

a drag path, etched in the surface

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77384991) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77384991>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Post-Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers) , POV Shane Hollander , Autistic Shane Hollander , Memories , Evidence of Mutual Pining , Slice of Life , Domestic Fluff , very light angst , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Soft Ilya Rozanov , Happy Ending , Brief mention of dementia , Photographs , Married Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Language:	English
Collections:	Works to reread
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-09 Words: 5,292 Chapters: 1/1

a drag path, etched in the surface

by [justhockey](#)

Summary

It kind of looks like junk, at first. Just a random collection of items, like the lost property box at the arena for things the cleaners find after games. But Shane quickly realises that the collection isn't random at all.

No, this is a box of memories.

Ilya's memories of Shane.

Notes

Title from *Drag Path* by Twenty one Pilots.

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

There's an undercurrent of discomfort simmering just beneath Shane's skin.

It's not anything major; he probably wouldn't have noticed it at all if he hadn't had such a blissful few weeks. But after his wedding, and his honeymoon, and finally getting to just *be* with Ilya - to live with him, and do life with him, and love him out loud after so many years of loving him in secret - the start of the season kind of feels like a storm looming on the horizon.

He's excited for training camp. He's excited to finally become a part of the Centaurs instead of just being Ilya's *WAG*, as the team had unfortunately taken to calling him since the wedding. But it's still...a lot.

Shane doesn't like change and he never has done. It makes his brain feel fuzzy and like his skin is stretching tight over too-big bones.

He used to cry when he was a kid in school and suddenly the routine was changed. When his mom got new washing powder that smelled different and made his clothes scratchy, he refused to change out of his pyjamas until she washed all of his clothes with the old powder. He's used the same stick tape since he was twelve, and the same brand of skates, and stick, and pads. He even turned down a deal for another brand of equipment, just because he couldn't make the change.

The point is, he's a man of routine. He doesn't like it when it's disrupted. Which means he urgently needs to find his copy of *Cold War: The Amazing Canada-Soviet Hockey Series of 1972* as soon as possible.

Reading it at the start of the season has accidentally become a habit of Shane's, and with all the upheaval of being outed, and getting *married*, and moving to Ottawa, and signing with the Centaurs, Shane needs the familiarity of his unintentional comfort read. Except he can't fucking find it. He knows he packed it, obviously; everything from his place in Montreal is now (mostly) unpacked in the home he finally gets to share with Ilya. He just doesn't know where the damn book *is*.

Ilya is out for lunch with Shane's mom - of course he is, where else would he be? - so Shane takes advantage of the empty house and decides to search for it.

(If Ilya were here he'd offer to help, and then within five minutes he'd have Shane face down on the bed, crying on his tongue or fingers or cock. They're both kind of insatiable, now that they live together full time and don't have to hide. It's a blessing and a curse. Mostly a blessing.)

Normally Shane is organised to the point of obsession. Everything has a place and everything needs to be *in* said place. But Bood, Haas, and Wyatt had helped Shane and Ilya with the move, and while many hands might make light work, they also make *messy* work. His system had been fudged up, and this is the price he has to pay.

And look, Shane knows he could just order a new book and have it here by first thing tomorrow morning. But. The spine on his copy is perfectly cracked, and he's made little notes throughout it, and there's a little *I love you* scrawled in the back of it that Ilya left there one time. It just wouldn't be the same if it wasn't *his*. So.

He's on his knees, rooting around in the bottom of their closet - because he knows a few boxes got stored there while they were unpacking - when he finds a cardboard box. It's bigger than a shoebox but smaller than a packing box, and though Shane doesn't remember it, he figures it's worth a try just to rule it out.

He flips the lid open and is disappointed, but not surprised, to see that his book isn't there. What *is* in there has Shane pausing, though.

It kind of looks like junk, at first. Just a random collection of items, like the lost property box at the arena for things the cleaners find after games. But Shane quickly realises that the collection isn't random at all.

No, this is a box of memories.

Ilya's memories of Shane.

There's one of those old fashioned matchbooks that - when Shane looks closely - is from the hotel they'd stayed in in Toronto, when they did the CCM shoot back in 2010. The shoot that Ilya had arranged. The one where Shane made the best decision of his life by giving Ilya his room number. Because that's where all of it began. Shane wouldn't have his husband, and his dog, and his supportive family and friends, if it hadn't been for the very first time they hooked up in that hotel.

If, back then, someone had told him he would end up marrying the impossibly arrogant Russian, well. Shane would never have believed them. (He would have wanted to, though).

There's a pile of receipts paper-clipped together that Shane, as he flicks through, realises are from all the hotel rooms they'd booked over the years. The ones they would meet in before they dared to let each other into their homes - into their *hearts* - and so they'd book a room on a different floor of the hotel the team was staying in.

That's how their love began, after all.

Just a series of rooms. Anonymous, and nondescript, and absent of anything important except for them - except for the thing that they were building together.

The next item is a single glove. It's thick and woollen, knitted in the Voyageurs iconic blue and red. It was Shane's. One he had accepted he'd lost years ago, and so he finally threw the other one out. But clearly he must have just left it at Ilya's at some point.

Shane doesn't know whether to laugh or cry.

There's a drinks coaster from the hotel bar they drank at when they were in Tampa for the All-Star Game, back in 2017. The one where Ilya kissed Shane's cheek on the ice. The one

where they talked, finally, about the way they felt - about the fact that the thing between them had become so much more than either of them ever intended. There's a faint ring stained onto the coaster in the shape of a beer bottle, and the corner is peeling up a little, like someone had been playing with it.

Shane.

It's *Shane's* coaster - the one that he'd nervously fiddled with as they sat at the bar and talked for the first time in months. Since Shane ran. Since he almost ruined everything.

He thinks about Ilya slipping it into his pocket after Shane left. He thinks about him carrying it around with him, taking it back to his hotel room, taking it from Tampa, to Boston, to Ottawa with him, just because. Because it was a memory of Shane - of *them* - and Ilya thought it was worth keeping.

"Fucking hell, Ilya," Shane whispers into the silence of the room.

He's also got an information pamphlet folded in the box - one that Shane instantly knows is from the tiny convenience store near his cottage. He knows Ilya never went there, so he must have swiped it from the cottage without Shane noticing. Another memory to collect...to hoard like treasure. Because the cottage was the place they both said their first *I love you*, and the place where they decided they were going to make it work, no matter what. The place that allowed them true freedom, for the very first time since they'd met each other.

Finally, there's an electric candle. One of those small ones made to look like a tea light.

There were already tears welling in his eyes, but the sight of that instantly sends them rolling down his cheeks.

It's one of the candles Shane had used to propose with. After the almost-plane-crash, when Shane had briefly felt like he was dying - like if Ilya's heart stopped, then surely Shane's would too - and he had decided enough was enough. He loved Ilya more than anything and he wanted to spend the rest of his life doing exactly that: loving him openly, proudly.

So he'd said *fuck it* to the ten-year plan, bought a ring and four dozen electric candles, and he'd gotten down on one knee to ask the biggest, most important question of his life.

And Ilya said yes.

It was the best thing that has ever happened to Shane. *Ilya* is the best thing that has ever happened to Shane.

There's not a single moment of loving Ilya that he would ever change. Despite the fear, and the secrecy, and the heartache, he wouldn't do any of it differently. He could wish they'd figured it out quicker, or wish the falling had hurt less, but then they wouldn't be *them*. Everything they've been through has led to this.

Everything they have now, is because of everything they couldn't have *then*.

And clearly Ilya agrees.

Because this little box of treasures is a love letter to them. It's proof of all the moments that Ilya was thinking about Shane, all the moments that matter to him, all the moments that he wanted to remember. They had been two boys pretending to be men, in a hotel room in Toronto and - to Ilya - it had been something worth holding onto, even then. And he's never let go since.

Shane remembers when the plane almost went down - that day lives inside of his bones, tattooed onto his ribcage by the frantic beat of his heart. He remembers the messages Ilya had sent to him, beautiful and poetic and so absolutely devastating, because he had thought they would be his last. He'd said: *I love you. Always. Maybe from the first time I saw you.*

Shane hadn't truly considered the weight of that statement until now, sitting here surrounded by tiny memories from all the moments they'd stolen together, starting right from the very first one.

Ilya really has loved him since the beginning.

Shane's not sure what he's done to deserve Ilya's devotion, but it's something that he treasures. That he holds close and keeps safe, because he knows how precious it is - knows just how hard it is for his husband to give away his affection, and his trust, and his love.

Shane almost misses the last thing in the box.

His eyes are already flooded with tears that make his vision all blurry, and the brown envelope right at the bottom blends in almost seamlessly with the cardboard. He reaches a hand in to get it, and it takes a few tries before he can get his fingers underneath it in order to get a grip on it.

When he finally pulls it out and turns it over, the word *boring* is written on it in Ilya's chicken scratch handwriting.

He opens the unsealed envelope and carefully removes the contents. Shane furrows his brows, not fully understanding what he's looking at, at first. But then it clicks.

It's a stack of Polaroid pictures.

Shane knows Ilya has a camera, remembers him snapping a couple of pictures now and again, but never seriously. As far as he knew, it wasn't exactly a hobby of his husband's. Just a thing he picked up whenever he remembered that he had it. He can't even remember the last time he saw Ilya with it.

He looks closely at the first photograph.

The colours have been muted with time, but it's obviously of a man sitting on the edge of a bed. The covers are pooled around his hips but he's clearly naked, his bare back facing the camera and the slightest hint of his ass on display. The guy's shoulders are hunched, and his hair is dark, and the hotel room is...familiar. In an instant, everything falls into place.

The man is Shane, all of eighteen years old, in a hotel room in Toronto after the very first time he and Ilya hooked up. The same one the matchbook is from. Shane doesn't even remember hearing the click of the camera.

He stares at it for a moment longer, then moves it to the back of the pile to reveal the next image.

What he sees makes him gasp.

It's taken through an open door, looking into a steamy bathroom. The glass of the shower is frosted, so it isn't revealing. The only thing that's visible is the silhouette of a man with his hands raised to wash his hair. The man is Shane, of course. He knows it in an instant. He's in Ilya's shower at his place in Boston.

Shane's heart stutters in his chest, skipping a beat and then suddenly beating much too fast.

The next picture is a close-up of Shane's face. He's fast asleep - at Ilya's, obviously - looking younger than he can ever remember feeling. The expression he wears is unguarded, peaceful, like he's sleeping soundly for the first time in far too long. Shane hates that he recognises when it's from; he hates the way the memory of it still makes him ache, even after all these years. Even with a shared home, and a dog, and matching rings on their fingers.

Because it was when Ilya had asked him to stay - when he cooked for Shane, and they'd called each other by their names, and Shane had ran away.

He'd almost ruined it all that day.

In the aftermath he had found Rose, and while he'll never regret that, he will always feel so incredibly guilty for the way he walked out on Ilya. For the way he made both of them suffer while he tried to figure himself out.

He thinks of his big, tough, Russian husband, buying ginger ale and the ingredients for tuna melts. He thinks about him working up the courage to ask Shane to stay, and snapping a picture of him sleeping in order to commemorate the moment. And then he thinks of the look on Ilya's face as Shane fled.

It makes him want to throw up a little.

Because underneath it all, behind the façade Ilya shows to the rest of the world, he truly is just the biggest sweetheart. He's soft, and gentle, and kind to a fault. He's patient, and understanding, and he gives Shane - and everyone he cares about - so much grace, even when they don't always deserve it.

He has a bigger heart than anyone Shane has ever met.

There's not a thing on this earth Shane wouldn't do for his husband. He's stormed out of the commissioner's office for Ilya, and he's faced the world's judgement for him, and he'll weather anything else that's thrown at them. He'd carry it all on his shoulders just to keep it from ever touching Ilya.

He'd drop gloves, tank his career, burn the whole damn world down around them, all for his husband.

He hates, more than anything, that he was ever the reason that Ilya was pain. And he remains grateful every day that they made it here, anyway...that they survived. And now, finally, they get to just *live*.

He brushes his tears away, then wipes his fingers on his sweats so the damp doesn't warp the photographs. Then he takes a breath and looks at the next one.

It's more recent than the others. Darker, too, shot late in the evening. It's at the cottage, clearly taken from somewhere inside the house. It shows the back of Shane, his shoulders draped with a blanket as he sits by the roaring fire-pit.

It's the first time they ever went together, he thinks. That summer after Shane's injury, when both of them had chosen to be brave. They'd said it was just for the next two weeks, just a little pocket of time they could create for themselves before the real world crept back in. But their love was too big and too beautiful to squeeze into such a short amount of time, and what began as a couple of stolen weeks turned into the rest of their lives.

When Shane looks back, he thinks - at the time - that was the happiest he had ever been in his life. And god, how lucky he is that it's only gotten better since then.

There are more pictures. One of Shane sleeping soundly on Ilya's chest, with Ilya's content smile visible right at the top of the picture. Then there's finally one Shane remembers - him smiling at the camera after helping Ilya move into his house in Ottawa. There's Shane hunched over the breakfast table, wearing plaid pyjamas with Ilya's Centaur's hoodie over the top. He looks sleep-soft, and he's eating while reading a book. He's in the middle of pushing his glasses back up after they slid down his nose.

The next one draws more tears from Shane: a photo of the plastic rings that Jade and Ruby had married them with.

He remembers that day so clearly - the way his heart was so full of love that it didn't feel like it fit inside his chest. By that point Shane had already known for years that Ilya was it for him, but that day only solidified it. It only proved that there was no future for Shane that didn't include Ilya right by his side.

They still have those rings. They keep them in pride of place on the dresser in their bedroom, right in front of one of their wedding photos.

Next there is a shot of Shane sleeping on the couch, Anya curled up peacefully on his stomach. One of his hands is resting on her head and the other is drooping off the couch with his glasses hanging loosely from the tips of his fingers. A silly, nothing moment, in the grand scheme of their life together. And yet it was something that Ilya wanted to freeze in time. A moment that he wanted to preserve.

When he gets to the last photograph in the stack, Shane feels a burst of sadness. It's irrational, of course, but he isn't quite ready for this to end yet. He's appreciated every single second of

getting to see their love story through Ilya's eyes, and even though it's not *over* - they'll have the rest of their lives to make a million more memories just like these ones - he still hesitates before looking at the last picture.

He lets out a quiet sob the second he realises what he's looking at.

It's a little blurry, like it was snapped quickly. It's clearly taken through the gap left by an open door, and it's of Shane's back and his reflection as he looks in a full length mirror. He's wearing his wedding tux and adjusting his bow tie, and his mom is just barely visible in the corner. He's smiling so wide that his eyes and nose are all scrunched up in the mirror's reflection.

Ilya wasn't supposed to see him before the ceremony, but he must have snuck away just for this - just to capture a glimpse of one of the biggest moments in their decade-long love story.

"Fucking hell, baby," Shane whispers, wiping away yet more tears as he stares at the picture.

It was the best day of Shane's entire life. Sometimes, even two months later, he still wakes up smiling just from the memory of their wedding. Of the day they promised themselves to each other for the rest of eternity. It will be the biggest achievement Shane ever reaches; no matter how many more cups, or awards, or trophies he wins - no matter how much fame he garners, or money he earns - nothing will ever mean more to him than getting to call Ilya his husband.

"Shane? What's going on?"

Shane startles at the sound of Ilya's voice.

He hadn't heard him arrive home, let alone climb the stairs and make his way to their bedroom. He looks up from where he's sitting on the floor. Ilya is standing in the doorway, leaning against the doorframe with wide, curious eyes. He's wearing a sweater Shane's parents had bought him for his birthday, and the pair of jeans that make his ass look ridiculously good.

Shane meets Ilya's gaze with watery eyes and a smile spread so wide across his face.

"Are you okay? What are you-"

Shane holds up the stack of Polaroid's in answer to the question Ilya hasn't even had the chance to ask yet. He looks at them, recognition dawning on his face as a smile slowly begins to curl at the corners of his mouth.

"Oh. You found it."

"I was looking for my book, I didn't mean to," Shane defends himself.

Ilya just shakes his head, closing the distance between them so he can sink to the floor beside Shane.

"Is okay," he says. "It was not really a secret."

“You never told me,” Shane points out.

Ilya hums. He glances at the other objects scattered across the floor - the matchbook, the glove, the coaster - and he chuckles. Then he reaches out a hand, palm-up, curling his fingers as he silently asks Shane to hand the pictures over. Hesitantly, like he doesn't want to part with them, Shane places them in Ilya's outstretched hand.

He flicks through them quickly, sometimes smiling, sometimes laughing, until he's back to the beginning again.

“I couldn't, at first,” Ilya begins. “I was, *god* - I was so in love, so, *so* fast. But we - we were lying to ourselves and each other for a long time.”

Shane nods in understanding, rests his hand on Ilya's thigh and squeezes reassuringly.

“If I had shown you these in the beginning, well. There's no way you could have seen yourself through my eyes and not known how much I loved you.”

Shane lets out an embarrassing whine, listing forwards until his forehead comes to rest on Ilya's shoulder. His heart fucking *aches* with how much he loves this man. And he's right, of course. The photographs are filled to the brim with adoration, and affection, and love. Right from the very first one.

If Shane had seen these, he would have known in an instant.

Ilya's hand settles on the back of Shane's head, his fingers scratching at his scalp for a moment, until Shane sits up. Ilya doesn't move his hand away, though, just keeps it resting on Shane's neck, his thumb rubbing back and forth over Shane's flickering pulse.

“And after? Once we were together for real?”

Ilya shrugs one shoulder. “It felt, I don't know the word? Not scary, but - like you would see too much of me?”

“Vulnerable?” Shane offers.

“Da. Yes. Vulnerable,” he agrees. “But I am glad you found them. You deserve to know how I see you. How I have *always* seen you.”

Ilya smiles so sweetly at Shane, and there's a gorgeous splash of pink colouring his cheeks. Not quite in embarrassment, but something softer than that. Like he's feeling exposed, but in a good way. *Seen*, perhaps.

Shane reaches up to curl his hand around Ilya's wrist, lets his thumb press down on Ilya's pulse like he is doing to Shane's.

“You love me,” Shane says. It isn't a question.

Ilya grins. “Yes. I love you. More than anything, *kótik*. Even if my mind goes away one day, I want to always remember this. You.”

Shane knows that Ilya worries one day he'll lose his memory like his father did. Shane worries, too. But he won't ever let Ilya forget their love. He'll remind him of it every single day if he has to.

He turns his head, kisses the top of Ilya's wrist.

"I can't believe you kept all of this."

Ilya shuffles closer, their knees bumping together as he leans in to press a kiss to Shane's nose, then the freckles on both of his cheeks, and then the centre of his forehead. Shane can't help but scrunch his nose up, giggling under the uninhibited affection.

"For a long time, it was all I had. All I was allowed to keep."

Shane gets it.

For years they'd had to delete all the selfies they'd sent each other while they were apart, delete the more incriminating messages, delete the handful of photos they'd actually been brave enough to take together.

For years, they weren't allowed to keep proof of their love because it was too much of a risk.

Since they were unintentionally outed, Shane has had to pay for extra iCloud storage on his phone. Every single day he snaps a dozen pictures - of Ilya sleeping, of Ilya with Anya, of them cuddled up together on the couch, or eating dinner, or on dates out in public. He has his parents take pictures of them whenever they're together, and makes the Centaurs send over any photos they take of them as well.

He's hoarding them like they're a precious commodity - a thing that could be stolen from him at any moment. It's probably going to take a while for him to get used to the fact that they won't be.

He wishes he had some pictures of Ilya from when all of this began - some of them *together*, even - but he's grateful for the few snapshots they do have. The ones Ilya had taken in stolen moments and kept safe for years, like evidence of all that they are to each other.

"You stole my glove," Shane remarks, his voice thick with emotion.

Ilya scoffs. "You left it, is not my fault."

"You could have given it back."

Ilya hums like he's considering it, then smirks as he says, "No."

"You're like a magpie, hoarding all your treasures," Shane teases him.

But Ilya just leans in, kissing Shane properly this time. It's soft, chaste, just a brief peck of their lips. It sets Shane's blood on fire still, even after all these years. He doubts there will ever come a day when his husband's kiss doesn't thrill him.

“*You* are my treasure,” Ilya says. “Zolotse moye.”

Shane shudders, pushing in for another kiss. And then another. And then one more, just because he can. Because there’s nothing Ilya won’t give him, and nothing he ever has to hold back from anymore.

“I love you, baby,” Shane murmurs against Ilya’s lips.

“Ya tebya lyublyu,” Ilya whispers back.

When Ilya pulls away he makes a move like he’s going to stand up, and Shane instantly grabs his arm to stop him.

He’s not sure why, it’s not like this spot on the floor is all that comfortable, but he just wants to stay in this moment for a little bit longer. It feels like taking a walk down memory lane, recapping the way that they fell in love with each other - the way they so diligently made time for each other, even while still pretending it didn’t mean a thing.

Ilya laughs, covering Shane’s hand where it’s resting on his arm as he sits back down.

“Let me get my camera,” he says. “We should take another one, no?”

And, well. Shane can hardly say no to that, can he?

Ilya is barely gone ten seconds, just to his bedside cabinet where he rifles around in his bottom drawer for a second before pulling out his Polaroid camera. It’s pretty compact and, for some inexplicable reason, a soft, baby pink colour. It’s hilarious and endearing at the same time.

When he sits back down on the floor beside Shane, he’s all teeth and smiles, clearly happy to take yet another photograph with Shane. Every single time Shane has held his phone up to ask for a selfie in the past couple of months, Ilya has leaned in eagerly - wrapped an arm around Shane, or pressed a kiss to his cheek, or even his lips.

He’s no less excited for this one, as he leans close and rests his head against Shane’s, holding the camera up in front of them.

“Say mozzarella,” Ilya says. He thinks *say cheese* is a hilarious expression, and has been substituting different kinds in for almost as long as Shane has known him.

“Mozzarella,” Shane says dutifully, grinning big and wide.

He notes that the click of the camera is quiet, almost silent, which explains why he never noticed any of them being taken. Why, in all the years Ilya had been secretly capturing moments he thought were deserving of being remembered, Shane never once caught him in the act.

Or maybe he was just so entirely wrapped up in Ilya that everything else simply faded into the background. Both options seem as likely as each other.

It doesn't take long for the photograph to print and develop.

Shane looks over Ilya's shoulder, resting his chin on it so he can watch as it slowly takes shape on the little square of photo paper. The image is, objectively, pretty bad. They're both smiling so wide that their faces are scrunched up, it's a little bit blurry from movement, and it's clear that Shane has been crying from the rings of red around his eyes. But their faces are smushed together and they look about as happy as they do in all of their wedding photos.

It's maybe Shane's favourite photo ever.

He kisses Ilya's cheek and Ilya turns into it, melting into Shane's touch like it's his favourite thing on earth.

Ilya adds the picture to the stack he's collected over the years, then goes to slip them back into the brown envelope. Shane reaches out a hand, resting it over the top of Ilya's to stop him. He shakes his head.

"Maybe we can put them in an album instead?" He suggests. "We don't have to hide anymore."

They can keep the album on a shelf and pull it out to show people when they get visitors. Though, maybe only the PG-13 ones.

Ilya looks at him for a moment, his eyes sparkling with complete adoration. It makes Shane's heart sing. And then Ilya dives on him. Their mouths clash together as Ilya all but tackles Shane to the floor, swinging his leg over Shane's waist so he's straddling him. He grapples for Shane's wrists, pinning his arms down on either side of his head as he absolutely devours him.

The kiss is fierce, and wanting, and filled with a decade of love and joy and memories.

"I love you, I love you, I love you," Ilya murmurs between kisses.

Shane giggles. "They're only pictures," he says, even though he knows it's not true. He knows it's so much more than that.

"It's our life."

"And it's a good one."

Ilya hums, kisses Shane sweetly one, two, three times. "A great one. Perfect, even."

Shane finds that he's inclined to agree. He'd go through all the confusion and pain and hardships a million times over, as long as it brought him to this very moment here: laughing with his husband on the floor of the home that they share together. There's not a single thing missing from his life, not a single thing they could add to it right now in order to make it any better.

"Thank you," Shane says, "for the memories and the photographs. Thank you for our life."

Ilya smiles sweetly, brushes the tip of his finger across the freckles on Shane's nose and cheeks. Shane lifts his head up to kiss the inside of Ilya's wrist.

"Anything for you, moya lyubov," Ilya promises him. And then, "Your book is in the office, by the way."

Shane groans, dramatically flopping back down onto the floor. Ilya laughs, loud and carefree and lovely.

And then they kiss and kiss and kiss.

End Notes

this has been sitting half-written in my notes for weeks so i decided to finish it :)

also i've seen so much discourse about AI lately so just to make it clear: i have never, and will never use AI. not for *anything*, but especially not while writing. i wouldn't even know *how* to use it (is chatgpt a website? app? what?) but even if i did, i would genuinely rather die :)

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