Lovers (Gross)

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Lovers (Gross)

by BardicPhoenix

Summary

He feels wild, untethered, something inside him like an animal rattling its cage, pacing, ripping the plaster off the walls. Like he’s a bug in a jar and he’s the one shaking it and nothing makes sense anymore, but also… looking at Ilya, the best hockey player in the world, struggling to get his clothes off fast enough for his liking, maybe everything does.

After the day they just had, the boys take care of each other.

(A continuation of the last scene in Ep. 6)

Notes

Hope you enjoy this one! Heavily inspired by the fact that we're probably going to have a big time jump at the beginning of season two and I want to see as much of our boys as possible. Also, yes, this is the first time I've written, let's say, heavier smut, so I hope it's hot.

See the end of the work for more notes

The car door shuts with a dull thud that cuts through their comfortable, warm silence like a line break on a page. Shane almost flinches, so caught up in the air that followed them out of his parents' house all the way back to the cottage. A soft air, a sweet one, and yet, he feels the constant sting of tears somewhere behind his eyes, where he's still afraid and the sunlight hasn't quite reached.

"Shane?"

Ilya is looking at him with an unreadable expression from the other side of his sensible, boring car that's good in the snow.

"I'm okay, sorry", Shane tries. He gets an eye-roll and that lopsided smirk for his efforts, the one that takes hold of his entire face, sharpening and softening it at the same time.

"You say sorry too much. Is okay." Ilya inclines his head like he's thinking through something important but his eyes are trained on Shane and Shane, only. "Was a lot, today, yes?"

Shane thinks about it for a moment, fiddling with the car keyes. Was it? Ilya closes the door on his side of the car and starts walking towards the cottage, throwing a glance back over his shoulder.

"You don't think so?" he says, when Shane's silence has apparently stretched too long.

"No, I just-" he scrambles to catch up with him "I don't know, I feel sort of stupid for worrying so much, now. They were so … normal about it." Still, his hands shake as he fits the key in the lock and pushes the door open.

"Hm."

"And your family -" Ilya brushes past him, one hand drifting down his back to settle possessively on his hip, squeezing "- your family, that's like. A whole other world of scary, this was … nothing, in comparison" A tight chuckle forces its way out of his throat. He kicks the door closed. He doesn't look up.

"Shane."

He doesn't look up.

"Shane."

The floor is a little scuffed in the entrance area.

"Любимый."

He looks up. Ilya's face is soft, his lips pulled into a gentle smile that can't quite contain a twinge of sadness, a terrible sadness, too deep and wide to be put into words. Maybe it's the

same sadness that lives in Shane, maybe it isn't. But on Ilya's perfect, golden face, it looks achingly familiar.

"What?" Shit. His voice sounds shaken, gritty. Like the gravel flying from under his dad's car as it gets smaller and smaller on the road. Get yourself together, Hollander. Don't fall apart now.

But like Ilya can hear what he's thinking, he raises both hands to hold his face, all gentle yet commanding, holding him in place and holding him together at the same time. His vision gets blurry as Ilya strokes a thumb under his eyes - whether there's tears to catch, he's not sure. In a fit of madness, he wonders if Ilya can catch the ones that haven't fallen yet, so that they never have to. Heal something that hasn't been broken yet.

"Shane. Любимый. Your parents are nice, yes, but scary, still, and you're you. Always worrying. Comes with the package, no? And don't compare yourself to me, is terrible idea. I always win."

He feels his frozen face crack open into a smile, his cheekbones pressing into fingertips that are still holding him tightly.

„Asshole." Somehow, it comes out not quite right; from his own grinning mouth and flavored with tears it sounds more like an endearment, like baby, sweetheart, darling, *love*.

Ilya's smile widens like he heard it too. His fingers loosen their vicelike grip on his face and, after tracing the constellations of freckles on his cheeks, pull him into a quick kiss. Just a soft, insistent press of lips. The type of kiss that, for the longest time, felt forbidden between them, like something stolen that would have to inevitably be returned. Not theirs, but someone else's reality. Shane sighs as Ilya pulls back.

There's a moment of quiet before Ilya pats him on the cheek, kicks off his shoes only to place them neatly next to each other by the door, and turns to strut into the kitchen. Shane frowns.

"So, Hollander, up for a run?" he says, his tone a little too casual, opening the fridge and pulling out a can of ginger ale "I had enough pasta to power jet, maybe you have chance of beating me now, when I am slow." He wiggles the can at Shane, grinning.

And Shane suddenly gets it.

The face-holding. The jokes about their rivalry, the little competitions. The gentle questions. The lingering, steady touches. An offer for physical activity outside.The shoes. Ginger Ale.

Ilya is taking care of him. And he's doing it perfectly. Knows his rituals and tells, what calms him, what makes his breathing slow, what settles him back into his body when everything has become too much, knows all of that well enough to offer it without question.

Knows him.

Since fucking rookie season. *The summer before.*

"I love you."

Ilya blinks, puts down the ginger ale on the counter.

“Ilya, I *love* you.” He suddenly needs him to hear it, truly hear it, more than anything. Needs him to. The sentence burns in his chest and on the way out on his tongue. Ilya raises both arms like in surrender.

“Okay okay, I love you too, Hollander, what-”

In two, three, four long strides, Shane is on him, grabbing his hands from where they’ve frozen in the air and pinning them to the kitchen counter. Swallows Ilya’s gasp in a kiss, hard and deep immediately, tasting pasta and desire, burying his hands in his beloved curls and tugging. He pulls on his lower lip with his teeth and listens to him breathe out a shocked, stuttering moan, feels the shiver that runs down Ilya’s spine as he raises his arms to embrace him in return, circling his waist. His body is warm against his, so warm every time, and the familiarity of it takes his breath away, every inch of skin where they meet aflame. Ilya’s curls tight in one hand, he pulls his head back to trace the lines of his muscled neck down to his shoulder, tearing, ripping, grasping at the collar, following the path his fingers make with his lips and pressing wet open-mouthed kisses along his collarbone.

Ilya’s chest rises and falls like he just played a whole game of hockey, each breath a little sigh, making the Boston logo on his shirt sway tauntingly. He can feel his hard cock like a brand inside his shorts and his hips stutter foward, pressing into him, closer closer closer. Suddenly, nothing has ever been more important than getting these clothes off of him, out from between them, he needs Ilya’s warm skin against his more than he needs air. Reluctantly releasing Ilya’s locks, Shane pushes both hands underneath the offending fabric, ripping it up and away when Ilya releases him for a moment, both of them pushing and pulling at shirts and shorts. Ilya swears in Russian at Shane’s buttons and a hysterical giggle escapes him.

Ilya freezes and makes eye contact, open mouthed and disheveled, his shorts halfway down his thighs, the tent of his cock almost comically huge between them.

“Are you alright? You still want?”

And Shane loves him, loves him, loves him.

“Of course I want, I always fucking want-” Shane keeps pulling insistently at Ilya’s underwear “When do I ever not want, oh my god-”

“When you have had stressful day and maybe you need ginger ale and nap?” Ilya’s eyes are so earnest, wide and concerned for him, gentle understanding in the dilated pupils, he can’t even bring himself to make fun of him for how stupidly soft he secretly is. His gruff, vicious boyfriend - god, his *boyfriend* -, always taunting, always teasing, with a heart so soft and cautious. So he slows, straightens up. Watches him carefully hide a twinge of disappointment in his jaw, takes a deep breath. Raises a hand to grasp his nape, stroking his curls back into shape. Leans in closer, cheek to cheek, pressing small kisses to that beautiful mole.

“What I need -” a kiss to his ear, lips tracing freckles “- is you on that couch and your cock in my mouth. Okay?”

The sound Ilya makes is filthy, desparate need.

“Fuck, Shane, yeah okay, I’m gonna -” he pulls away, almost tripping over his shorts in the process that have fully pooled around his ankles “Fuck, you make my legs not work anymore.”

Shane watches him struggle for a moment in disbelief before reaching out an arm to steady him. Ilya leans into him, a full-bodied movement like there’s magnets in their spines, pressing their hopefully finally soon pleasepleaseplease naked bodies together. He has to visibly force himself to pull back and step out of his shorts, kicking at them with a few curses under his breath. Then he’s off, practically running towards the couch, threatening to topple that one lamp again - really gotta put that one in a different spot - and Shane follows him eagerly, pulling off his clothes and folding them on the side table. He feels wild, untethered, something inside him like an animal rattling its cage, pacing, ripping the plaster off the walls. Like he’s a bug in a jar and he’s the one shaking it and nothing makes sense anymore, but also… looking at Ilya, the best hockey player in the world, struggling to get his clothes off fast enough for his liking, maybe everything does.

He stares at him. Ilya naked on his couch is still a visual that feels unreal, like he’s making it up staring at empty space, hoping waiting wishing. But he’s here and he’s breathing hard and he’s pushing the table out of the way and throwing pillows on the floor for Shane to kneel on and staring, panting through an open mouth, at Shane’s aching, leaking cock.

Ilya swallows hard.

Shane drops like his strings have been cut, caught perfectly safe in between Ilya’s knees.

“Fuck, Любимый.”

He presses a kiss to his kneecap, scrapes his teeth over the inside of his thigh, nuzzles into the dormant strength there, and breathes.

“What does that mean?”

Ilya smiles.

“Любимый?”

“Yes, that.”

He reaches a hand out to card through Shane’s hair, scratching gently behind his ears and he can’t suppress a shiver. Barely has the mental capacity to think about suppressing it. He stares at Ilya’s beautiful mouth, at his lips widening around the syllables -

“My Beloved.”

The animal inside his chest settles, startled.

“Oh. *Oh*. Really?” He’s sure his face is bright red but to his endless delight, he can see an answering blush spreading on Ilya’s cheeks and nose. Even his ears have that lovely rose

touch again and Shane decides he wants to see his boyfriend blush every day from now on.

“Yes, but -” Ilya raises his free hand to scratch at his nose, selfconsciously “English is stupid, is better word in Russian.”

Shane presses his grin into Ilya’s thigh. A giggle escapes him.

“Hey it *is!*”

“Sure, Lyu-bee-me”

The hand in his hair freezes for a second before it continues softly petting him.

“Ugh I knew you would be perfect at it immediately.”

Shane shivers at the praise, pressing his face closer to Ilya’s straining, twitching cock. He looks up, catching his gaze, and lets his jaw fall open suggestively, breathing, offering his tongue. Ilya sucks in a breath and Shane grins.

“You know what else I’m good at?”

Ilya huffs a surprised laugh..

“No, what?” Asshole.

“Want me to show you?” He drags his relaxed tongue up his shaft, grinning at Ilya’s gobsmacked expression. The green of his eyes is almost entirely eclipsed by his widened pupils, blown up like he’s on drugs, his mouth agape.

God how he wants to take him apart. He wants it so bad, for a second he thinks the words are coming out of *his* mouth, when -

“Please. *Please* show me.”

There’s no way he could be expected to hold back after that. With an air of practiced ease paired with an everburning eagerness, the same as it has been from that very first time through every single time after, in dark hotel rooms, and now in the sun, he pulls Ilya’s cock into his mouth. They moan in tandem, Shane muffled by the weight and thickness of him, the perfect fullness, the familiar taste. He swirls his tongue around the fat head, licking and sucking at his slit, listens to Ilya gasp and whine, and pushes deeper.

“Fuuuck, Shane.” *Oh* - his voice has already lost its shape entirely. Shane moans around his length, pushing, pushing, pushing deeper, then pulling back and sucking, hard, on the way up.

“Good, good, like that, oh fuck-” He starts bobbing his head faster, pushing Ilya’s fat length a little further into his mouth on each go. God, nine inches. He wants all of it. But there’s so much of him, so much, and when he hits his throat, he has to pull back for a moment to breathe.

“Easy, Любимый, easy -” The endearment does the opposite of deterring him, he’s back with furious determination a moment later. His hands grasp Ilya’s thick thighs, scratching at them, and he hears him moan sharply, the hard, hot length in his mouth twitching. God, he wants to hear that again. He pushes closer, deeper, feeling it hit his throat again, but this time - yes, this, please, yes - he pushes out his tongue and lets it go on, pushes past his need to gag, lets the spit drip out of his mouth, slicking him with one hand.

Ilya’s cursing turns Russian.

Two hands on his cock now, Shane pulls back to lick and kiss at his head again, moaning as he peppers kisses there, breathing harshly. Again, he needs him deep, again. Deeper. He pushes until his lips hit his fingers, moves his hand out of the way to his sack, squeezing and rubbing at his balls, pressing at the space behind them, encouraged by the Russian cursing and the reedy, high pitched quality of Ilya’s voice. And then he pushes further, sucking, licking, needy for it, even though his eyes are watering and distantly, he knows how gross he would find this usually, all spit and tears. It works, this time, Ilya’s hot, thick cock pushing into his throat. His hands in Shane’s hair twitch, fluttering and grasping as he moans, loud and shocked, echoing inside the cottage. His cottage. His boyfriend in his cottage, his boyfriend’s cock in his throat, all his. His.

“Jesus fucking Christ, Shane, fuck mmmmhm-” the hands in his hair turn insistent, pulling him back by the nape. He tries to resist for a moment, pushing a little further in spite, but Ilya just pulls harder at his hair. It feels so fucking good. Moaning low, as much as its possible for sound to escape around the weight in his mouth, he gives in and pulls back, slowly, suckling at the head. Then he looks up, catching Ilya’s gaze.

He looks positively ruined, blazing red and panting, sweating, but in his eyes there is concern for him, even now.

“Fuck, Shane, don’t hurt yourself.” And even though his jaw aches and his eyes are watering, hurt is the furthest possible thing from what he’s feeling. One of Ilya’s hands has slid down to hold his cheek, gently stroking a thumb under his eye. He clears his throat.

“I’m okay.”

“Maybe now, but what if later - don’t want you to hurt, later.” Ilya’s gaze flicks across his face, checking for tells, landing on his eyes. Shane feels his mouth pull into a smile and knows he looks utterly besotted right now.

“It’s okay” he gets out finally, raspy and reedy “you’ll take care of me.”

Ilya breathes in sharply.

“Yeah?”

Shane nods and nuzzles into his hand.

“Yeah, you take such good care of me” he turns his head and kisses Ilya’s fingers, nips at them “Giving me everything I need.”

Ilya's cock twitches hard, leaking, swollen and wet with spit, as he lets out a string of curses. Shane's mouth waters just looking at it.

"Are you gonna give it to me?"

Ilya just stares, wide-eyed and slack-jawed, and, finally, nods.

So Shane gets back to work, sucks him back into his eager, needy mouth. It's easier this time around, now that he knows what to expect and Ilya's cock is already drenched in spit and leaking. There's a moment of resistance when it hits his throat but he pushes past it and keeps going, going, going, until his nose is pressed to the soft, dark hairs at the end of Ilya's happy trail. He stills.

Every one of Ilya's breaths is a moan, every twitch a sigh.

Shane pulls back, pushes forward, settles into a gentle rhythm, slowly becoming aware of his own cock fucking leaking onto this carpet that he's going to have to burn after this, but worth it, so worth it, for the whining moans from Ilya's throat and the feeling of completeness in the back of his head, the purring in his chest. He would touch himself but his hands are busy squeezing and scratching at Ilya's thighs again, and honestly, he isn't sure if he'd even have the brain capacity to get a grip on himself.

Then, Ilya's hips twitch up, and Shane almost comes.

"Sorry, sorry, fuck, is too good, I can't-" Ilya sounds apologetic, why, it's perfect, he wants it again. Needs it, again. He pulls off, rasping, mindlessly turned on:

"No please, give it to me, it's mine, please-" and descends on his cock again, pushing all the way, with ease this time, while Ilya curses what sounds like his entire line of ancestors. His hips twitch, again, and this time, they don't stop, fucking his face in tiny, desperate increments to the sound of Ilya's gasping moans. There's a buzzing in the back of his head. It's probably just his blood rushing, his heart beating, his need to breathe, but it sounds like applause in a stadium and the wind in the reeds outside and he craves its crescendo. It sounds like Ilya does too, his moans tipping into real desperation, and his hands once again scramble, tangle in his hair in the attempt to pull Shane off of him. Oh nonono. He nuzzles deeper.

"Oooh Shane, Shane, Любимый, don't - I can't -"

Shane attempts to swallow and all he achieves is a slight fluttering of muscles, but it's enough for Ilya to shout, once, and release, twitching and bucking, down his throat. It takes a while, a long while, until he's reduced to shivers and quivering, cock softening and sliding up, slipping out of his mouth. Shane gasps for air and presses a last, almost mournful kiss to its head that makes Ilya twitch and hiss in oversensitivity.

For a moment, there's only the sound of their breathing.

Then Shane remembers his own leaking cock and whimpers, pitifully. He can't even muster up the energy to be embarrassed, though, and Ilya isn't looking for embarrassment anyway. No, he's hauling him up onto the couch, onto his lap, has him, legs spread, over his thighs in

moments, pulling his hips close and claiming his mouth in a bruising kiss. The pressure against his own cock, finally, makes him shiver and shake. He's so close, Ilya is so hot, he can't help but rut frantically against the warm skin of his hip, the perfect V of his pelvis, encouraged by Ilya's grip on his ass, rocking him, whimpers caught between their mouths and on their tongues. Distantly, he wonders if Ilya can taste himself on him, in him, how deep the taste of him goes, but mostly, he's busy coming.

Long ropes of white land on Ilya's chest, drip through his happy trail, as Shane gasps and shouts and empties himself, shivering in Ilya's grasp.

"There you go, Любимый, mmmhmm, good, you did good-"

He lets himself fall against him, nuzzling into his curls, breathing in the smell of his sweat and the warmth of his skin, listening to his soft murmurs until his heart slows and his vision clears. Caught in the safety of Ilya's arms. Safe and cared for, sated, *happy*, even. There was a moment today - today, today, it was today, it feels like years have passed, lifetimes - where it seemed these feelings would never live inside of him again. But the scary thing is over, for now.

Or, *one* scary thing.

But he's fine, he's fine and he's not alone, and the sunlight is warm on his skin.

His skin, not someone else's. *He* gets to have this.

After a while, Ilya's fingers move from soft pets of his hair and scratches on his scalp to grip his chin, instead. Gently first, and then insistent, dragging him from where he's pressing absentminded kisses into Ilya's temple to meet his gaze. His eyes have lost none of their heat, blazing - for him? - half-open and blinking honey-slow.

"Wow, Hollander."

His lips pull into a smile. A chuckle escapes him, and he knows he sounds shy, at odds with what he's been doing for the past… whoever knows how long. Ilya just looks on fondly.

"Yeah?" He can't help but feel a strange need to make sure, that he's doing good, he's done it right "I just - you must've h-had, someone, um, someone else who did. That. For you, before." Ilya's lips twitch, amused.

"No one like you." His heart leaps but surely, he must be trying to be nice.

A small voice in the back of his head reminds him that this is *Ilya Rozanov*, but...

"No?" Ilya frowns at the tone of his voice, like he can read something in it, like an undercurrent on a frequency that Shane can't pick up and has no control over.

"No, Hollander, where is this coming from all of a sudden?"

And he doesn't know, not really. Has no good answer, or maybe just not one he can explain. He forces himself to make eye-contact, wills Ilya to read something in his gaze that he's not

sure he even understands himself. *Look at me, you get me. You know me.*

“I guess I just want to be - be *better* for you. The best” he puts both hands on the sides of Ilya’s face “Like… like you are. For me.”

Whatever Ilya reads in his eyes, it seems to calm him. His lips pull into a wide grin, all shiny teeth and curved lips, and he huffs a laugh.

“You make everything into competition.” Ah. Well, yes. Shane laughs with him, a little. Lets his own forehead rest against his boyfriend’s, lets the laughter breathe. Ilya presses a tiny kiss to his nose.

“No, really, Shane. You have nothing to worry about. You *know* me. We’ve been lovers for like eight years -” He’s interrupted by Shane’s horrified groan.

“Stop saying that word, never say that word again!”

Ilya scoffs and rolls his eyes.

“Why, is true.”

“It doesn’t just mean what you think it means, it implies… sex stuff.”

Ilya looks deeply unimpressed. His eyes flick pointedly between their naked bodies and he smacks him lightly on the asscheek he’s still cradling.

“Yes, and?” Okay, he has a point. However-

“My *mom,* Ilya, you said it in front of my *mom.*”

Ilya flicks his hand in a motion like he’s swatting a fly, clicks his tongue impatiently.

“Eh, lovers means lovers. I love you, you love me, we love. Is grammar, Shane, you should know this.” Oh this romantic asshole.

“Hey!” He pushes at Ilya’s face but he’s just looking at him, intently, a grin unwavering on his face. There’s a moment of quiet as they stare at each other. Then Ilya’s grin melts into something soft and, if he didn’t know any better, almost shy.

“Is not what we’ve been doing?” he says quietly, finally, with something sparkling between the words “Loving each other?”

And he knows what Ilya means, knows it’s probably mostly a joke, an attempt to lighten the mood, maybe, but there’s a glow of vulnerability in his eyes, something that says hey, here I am, are you with me?
And he is. He has been. He will be. *Is grammar, Shane*.

He hangs his head, sighing in defeat and a not insignificant amount of relief, but Ilya catches him by the chin again, stops him in the movement. Meets his eyes and looks at him expectantly.

Finally, Shane smiles, nods. Their lips meet in a kiss like a stamp of approval. When they pull apart, it's only because they're both smiling too much to keep kissing.

"Yeah," Shane says softly "Yeah, it is. Do you remember uh-" he feels himself blushing, embarrassed to even be asking this "Do you remember when it started for you?"

Ilya grins.

"When I fell deeply stupidly in love with boring hockeyplayer?"

"Yes, asshole."

"Hmmm" Ilya lets his head fall back against the couch, thinking. Shane plays with his hair and enjoys the quiet until a grin spreads on Ilya's face and he looks up.

"You fold your clothes after you take them off." Shane frowns.

"Yes, I do."

Ilya rolls his eyes.

"Yeah and since you did, it was-" he gestures vaguely like something's exploding "- poof. Over for me." Shane blinks slowly.

"Ilya, I do that every time."

"Mm-hm."

"I probably did that the first time, when we-" Ilya's grin is so blinding, Shane can barely think over the pounding of his heart "- you can't be telling me - *Ilya*."

"I'm not kidding. It was, what is word?" he snaps his fingers "Charming. Very charming."

"But, after that, it was years before-" Shane huffs a disbelieving, almost hysterical laugh. Ilya chuckles, the sound catching a little.

"What, take you longer? I keep telling you you're slow." And goddamn it all but he loves him to pieces.

"This is not a competition!"

"But if it was, I'd win!"

Shane rolls his eyes, hard.

"It didn't even take me *that* long."

Ilya raises his eyebrows, challenging, always challenging him.

"Oh it didn't?" His tone says that he'll have a hard time believing that.

“Well, I *realized* in Vegas - hey!” Ilya’s already laughing at him “You asshole decided it would be alright not to kiss me the entire night, fuck you!” He’s swatting at him, shoving him, but he knows, and it’s likely obvious to Ilya too, that it’s just an excuse to touch him more. Caresses or friendly slaps, it’s always, *always* about touching him more.

Ilya’s chuckles die down, soften into a warm smile, and it makes Shane’s heart throb.

“Sorry, sorry - you realized, what, 2014?” He nods “But, actually… before that?”

Shane just nods again, biting his lip. He truly doesn’t know why he’s embarrassed about this now of all times, maybe it’s just their playful tone, or the sunny air of the cottage. But maybe it’s also the weight of Ilya’s confession - the entire time, oh god, the entire fucking time - and how his own pales in the light of something so bright.

“What, you want me to guess?” Ilya prods, impatient as always. Shane shakes his head no. Leans forward, kisses Ilya’s brow, his temple, his forehead. His nose. *Любимый. My Beloved.* He swallows, once, hard.

“No, I just. It wasn’t, like, this one big moment for me? Just little ones.” Ilya loops his arms around him, settling all secure around his lower back, stroking his skin slowly.

“Tell me.”

“Okay… like. Your stupid tuna melt-”

“Wasn’t stupid.”

“- and how you kept asking if I was okay, all the time. And chirping me on the ice. Oh and - remember, um. Beginning of ‘11, the All Star game? When you made me wait outside and fucking Scott Hunter was next door?” Ilya’s smile is too smug for his liking.

“Yep.”

“I was so nervous and so stupidly scared and you just laughed at me.” Ilya quirks an eyebrow.

“You liked that I laugh at you.”

“No, asshole, just - “ he knows he’s blushing, can feel the heat of blood rushing to his face “I thought, fuck. I would’ve stood in that hallway *longer* to hear you laugh.”

The look on Ilya’s face is one he hopes he’ll remember when he’s old and grey and they’ve retired to their house with their five rescue dogs. He looks floored, and maybe a little in pain, and maybe like there’s a cage inside of his chest too, and the animal inside just stuck out a paw, for the first time, into the sun. Like unlikely animals becoming friends. Like he feels safe, and known. He looks oh so happy. And then it looks like a thought just hit him and he grins, huffs a laugh, shakes his head like an excited puppy. Shane can’t help but chuckle along with him, even though he has no idea what’s going on.

“What?”

“It is funny.” Ilya bites his lip on a grin “We were so quick to say no, but. Your mom was right. We *have* been in love the entire time.”

Oh. Huh.

It takes a moment for the thought to settle, but then they’re both laughing, giggling hysterically at themselves, at their situation and how ridiculous it is, at their past and how stupid they were. And a little at their future, and how utterly … *possible* it is.

Sitting here, entwined and disgustingly sticky, warm in the sunlight.

Lovers. Gross.

End Notes

Yes, I will be staying at the cottage.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!