes he was going to ask eventually.

Ilya looks down at his hands. He might as well tell the other man everything. He deserves the truth. “I come here from Russia. They say is...” He mentally searches for the word in English. “Good opportunity. Lots of money.” He clears his throat. “I get here, is fighting ring. No money. Cannot leave.”

“What?” He whispers.

Ilya’s gaze flicks sideways to him. “Alpha fighting. Bad men. No one is allowed to leave. 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.” He can still remember the exact moment he saw Shane.

Shane flinches at the words. “Don’t...” He trails off.

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 be held, lets himself relax. 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.” It feels so good to hold him. It pleases Ilya’s inner Alpha.

“I kept checking on you.” Shane admits. “You looked peaceful.”

“No dream. That was nice. I feel...so sad when you go. I wanted to protect you.” Ilya hopes he isn’t admitting too much, coming on too strong.

Shane sinks lower until his upper half is sprawled across Ilya’s lap. Ilya is surprised but not in a bad way, and he lets one hand fall to Shane’s lower back, while the other stays in his hair. Shane closes his eyes. They lay there for a while, and then Shane falls asleep. Ilya carries him to his bed, tucking him in and pressing a kiss to his hair.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

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

Ilya brings in some blankets and pillows from the guest bedroom and arranges them on the floor beside Shane's bed. The other man is fresh off a heat, exhausted and vulnerable. Ilya will sleep here to protect him.

Despite being on the floor, he falls asleep easily knowing that Shane is resting peacefully beside him.

In the morning, when he hears Shane stirring, he pops his head up. Shane smiles at him. "What are you doing?"

"I keep you safe." He says proudly.

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

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

"I'll make us breakfast." He says with a yawn.

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

While he's cooking, Shane has some news for him. "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."

Ilya was not expecting this news. "Where do you play?" He asks after a moment.

“Montreal. But we travel a lot, you know?” Ilya isn’t even sure where Montreal is, especially related to where they are now.

Ilya nods. “I have just found you.” He says sadly, unable to keep this thought inside. He just found Shane, and he had to leave for four days, and even *that* was torture. Now he’s going to really leave.

“I know.” Shane says softly. “You could stay here. You’ll be safe. I can come back and see you whenever I’m able.” That’s a good deal, Ilya knows, but he still can’t help the way his heart breaks.

“Ilya, are those...are people going to be looking for you?” Shane suddenly asks.

“I do not know.” Ilya admits. His blood runs cold just at the thought of it. “They probably assume I die outside.” *Hopefully* that’s what they assumed. They’re both quiet for a moment. Suddenly, Ilya has a flash of memory of a life before any of this. Shane’s declaration had reminded him. “I used to play hockey. Back in Russia.” Ilya tells him. He’d liked it, but it was never something that could be a career for him like Shane. He never had that much time to dedicate to it to get to that level. After his mom died when he was twelve, he had to work several jobs to support his family.

“Really?” Shane asks.

“Da. I like it.”

Shane smiles. “Hockey is my life.” 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 very reluctantly trails behind Shane to the front door. Shane peeks through the unfrosted part of the glass. “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. They have a short conversation, and then 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. “Yes I do.”

~

“You are kind of boring.” Ilya says later, apropos of nothing. Maybe that’s rude, but it’s just an observation.

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.” He says honestly.

Shane’s mouth drops open at his casual admission.

“What?”

“Nothing, nothing.” Shane’s cheeks are flushed. It’s endearing.

“Don’t tell me you...” Ilya wiggles his eyebrows suggestively. Is Shane a virgin? He’s acting so appalled at the mention of sex.

Shane’s ears turn red at the implication. “I’ve had sex.” He insists. “Plenty of it. Like, a really good amount of it, I would say. So much sex.” Ilya is not convinced. In fact, he might be even less convinced now. He bites his lip, but then an honest to god giggle escapes, and he bursts out laughing, and so does Shane.

“Come on.” Shane whines. “But seriously, I’m really not a virgin.”

“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. He loves them.

Shane flushes again and looks away. “That’s not...” He huffs and fidgets.

“Hm?”

“Alpha’s don’t...like me, like that.” That’s impossible. Utterly impossible.

“I like you like that, and I am Alpha.” Ilya says.

Shane squirms.

“You don’t believe me?” Ilya asks, and Shane shrugs, still avoiding his eyes. Ilya’s 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. He really wants to, but he would stop at a moment’s notice if the other man asked.

“Yes.” Shane whispers. Ilya leans in to kiss him tenderly. It’s not a means to an end, it’s a promise. A promise that Ilya will take care of him, that he wants this, no matter what it takes.

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's healing alright even without that, but he lets the Omega take care of him. It seems to make him happy.

Shane had been worried about him getting enough food. Ilya knows he's a little on the thinner side right now for his height. "We were meaner when we were hungry." Ilya had told him, by way of explanation.

Shane starts to ask him more questions. "How did you trust me so fast, after everything?"

"You are not Alpha." Ilya had told him. "All of my bad experiences come from Alpha." It's that simple. Then, he can't resist adding "Plus, you look like little kitten." Shane had blushed at that.

"Your family isn't looking for you?" Shane had asked another time.

"No." That one stung the most. Ilya didn't feel much like talking after that.

Eventually, Ilya starts asking him questions in return. "Why did you let strange Alpha into home?" He was really curious about this.

"You needed help." Shane shrugs.

"I could be dangerous." Ilya reminds him. "Eat little kitten up." He smirks.

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

“To make me eat bland chicken?” He doesn’t mean to say it, but it slips out anyway. Shane’s mouth drops open but then they both dissolve into laughter.

~

The day that Shane is set to leave, both of them are on edge all morning.

“Do you have everything you need?” Shane asks Ilya for perhaps the third time.

“Da.” Ilya says. If he says anything more, he might burst into tears, so he keeps his sentences short. He doesn’t want to make Shane feel bad for doing what he has to do. He has a job and a life. He’s already helping Ilya so much. He couldn’t possibly hold the Omega back.

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

“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.

“будь осторожен”. *Be safe.*

“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. He can’t, not past the lump in his throat.

“Goodbye, I’ll see you soon.” Shane walks out the door and into his parents' waiting car, and Ilya’s chest begins to ache.

Chapter End Notes

If you have read both fics, Sweet Cinnamon and this one, I hope you didn't find it too redundant and enjoyed them. Thanks so much for reading and remember to stick around for the third story in this series, where we see what happens after Shane leaves!

End Notes

I made myself so sad writing the first part! Our poor Ilya.

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