

stars fading but i linger on

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76627991) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76627991>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Troy Barrett/Harris Drover , Rose Landry/Svetlana Vetrova
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Hayden Pike , Troy Barrett , Svetlana Vetrova , Rose Landry , Harris Drover
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Restaurant , chef Shane Hollander , Bartender Ilya Rozanov , Anal Fingering , Blow Jobs , Riding , i'm terrible at tags yall i'm SORRY
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-29 Words: 5,120 Chapters: 1/1

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by [princebutt](#)

Summary

“I fucking said ‘hands’ Rozanov! Are you going to stand there day dreaming or come and run this hot food, for fuck’s sake!”

The words jolt Ilya out of his reverie, and he scoffs in the direction of the expo window. It sits far enough back from the dining room that (hopefully) the guests didn’t hear that little outburst, but close enough to his bar that he (unfortunately) did hear it.

“What a fucking asshole,” Ilya mumbles to Svetlana, the server picking up his gorgeous old fashioned from the bar and balancing it with two soda waters on her cocktail tray.

OR, Shane owns an upscale japanese restaurant in Ottawa. Ilya bartends there.

Notes

Oh hello lovelies! This idea was supposed to be a firstprince fic but I never got around to it, and then inspo struck last night and it just works so much better for Shane and Ilya, so here we are! Thank you forever and always to Anna for betaing, and I hope you all enjoy!

“Hands!” Ilya hears the Chef’s voice ring out, but he’s too busy perfecting this old fashioned to care. He expresses his orange and squeezes the peel over top of the cocktail to release its oils, and then delicately balances the slice of rind on the top of the large ice cube before setting the drink in the bar well on top of its ticket for the server to pick up on their way back out to the dining room. He’s a brilliant bartender, what can he say? And his craft will always come first.

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“You can say that again,” Sveta agrees as she turns and heads out towards the dining room. It’s a busy Saturday night – they’ve got a fully seated floor here at Kappo Kichō, and Ilya hasn’t had a moment to breathe behind the bar, let alone daydream. He scoffs as he rounds the corner into the kitchen where two plates of food are immediately shoved into his hands without so much as a glance from Chef Hollander.

“Take those to table 21. Shellfish allergy at seat two so make sure this one –” he taps the dish in Ilya’s left hand, “-- goes to seat one. Got it?” Still not so much as a glance. Ilya sticks his tongue out at the chef’s back, which makes a few of the servers behind him laugh behind their hands.

“There’s nothing funny about a shellfish allergy. Why are you still here, Rozanov? That food is getting cold.”

“Yes, chef,” Ilya bites out, shooting daggers with his eyes as he turns and leaves the kitchen, heading towards table 21. He makes sure to set the dishes down in the correct spots and triple checks for the allergy before heading back behind the bar, sighing in frustration, and getting back to the line of bar tickets that accumulated while he was gone.

Shane Hollander is a fantastic chef, that much no one would argue – but he’s kind of a dick.

Ilya has been working at Kappo Kichō for years, and it would seem nothing could improve his interpersonal relations with head chef and owner, Shane Hollander.

Well. Part owner. His mother and father, Yuna and David, are also heavily involved in the business, though Shane calls most of the shots.

As Ilya busies himself making cocktails, Svetlana comes over to rest an elbow against the bar. She sighs as she surveys the busy floor of the Japanese restaurant – all of the tables are full, the bar top is also completely seated, and they have reservations through the rest of the

night. It's not going to be an easy shift, but they'll come out with plenty of money, and that is what matters.

"You know, I can't believe he hasn't fired you yet," Svetlana teases, her Russian accent light and lilting, a breath of a thing. Ilya got her the job here, when she'd left her last gig due to sexual misconduct on the owner's part. She and Ilya worked together at that bar, but it was grungy and quite the dive, and Ilya wanted to make more money, so he'd come to Kappo Kichō when it had opened a few years back. Now, the little Japanese restaurant that took the Ottawa food scene by a storm is thriving, and everyone knows why.

It's because Chef Hollander runs a tight ship. He expects nothing but perfection from his crew, and he only keeps around those who can match his passion, desire, and drive. He's fired better men than Ilya for silly mistakes, but Ilya is one of the lucky ones, it would seem.

"He loves me," Ilya says cheekily, his own Russian accent flourishing his words, as he hands Svetlana two drinks to run. She rolls her eyes and arches a brow, chuckling as she adjusts the cocktails on her tray.

"Uhuh, I'm *sure*," She teases, and Ilya winks at her as she turns to slink back off into the crowded restaurant.

The night continues on without a hitch; Ilya makes his cocktails and takes care of his bar guests, is his charming self and dazzles all of the patrons, and spends his downtime being hassled by Chef Hollander to run food or wipe down his bartop. He doesn't like being barked at by Hollander, but it's part of the job, and he makes good money doing it, so he doesn't complain because, while Chef is demanding, he isn't *harsh*, like some of the restaurant owners Ilya has worked for in the past. Hollander is fair, and pays them well and makes sure everyone has something to eat by the end of the night.

As the crowd winds down and the bar empties, employees take patrons' spots as they do their check outs and enjoy their free shift drink. As the bartender, Ilya is usually one of the last to go home, but he's always outlasted by Hollander. As Ilya makes an espresso martini for Rose, the gorgeous, redheaded manager who Svetlana spends most of her shift flirting with, he eyes the rest of the counter. There's Hayden Pike, Hollander's right hand man and Sous Chef, and Troy Barrett, a line cook who's scrappy and handsome and a little dense, but they all let it slide. Rose and Svetlana are sitting beside each other and conspiring, while a harried looking Harris Drover, the 'hostess with the mostest' as he likes to call himself, who also runs the social media during weekdays, sips on a hard cider.

They've got an amazing crew, really. Ilya is proud to work here, even if Shane Hollander maybe gets under his skin *just* a little bit.

"Can I have another?" Troy grunts as he slides his pint towards Ilya, who is setting the martini down in front of Rose.

"Can you all not go across the street to Barry's? Why do you have to dirty up my bar, eh? I would like to go home too, you know!" Ilya gestures to the dive bar across the street and everyone chuckles but knows he means it in good fun. His crisp white button down is unbuttoned, exposing a black tank top, and the sleeves are rolled up to his elbows, showing

off his well-toned forearms. The restaurant is officially closed, so while he cleans, Ilya sips his own glass of straight vodka, and enjoys a bowl of fried rice, the family meal the kitchen made tonight.

“What, you got a hot date or something, Rozanov?” Hayden asks, with a little smirk as he takes a long sip of his beer and sits back in his seat, kicking his ankle up onto his knee.

“Maybe,” Ilya says noncommittally, with an equally nonchalant shrug. “Your mom invited me over and I do not want to disappoint her, Pike,” he teases with a wink, which earns him a scoff and a middle finger from Hayden.

Rose flicks something off of the sleeve of her shirt and shrugs as she looks around at their ragtag group. “Everyone’s welcome back to mine, I still have some beer and wine, but we gotta be quiet this time. My landlord gave me a warning last time I invited you heathens to my place.”

“I gotta get home –” Hayden starts, and the group as a collective rolls their eyes.

“-- to Jackie,” everyone finishes for him, and Hayden’s brow furrows as he rolls his eyes.

“You all are the *worst*.”

“And yet here you are, drinking with us, enjoying our company...” Ilya spreads his hands and gives Hayden a little eyebrow wiggle. This prompts the Sous Chef to finish his beer and stand up, grabbing his chef coat as he slaps a few bills down on the bar for Ilya.

“Don’t forget to tip your waitstaff, assholes. I’ll see some of you for brunch tomorrow.” With that, Hayden heads around to the kitchen and out the back. Ilya hears him say something to Hollander, who is in the back doing god knows what, and who is too boring to come out and have fun with the crew anyway.

“You wanna come over and play some NHL 25?” Troy asks, which earns him a look from Harris. The two have not so subtly been flirting for a few months now, since Troy got hired, and Ilya has a feeling Troy might have just stomped all over Harris’s plans. Luckily for Harris, Ilya has plans of his own.

“No, I need to go home and get beauty rest. I work brunch tomorrow,” Ilya shrugs in apology, and Troy only looks a little sad about it. He picks up his phone and taps away, and Ilya is unsurprised when Harris’s phone lights up down the bar. Ilya chuckles to himself and turns to take a bite of his rice and a sip of his vodka (not the best pairing but he’s also not going to turn up his nose at free food or free alcohol). He gets busy cleaning out the beer grates and finishing up his dishwashing. All he has to do before he leaves is wipe down the bartop and count his drawer, neither of which will take long once everyone leaves.

So for the next twenty minutes, Ilya just drinks and eats and chats with his friends. As much as he gives them shit for sitting at his bar at the end of the night, he loves this rehash of events with his crew. Troy is telling Rose about lighting a kitchen towel on fire, and Svetlana and Harris are gossiping about the people who came in, specifically an awkward first date

Svetlana had waited on. Apparently, the man spilled red wine all over his date, and she'd been in *white*.

When it hits midnight, Hollander comes around the corner and holds out a plastic deli container wordlessly. It's their midnight ritual – Shane doesn't ask, doesn't say a word, and Ilya fills his container with the lightest beer they have on draft. Shane nods his thanks, and heads back to the kitchen, probably to finish inventory. Honestly Ilya isn't sure what he's doing back there.

"He could maybe try '*please*' or '*thank you*,'" Svetlana huffs, and Harris chuckles as Rose shrugs.

"You know how Shane is," Rose offers, and Ilya's brows arch, though he doesn't really care. He and Hollander have a *fine* working relationship – they both come to work and do their jobs, and sure, they butt heads and fight a little, but it's not a big deal. It is what it is, and it isn't going to change any time soon.

"An asshole?" Ilya offers, and everyone snickers except Rose.

"He just... isn't the best with people. But he's amazing with food," Rose points out. She's been friends with Hollander for a long time now, and she knows him better than any of them, Ilya would bet.

"Well he runs a restaurant. Which involves people. So maybe he should try harder?" Svetlana offers with a shrug of her shoulders. Rose's expression seems to say 'you're right,' and Ilya laughs a little.

"He's especially bad with Ilya though," Harris points out, and everyone openly laughs at that because... he's not wrong. Shane has never seemed to know how to deal with Ilya, but a lot of people don't, and he's ok with it.

Svetlana chimes in with a little nod. "I think he actually hates you," she points out, and Ilya snickers as he polishes a wine glass.

"Is because I'm so pretty, obviously," Ilya jokes, and everyone laughs.

"Or because you never fucking run food!" Svetlana grouches.

"Hey! I ran plenty of food tonight!"

They all laugh before devolving back down into smaller conversations, leaving Ilya to do more cleaning after another sip of vodka.

Harris leaves first, after he finishes his cider, and is not so subtle as he looks in Troy's direction. Troy downs the rest of his beer a few minutes after Harris leaves and makes some pathetic excuse about needing to feed his fish (Ilya is fairly sure he doesn't actually have fish). Svetlana and Rose stick around to do a shot with Ilya (tequila), then make their way across the street to Barry's to keep the party going.

In the blissful silence, Ilya lets himself breathe.

Playing his own music through the house speakers, Ilya cleans up the last of the glassware. He wipes down the bartop and barstools, then hoists them up onto the bartop so he can sweep and mop. He sings along with his playlist, and shimmies his hips as he mops, and the task goes quickly.

It makes him late to realize Hollander is standing at the end of the bar, arms crossed over his chest, dark eyes scanning the bar, as if to avoid Ilya.

“Yes?” Ilya asks as he leans against the mop handle. Hollander scoffs, and Ilya smirks.

“Just came out to check on you. You’re here late.”

“The gang did not want to leave tonight. Everyone had two drinks,” Ilya shrugs and continues mopping, careful not to miss a spot with Hollander standing there.

“You really should kick them out after one,” Hollander points out, and Ilya just shrugs.

“More money for both of us, *Chef*,” Ilya rolls the word across his tongue, his accent making it pop, and he smirks when Shane flushes. *Good*.

“Make sure you wipe down the back counter, and there’s beer on the backsplash,” Hollander says as he clears his throat.

With a sigh, Ilya rolls his eyes. “We were having such a lovely moment,” he teases, and Shane scoffs, brow furrowing and lips pulling down into a little frown.

“You’ve also got to get better about coming to the kitchen when I call for hands. Multiple times tonight I had to call you twice, and hot food is a priority over beverages.” Hollander looks down at the clipboard he’s holding to avoid eye contact with Ilya. Ilya stares at him anyway, and is tempted to scoff and shake his head. So he does.

“What?” Hollander asks.

“You hired me to make drinks, so I make drinks. Then you tell me not to make drinks? Makes no sense.”

The ‘v’ in Hollander’s brow deepens. “The *food* is everyone’s priority, Rozanov.”

With another little noise of annoyance, Ilya mock salutes Hollander. “Yes, sir.”

This earns him a deep eyeroll from Shane, who turns on his heel. “You really should think about the way you treat your superiors.”

“And you should let me do my job!” Ilya calls after him as Hollander heads back into the kitchen.

With a sigh, Ilya finishes up his mopping. He counts his drawer and loathes that he now has to go and drop it off at Hollander’s office. Hollander counts the drawer wordlessly, then hands Ilya his money for the night.

“Will you make sure to turn the front of house lights out?” Hollander asks as he pushes his glasses up his nose and turns back to his computer. Ilya rolls his eyes as he goes to leave the office.

“Yes, of course, always with the lights.”

“Always with the attitude!” Hollander calls after him. Ilya just flips him off. He doesn’t care that Hollander is his boss – it’s been a long night, and he’s *done*.

Ilya is so grateful to walk through the door of his apartment and collapse onto the couch after that shift. His feet ache and his back is sore and he *stinks*, and while he knows he should shower first, he’s just going to sit here on this couch for the time being, shower be damned.

Honestly, he’s not sure when he fell asleep. Well, he knows about when it happened, but he’d not realized it was going to happen until he’s being woken up by the sound of the door closing and soft footsteps on the hardwood. There’s rustling as shoes are toed off and a jacket is shed, and the hallway light being flicked on makes Ilya grimace as his eyes squint, trying to adjust to the soft glow of light.

“Ilya?” The soft, husky voice makes him sigh, and he rolls over on the couch, still in his work uniform, shoes on and everything, and waves.

“In here, lyubimyy moy,” he calls, eyes squeezing shut as he rubs sleep from them.

And then soft fingers are curling in Ilya’s hair, and the gentlest of kisses are being pressed to his temple, and Ilya feels overwhelmed with how loved he is, and how much he loves in return.

“I’m sorry for what I said earlier,” Shane whispers against his ear as he sits on the edge of the couch. Ilya finally lets his eyes open and grunts as he sits up on the couch, resting his back on the arm as his palm cups Shane’s cheek and his thumb strokes across constellations of freckles, as if he holds the night sky in his palms.

“Is ok,” Ilya says through a yawn. Shane looks sheepish, and he leans in to press a searing kiss to Ilya’s lips.

“No, I really need to do better. I shouldn’t be so hard on you.”

“Hey,” Ilya tilts Shane’s chin up so their eyes meet. “Is your business, and you must run it.” Ilya shrugs, and leans back across the couch. He drops his hand from Shane’s cheek to tug him in closer by the shirt, and Shane adjusts so he’s straddling Ilya, and pressing a barrage of light, loving, tender kisses across Ilya’s cheeks and the bridge of his nose.

“Also keeps anyone from suspecting,” Ilya points out, words a huff as Shane’s lips trail down his jaw to his neck.

“True,” Shane sighs, and he sits back, looking down at Ilya with sadness in his eyes. Ilya understands – he wants to tell his friends about how head over heels in love he is, about how

he gets to call Shane, one of the most incredible men in the world, *his*. But lord knows, it would look terrible for the company. And Ilya loves his job, and working with Shane, too much to want to change it.

Ilya met Shane for the first time at his interview. It had been instant chemistry, and Shane had hired him on the spot. They made it a few months in before one drunken night after all the staff had left, Ilya invited Shane back to his place, and their draw to each other after was undeniable. So they'd kept it a secret, because Ilya is the best bartender Shane has, and Ilya loves his job at Kappo Kichō.

That had been three years ago. Now they live together. They have a whole fucking *life* together. And the only people who know other than them are Yuna and David, Shane's parents and business partners. But Ilya wants people to know. He wants to tell Svetlana, and maybe even Troy and Harris. He wants to show his boyfriend off, to brag about how brilliant he is, to tell each guest that sits at his bar that his amazing, wonderful partner is the one who put the brilliant food on their plates.

Instead he keeps his mouth shut to keep them both happy.

"Hey," Shane presses his thumb against the corner of Ilya's mouth, then leans in and chases it with a kiss. "Where'd you go?"

"Just thinking," Ilya says truthfully. Shane brushes curls from his forehead and then dots it with kisses.

"Let me make it up to you for how atrocious I was earlier," Shane mumbles against the soft skin of Ilya's throat. And it's not like Ilya's going to say *no*. He never can say no to Shane, and that's how they got here in the first place. He's going to follow Shane like a lost puppy just looking for a home, because it's always been that way. He's always been searching for something that felt even remotely like a home should, and Shane is the only person who has ever been that for him.

Ilya has slept in plenty of women's and men's beds. He's had his fun, he's gotten around. No one satisfies him like Shane does. No one makes him feel like he's truly *loved*, like he could be more than just some boy from Russia without a family and without a home.

Shane sees more in him. He always has, and Ilya hopes he always will.

"*Well*, if you insist –" Ilya sucks in a sharp breath as Shane pushes his button down open to gain access to the sensitive skin of his collarbone, where Shane's lips nip and suck, working the skin there, sucking a mark where no one but Ilya will see. Ilya toes his shoes off and kicks them to the floor as Shane pushes his shirt off of Ilya's arms and runs his hands down Ilya's biceps, admiring the muscle there.

If there's one thing that's certain, it's that Shane always makes him feel loved and appreciated as soon as they step foot outside of the restaurant. Sure, they bicker and fight and are rude to each other inside the walls of Kappo Kichō, but none of that counts, in Ilya's books. That's Chef Hollander, who is an incredible chef with a mind to keep his restaurant's doors open for

years to come. That's not his boyfriend Shane. And Ilya has learned to differentiate and compartmentalize. It might not be the healthiest thing, but they make it work.

Through his tank top, Shane pinches one of Ilya's nipples between his fingers and leans back down to kiss Ilya's lips fully. Ilya presses for more, swiping his tongue along Shane's lower lip and begging for entry, which he is allowed. Their tongues dance and slide together as Ilya tangles his fingers into Shane's hair and tugs him closer, wanting nothing more than the press of Shane against him, the weight of him pinning Ilya down. It's the most satisfying part, feeling Shane grow hard against him, feeling his erection strain against his pants that's all Ilya's doing.

Shane rolls his hips against Ilya's and both men moan into their open-mouthed kiss. Ilya sits up and tugs his shirt off, and Shane's white t-shirt falls to the floor, joining Ilya's, as their mouths meet again. All of Ilya's sleepiness is gone now, and he feels like he's taken a shot of espresso straight to the face with how worked up Shane's got him. He tugs Shane closer, breathing him in, pressing hot, biting kisses along Shane's collarbones and pecs, nipping here and there, then flicking his tongue over one nipple, then the other. Shane whines as his hips grind down against Ilya's, and Ilya catches Shane's hips, bracketing them with his hands and encouraging a slow, steady rhythm from Shane.

"Oh god, Ilya," Shane groans out, biting his lip as his head falls back, allowing Shane more access to kiss at his neck. Ilya's thumbs smooth along the tops of Shane's hipbones, and he grins into Shane's skin, loving the feeling of this gorgeous man coming undone because of him.

"M... supposed to be taking care of *you*," Shane whines as Ilya's tongue traces the line of muscle jutting in Shane's neck.

"This is taking care of me. I am having so much fun," Ilya purrs against Shane's skin, which makes Shane's whole body *shudder* with want. "Do you want me to fuck you, sweetheart?" Ilya asks, and Shane nods, words lost as he grinds against Ilya's erection.

"Then let's get these pants off, hmm?"

They both struggle out of their pants, and Ilya reaches behind them to the coffee table where he knows there's a stash of lube. He coats his finger in it, warming the lube up, then sits back against the arm of the couch and nudges Shane onto his knees where he's still straddling Ilya's hips. Shane's cock bobs against his stomach, hard and thick and wanting, and Ilya *slowly* traces around Shane's entrance with his pointer finger, teasing the tight muscle there, a promise of what's to come. Ilya's own cock is stiff and erect, and one of Shane's hands reaches down to stroke him, from balls to tip, taking his time, which makes Ilya groan in satisfaction.

"Ready?" Ilya asks, softly, as he presses a kiss to Shane's ribs. Shane nods wordlessly, and Ilya's finger lazily sinks into him. He takes his time with it, lets Shane feel his first knuckle, which makes him whimper with need. Ilya bends, then, and takes the tip of Shane's cock into his mouth, suckling on the head, teasing the slit with his tongue.

“Fuck, Ilya that’s so fucking good, oh my god,” Shane moans as his whole body tightens with desire. His hand on Ilya’s dick strokes again, and Ilya takes more of Shane’s cock into his mouth, and presses another finger inside of him, curling his fingers and stretching Shane just right, rewarding him for the way his hand works on Ilya’s cock.

For a moment they continue like this, Shane panting above Ilya while Ilya takes him deeper and fingers him, opening him up, getting him ready for Ilya’s cock, which Shane continues to stroke half-heartedly, the best he can with how overstimulated he must be. Shane whines and moans above him as Ilya sucks more of his cock down, bobbing his head as Shane’s free hand tangles in his curls and encourages him. Ilya adds a third finger and thrusts deeply into Shane, curling just so, making Shane whine with it.

Finally – *finally* – once Shane’s body is taught as a bow and ready to be played, Ilya removes his fingers from Shane’s hole and pops off his cock, lips swollen and red, a trail of spit hanging between his mouth and Shane’s cock. Shane pushes him down, and Ilya doesn’t complain, just watches as Shane slicks his cock up with lube then lines himself up. Before he knows it, Shane’s sunk down onto him, head thrown back, hands on Ilya’s chest, lower lip caught between his teeth. Fuck, he’s so gorgeous like this. *This* is the Shane Ilya always wants to remember – blown open with want, filled with love and aching to please Ilya. *This* is his Shane.

Ilya’s hands catch Shane’s hips again, and he digs his fingers in as Shane grinds down on his cock, taking more of him this time.

“Touch yourself,” Ilya instructs, and Shane does. He strokes his own dick and thumbs at his slit and balances his other hand back against Ilya’s thigh. Their breathing syncs as Ilya watches Shane, and Shane puts on a fucking show, one that Ilya would definitely subscribe to, if he could. He grinds down on Ilya’s cock, taking more and more of him with every move, and Ilya’s eyes, hooded with love and want, finally slide closed as he lets his head fall back and thrusts up into Shane, moaning Shane’s name as he goes.

Shane rides him and Ilya runs a hand through his hair as he lets himself be pleased. The sex has always been off the charts, but something about this tonight feels sacred, like he can *feel* Shane’s apology in the fervent way he takes all of Ilya’s cock into him, how he moans Ilya’s name like it’s a fucking *prayer*, how he reaches for Ilya’s face and lightly caresses his cheek with a quiet ‘*hey, look at me, Ilya.*’

It’s enough to send Ilya over the edge, but he holds on just a little longer. He holds Shane’s gaze and then grabs for his hand, tangling their fingers together, helping Shane balance. His other hand finds Shane’s cock and strokes, and Shane tries to keep their gazes locked but soon drops his head back again, moaning in pleasure.

“Fuck, Ilya, I’m gonna come so soon, I’m gonna fucking –” He stops and breathes, and Ilya picks up the pace, thrusting up into Shane.

“Come for me, Shane,” Ilya growls, and Shane cries out Ilya’s name as he comes, strings of it spurting from his cock, coating Ilya’s chest and stomach. “Fuck,” Ilya moans, and he’s coming, too, inside of Shane, filling him and thrusting as he rides out the waves of his orgasm. It’s like a tide breaking, or the current of a river pulling him home. It’s like knowing

he's where he belongs, which is right here, Shane collapsed on his chest and kissing his neck with dizzying little kisses that leave Ilya's sweaty skin hot where Shane's lips touch.

For a moment, they just embrace and breathe together. For a moment, the whole world is still and has stopped moving. For a moment they can just be Shane and Ilya, nothing else but two men who are in love.

Finally, the moment is over and Shane's nose wrinkles.

"Ew," he mumbles, and Ilya kisses the top of his head.

"Let's go shower," Ilya agrees.

They shower together, making out under the water slow and lazy, and Ilya finds it hard to keep his hands off of Shane. He's so fucking stupidly in love that he thinks it might kill him. He wants to live under Shane's skin, to build a home between his ribs so he can feel his heart beating every moment of every day.

Ilya doesn't want to fight at work anymore, but he doesn't know how to ask for that. That seems off limits. So instead he kisses Shane like tomorrow will never come, like they don't have to be up in seven hours for brunch shift, like they can just live in the here and now and not worry about the later.

After their skin is red from the warm water and towel dried, they collapse into their bed together in this home they share. Shane immediately tangles around Ilya, twining their legs and arms together, holding onto Ilya tightly like he might disappear.

"I'm not going anywhere, Shane," Ilya promises, and Shane sighs into Ilya's chest as his fingers trail up and down the knobs of Ilya's spine like he's mapping mountains.

"Promise?" Shane asks weakly, like he doubts the orbital pull he has on Ilya.

"I swear it," Ilya reassures him, as he kisses the top of Shane's head.

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