Not His Hands

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Not His Hands

by ompalompap

Summary

“Ilya,” he whispers, voice hoarse. “I don’t feel right.”

The hand doesn’t pull away. Instead, it slides lower.

Shane stiffens as fingers trace down his spine, lingering too long, dipping beneath the hem of his shirt. Skin-on-skin contact sends a jolt through him, not pleasure, not comfort, but something sharp and wrong. His breath catches.

Then the hand grips him. Firmly. Possessive. Fingers digging into his ass through his jeans.

Shane jerks slightly, confusion slicing through the fog. His heart stutters, a hard, uneven beat that makes his chest ache.

That’s… not-

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Someone puts something in Shane’s drink. Ilya is not happy.

Notes

Live, laugh, love protective Ilya <3

Chapter 1

The bar is loud in that specific, vibrating way that only happens after a big win.

Music thumps through the floor, bass heavy enough that Shane can feel it in his ribs, in the backs of his knees, in the place where adrenaline still hasn't quite settled.

Laughter spills over itself, drinks clink, someone shouts Shane's name from across the room and he lifts his glass in acknowledgment without even looking.

He's drunk enough to be loose, not enough to be sloppy. That perfect middle ground where everything feels a little brighter, a little funnier, a little more possible.

Ilya is pressed into his side, warm and solid, one arm slung around Shane's waist like it belongs there, because it does. Shane leans into him without thinking, shoulder knocking gently into Ilya's chest when he laughs at something Harris says.

Ilya dips his head to murmur something directly into Shane's ear, voice low and amused, and Shane shivers despite the heat.

"Stop," Shane laughs, half-turning his head. "You're distracting me."

Ilya smiles against his skin, lips brushing the shell of his ear. "You weren't paying attention anyway."

"That's not true," Shane protests weakly.

Ilya hums, clearly unconvinced, and squeezes his hip once before pulling back. His eyes are bright, that sharp blue softened by alcohol and satisfaction, and Shane feels that familiar,

stupid little rush in his chest just from being looked at like that. Like he's something Ilya chose. Like he's still choosing him.

Around them, the group is scattered but connected, Rose perched on a barstool nearby, legs crossed, drink in hand, yelling over the music at Svetlana, who's dancing even though no one else is yet.

Troy and Harris are flirting as always, while Hayden and Jackie hover near the end of the bar, Jackie laughing as Hayden tells some probably exaggerated story with way too much confidence.

It's easy. Comfortable. The kind of night Shane knows he'll remember in flashes later, warm lights, sweat-slicked glass, Ilya's hand always finding him again no matter how often they drift apart.

At some point, Shane's drink is empty.

He notices because he tilts the glass back out of habit and gets nothing but melting ice against his lip. He frowns at it, then glances at Ilya.

"I'm getting another," he says, already stepping away.

Ilya nods easily. "You want me to come?"

Shane shakes his head, giving him a quick kiss. "Stay. I'll be right back."

Ilya watches him go, eyes lingering in a way that makes Shane's chest feel tight and pleased all at once. He weaves his way toward the bar, slipping between bodies, nodding at someone who calls his name, laughing when Rose reaches out to tug briefly at his sleeve as he passes.

The bar itself is packed, three deep in places, bartenders moving fast, all muscle memory and sharp efficiency. Shane leans an elbow against the counter, waiting, tapping his fingers in time with the music. He glances up at the mirror behind the bottles and catches his own reflection for half a second; flushed cheeks, messy hair, eyes bright. Happy.

That's when someone slides in beside him.

"Hey."

The voice is male, smooth in a way that's clearly practiced. Shane turns his head slightly, polite reflex already engaged, and takes in the guy standing way too close for a stranger. He's tall, broad-shouldered, dressed well in a way that feels deliberate, dark button-down, sleeves rolled up, watch glinting under the lights. Confident smile.

Shane offers a neutral one back. "Hello."

"I've seen you around tonight," the guy says, leaning one elbow against the bar like he owns the space. "Thought I'd come say hi."

Shane nods, noncommittal. "Oh, okay."

The guy chuckles, like he's amused by Shane's lack of enthusiasm rather than deterred by it. "You're with the hockey guys, right?"

Shane feels the first flicker of annoyance. He keeps his tone light. "Yeah."

"Thought so. Big game tonight."

"Mm," Shane agrees.

The bartender finally catches his eye, raising an eyebrow in silent question. Shane holds up two fingers, then glances at the guy beside him and adds, “Just one, actually.”

The guy laughs again. “Let me buy it for you.”

Shane turns fully to face him now, expression easy but firm. “No, thanks. I’ve got it.”

“Come on,” the guy says. “One drink. Celebration.”

“I’m fine,” Shane repeats.

The bartender slides a glass toward Shane, and he pulls out his card without breaking eye contact with the stranger. The guy watches him do it, something shifting in his gaze, interest curdling into something sharper.

There’s a beat of silence, filled by the music and the clatter of glasses. The bartender sets Shane’s drink down in front of him, and Shane reaches for it, fingers closing around the cool glass.

“So,” the guy says, undeterred. “You here with someone?”

Shane doesn’t hesitate. He jerks his chin over his shoulder, pointing easily across the bar, toward where Ilya is now laughing at something Troy just said, head tipped back, arm still slung over the back of Shane’s empty stool.

“Yes, my husband,” Shane says.

The guy follows the line of Shane’s gesture, eyes flicking over Ilya in a quick, assessing sweep. When he looks back, his smile hasn’t faded, but it’s changed.

“Huh,” he says. “Didn’t peg you for-“

Shane cuts him off, still smiling. “Yeah.”

“Well,” the guy says finally. “Can’t blame me for trying.”

Shane lifts his drink in a casual salute. “Guess not.”

The guy hesitates, then shifts slightly closer again. “You know,” he says, lowering his voice, “I don’t kiss and tell, if you change your mind-“

“I won’t,” Shane says lightly.

The guy’s smile tightens. “Sure.”

Shane turns away then, conversation clearly over, taking a sip of his drink as he pivots back toward the group. He feels the stranger’s presence linger for a moment longer, then fade as he steps back into the crowd.

Shane doesn’t think about him again.

He slips back into his spot near the group, leaning into Rose as she throws an arm around his shoulders, shouting something about finally getting people to dance. Shane laughs, raises his glass, and takes another sip. The drink tastes normal, sharp, cold, a little too sweet. Vodka soda, probably.

Ilya catches his eye from across the small space, lifts his brows in a silent question. Shane mouths, all good, and Ilya nods, satisfied.

“Dance floor,” Rose declares suddenly, already tugging at Shane’s wrist. “Come on.”

“Wait-“ Shane starts, laughing, but Svetlana is already there too, grabbing his other hand.

“No excuses,” Svetlana says, eyes bright. “We’re dancing.”

Shane looks over his shoulder toward Ilya again, but Ilya just grins, making a shooing motion with his hand.

“Go,” he mouths. “Have fun.”

Shane lets himself be pulled.

The dance floor is packed and hot and electric, bodies moving in close quarters, lights flashing in time with the beat. Rose immediately starts dancing like she’s on a stage, unselfconscious and dramatic, while Svetlana matches her energy with sharp, playful movements. Shane laughs, shaking his head, but he moves with them, letting the music take over.

At first, everything feels fine.

Better than fine, actually. The bass feels deeper now, like it’s inside him, echoing. His limbs feel loose, buoyant, movements smoother than they should be. He spins Rose, dips dramatically when Svetlana pretends to swoon, all three of them laughing too loudly.

Shane takes another sip of his drink without really thinking about it. He finishes it in a gulp, discarding the glass at one of the tables nearby.

That’s when things start to tilt.

It’s subtle at first. A warmth that spreads too quickly through his chest, like he’s just taken three shots instead of half a drink. The lights seem brighter, edges blurring slightly. He blinks hard, frowning, trying to refocus on Rose’s face as she says something he doesn’t quite catch.

“-you okay?” she asks, leaning closer.

“Yeah,” Shane says automatically, though his tongue feels thick. “Just- hot in here.”

Rose nods in agreement, spinning once. “It is hot. You want some air?”

“No, no,” Shane says quickly. He doesn’t want to make a thing of it. Doesn’t want to worry anyone. He takes another breath, then another, but the air feels thin, like it’s not quite reaching his lungs properly.

The music swells, bass thudding harder, and suddenly Shane feels unsteady. The floor seems to dip under his feet, a slow, nauseating roll that makes his stomach lurch.

That’s not right.

He plants his feet wider, trying to ground himself, but his knees feel loose, unreliable. His heart is pounding now, not fast, exactly, but heavy, each beat echoing in his ears.

“Shane?” Rose says again, sharper this time.

“I’m good,” he insists, though the words come out slower than he means them to. He laughs, tries to shake it off. “Just need- water or something.”

He glances toward the bar, then toward where he last saw Ilya, but the crowd has shifted and he can’t spot him right away. That sends a strange spike of panic through him, sudden and disproportionate.

Where is he?

The lights blur again, streaking as Shane turns his head too quickly. He sways, catching himself just in time. Svetlana's hand is on his arm instantly, steadying him.

"Okay," Svetlana says firmly. "You are not good."

"I am," Shane says, but even to his own ears it sounds wrong. Distant. Like he's hearing himself from underwater.

Rose and Svetlana exchange a look over his head, concern flashing between them.

"I think I just-" Shane starts, then stops, swallowing hard as a wave of nausea hits him. His mouth fills with saliva. The room spins.

Bathroom. The thought lands heavy and urgent.

"I need the bathroom," Shane says suddenly, pulling gently out of their hands. "Just- give me a sec."

"You want one of us to come?" Rose asks.

"No," Shane says quickly, too quickly. "I'm fine. Just- be right back."

He forces a smile, hoping it looks convincing, and turns before they can argue. Each step feels strange, like his feet are half a beat behind his body. The noise of the bar fades slightly, replaced by a rushing sound in his ears.

As he pushes toward the hallway leading to the bathrooms, the world tilts again, harder this time, and Shane has to brace a hand against the wall to keep himself upright.

Something is very, very wrong. He fumbles forward, heart pounding, vision tunneling, and finally reaches the bathroom door.

“I just need a minute,” he murmurs to himself, hand closing around the handle as he pushes inside.

The bathroom door swings shut behind him with a dull, echoing thud. The sound feels too loud in Shane’s head.

He stumbles toward the sink, palms slapping clumsily against the porcelain as he bends forward, breathing hard. The room spins in slow, nauseating circles, the fluorescent lights above him buzzing faintly, like they’re miles away. His reflection swims in the mirror, his face stretched and pale, eyes unfocused, mouth slightly open as if he’s forgotten how to close it.

“Okay,” he murmurs, though the word barely feels connected to him. “Okay.”

His stomach rolls. He leans farther over the sink, knuckles whitening as he grips the edge. Cold porcelain presses into his palms, grounding and awful and necessary. He squeezes his eyes shut, trying to breathe through the wrongness crawling under his skin.

Behind him, the door opens.

Shane registers it distantly, the creak of hinges, the soft scuff of shoes on tile. He doesn’t lift his head. He assumes, because it makes sense, because his brain is clinging to whatever feels safe, that it’s Ilya.

Of course it’s Ilya. Of course he followed him. A hand touches his back.

At first, it's almost comforting. Slow, deliberate strokes between his shoulders, palm warm through the thin fabric of his shirt. Shane exhales shakily and lets his head drop lower, forehead nearly touching the sink.

"Ilya," he whispers, voice hoarse. "I don't feel right."

The hand doesn't pull away. Instead, it slides lower.

Shane stiffens as fingers trace down his spine, lingering too long, dipping beneath the hem of his shirt. Skin-on-skin contact sends a jolt through him, not pleasure, not comfort, but something sharp and wrong. His breath catches.

Then the hand grips him. Firmly. Possessive. Fingers digging into his ass through his jeans.

Shane jerks slightly, confusion slicing through the fog. His heart stutters, a hard, uneven beat that makes his chest ache.

That's… not-

Another hand joins the first, sliding up under his shirt, palm flattening against his bare stomach. The touch is exploratory, invasive, nothing like the familiar steadiness of Ilya's hands. Nothing like the quiet reassurance Shane expects.

"Hey," Shane mutters, trying to straighten, but his arms tremble and he ends up sagging forward again.

Warm breath brushes his neck. Then lips. A kiss presses just below his ear, wet and lingering, teeth grazing his skin.

Something cold floods Shane's chest. Wait. No. No, no, no.

Ilya wouldn't do that. Not like this. Not without asking. Not when Shane feels like he's barely inside his own body. He wouldn't use this to his advantage.

The realization hits him hard enough that for a moment it cuts through the haze. His pulse spikes, panic blooming sharp and sudden, clawing its way up his throat.

"Wait- don't," Shane says, though it comes out weak, slurred. He tries to pull away, twisting his shoulders, but his balance is shot and the world lurches violently when he moves.

The hands tighten instead.

"Easy," a voice murmurs against his neck. "Let me take care of you."

The voice is wrong. Too low. Too smooth. Not familiar at all. Shane forces his eyes open.

The mirror is still spinning, but he catches a glimpse of the man behind him, dark hair, unfamiliar face, eyes fixed on him with an intensity that makes Shane's stomach drop. For a terrifying second, his vision blurs again and the face smears into something unrecognizable, but then it sharpens just enough.

It's not Ilya. The truth lands with sickening clarity.

Adrenaline surges, cutting through the drugged fog just enough to spark instinct. Shane shoves backward with both hands, palms slamming into the guy's chest.

"Get off me," he snaps, voice cracking.

The movement throws him off balance. His foot slips on the tile and he stumbles sideways, barely staying upright. The room spins violently, black spots blooming at the edges of his vision.

He turns, trying to get past the guy, toward the door. Toward the hallway. Toward anyone. His hand fumbles for the handle, misses. The guy catches him easily.

An arm snakes around Shane's waist, locking him in place, fingers digging into his hip hard enough to hurt. Shane gasps, panic flaring hot and desperate now.

"Let go," he says, louder this time. He tries to wrench free, but his body doesn't respond the way it should. His legs feel heavy, uncoordinated, like they're moving through syrup.

The guy holds him upright like it's nothing.

"Relax," the guy says quietly, close to his ear. "You're not feeling well. I'm helping you."

"Stop," Shane says. His words are slurred, barely audible. His heart is pounding so hard it feels like it might tear its way out of his chest. "I need- don't touch me."

The guy doesn't answer. He turns them both toward the door, arm still tight around Shane's waist, and starts walking.

Shane's feet drag as they move down the hallway, his shoulder bumping the wall. The noise from the bar grows louder with every step, but it feels impossibly far away, like it belongs to another world entirely.

He tries again to pull free. The guy's grip only tightens as they disappear down the hall.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

> He lowers his forehead briefly to Shane's temple, grounding them both, then pulls back just enough to really look at him.
>
> "Did he touch you?"
>
> Shane goes very still. For a second, Ilya thinks he might not understand the question. Shane's brow furrows, his mouth opening slightly, then closing again. His fingers tighten weakly in the front of Ilya's jacket.
>
> There's a pause. Then Shane nods. Just once. Small. Hesitant. Ilya sees red.

Chapter Notes

> New chapter! No idea where this is going but yeah

Ilya comes back inside with the cold still clinging to him.

The night air had helped, at least a little. The call with Wiebe had been short, boring, something about logistics tomorrow, but he'd taken it anyway just to step out, to breathe, to give Shane space to dance with Rose and Svetlana without Ilya hovering. When he pushes through the door again, the bar hits him all at once; heat, noise, light. Familiar chaos.

He scans the room automatically. Shane isn't where he left him.

At first, Ilya isn't worried. Shane drifts. He bounces between people, gets pulled into conversations, gets distracted by music. Ilya lets his gaze move calmly over the crowd, bar, booths, dance floor, expecting to spot Shane's dark hair, his easy smile.

He doesn't. A flicker of unease curls low in Ilya's stomach.

He spots Rose and Svetlana on the dance floor almost immediately, still moving, still laughing, Rose's arms over her head as she spins. Shane should be with them.

He isn't.

Ilya pushes through the crowd toward them, irritation building with every step, not at Shane but at the feeling creeping up his spine. The music is too loud, the lights too harsh. His instincts are prickling, sharp and insistent.

Rose notices him first.

"Ilya!" she shouts, leaning in to be heard. "You're back!"

"Where's Shane?" Ilya asks without preamble.

Rose blinks. Svetlana stills beside her, smile fading as she registers his tone.

"He went to the bathroom," Rose says. "He wasn't feeling great. Thought he drank too much."

The words land wrong. Ilya feels it immediately, an icy drop straight through his chest.

"He didn't," Ilya says flatly.

Rose hesitates. "I mean, he said he was fine, but-"

“He didn’t drink much,” Ilya repeats, sharper now. He can still see Shane in his mind, glass barely touched, laughing, steady on his feet. “Which bathroom?”

Svetlana points without hesitation. “Down the hall. Left.”

Ilya is already moving.

He doesn’t run, not yet, but his pace is fast, cutting through the crowd with purpose. His jaw is tight, his thoughts racing ahead of him in jagged pieces. Shane knows his limits. Shane would’ve told him if something was wrong. Shane wouldn’t just disappear.

The hallway feels too long.

The closer he gets to the bathrooms, the stronger the dread becomes, thick and choking. He passes people leaning against the wall, laughing, kissing, oblivious. The music dulls, replaced by the rush of blood in his ears.

Then he sees them.

Shane is halfway out of the bathroom, slumped slightly, his weight clearly not fully his own. An unfamiliar man has an arm around his waist, too tight, too possessive, guiding him forward like Shane can’t walk on his own.

Ilya’s vision tunnels. For a split second, everything goes quiet. Then rage hits him like a physical force.

“What the fuck is going on?” Ilya snaps.

The sound of his voice cuts clean through the hallway, sharp and unmistakable. Both of them look up.

Shane's head lifts sluggishly. His eyes struggle to focus, glassy and unfocused, relief and confusion flickering across his face at the same time.

"Ilya," Shane murmurs, voice soft, wrong.

The guy stiffens.

"Oh," he says, clearly startled, but he recovers fast. Too fast. "Hey, man. It's cool. Your uh-boyfriend just had a little too much to drink. I was helping him out."

Ilya takes two steps forward.

Every muscle in his body is coiled tight, fury vibrating under his skin. He takes in everything in one brutal sweep; the way Shane is leaning into the guy because he can't quite hold himself upright, the way the guy's hand is still planted on Shane's waist, fingers dug in like he belongs there.

"Take your fucking hands off him," Ilya says. "Now."

His voice is calm, yet warning. That somehow makes it worse.

The guy raises his hands slightly, palms out in a placating gesture, but he doesn't let go right away. "Relax. I was just being a decent human being."

Ilya's smile is sharp and empty. "You've got about half a second to step away."

Shane shifts weakly, brow furrowing as if he's trying to understand what's happening. "Ilya," he says again, quieter. "I feel-"

Ilya reaches out, sliding an arm around Shane's shoulders, pulling him firmly against his own chest. The contact is immediate, instinctive, protective. Shane sags into him, like he's been holding himself together by sheer will alone.

The guy finally releases him.

"There," the guy says lightly. "See? All good. You should probably get him home."

Ilya doesn't look at him. He's focused on Shane, on the way his breathing is uneven, on the unnatural heaviness of his body, on the faint tremor running through him.

"You touch him again," Ilya says, low and lethal, "and you will regret it for the rest of your life."

The guy scoffs, backing up a step. "Jesus. No need to get dramatic."

Ilya finally looks at him. The look in his eyes wipes the smirk right off the guy's face.

"Get out of my sight," Ilya says.

The man doesn't argue this time. He mutters something under his breath and starts backing down the hallway, already turning as if eager to disappear.

Ilya doesn't take his eyes off Shane until the man is gone.

"Hey," Ilya says softly now, all the fury banked and buried for later. He cups the back of Shane's neck, steadying him. "Shane. Look at me. I've got you."

Shane tries. His gaze slides off Ilya's face once, twice, before finally sticking. His breathing is shallow, uneven.

"I'm sorry," Shane murmurs, like he's done something wrong.

Ilya's chest tightens painfully.

"Don't," he says immediately. "You didn't do anything."

He lowers his forehead briefly to Shane's temple, grounding them both, then pulls back just enough to really look at him.

"Did he touch you?"

Shane goes very still. For a second, Ilya thinks he might not understand the question. Shane's brow furrows, his mouth opening slightly, then closing again. His fingers tighten weakly in the front of Ilya's jacket.

There's a pause. Then Shane nods. Just once. Small. Hesitant. Ilya sees red.

His hands curl into fists at his sides before he can stop them, every instinct screaming to move, to break something, to find that man and-

"Ilya!"

Rose's voice cuts through the hallway, sharp with alarm. She's suddenly there, eyes wide as she takes in the scene, the way Shane is barely upright, the way Ilya's entire body is coiled like a weapon.

“Oh my god,” she says, rushing forward. “Shane-“

Ilya doesn’t hesitate.

“Hold him,” he says, already shifting Shane toward her. “Don’t let him walk. Don’t let him go anywhere.”

Rose wraps her arms around Shane instantly, steady and careful, supporting his weight against her shoulder. Shane lets her, eyes fluttering, his grip on Ilya loosening only when Rose has him securely.

Ilya straightens. The guy is halfway down the hall now, moving fast.

Ilya turns and goes after him.

“Ilya,” Rose calls, nervous now. “Wait- Ilya-“

He doesn’t stop. He doesn’t even hear her.

Every step is fueled by raw, unfiltered rage. His hands are fists at his sides, jaw clenched so hard it aches. The hallway feels too narrow, the air too thin, the sound of his own footsteps thunderous in his ears.

Ilya doesn’t think.

The guy is already moving fast, almost jogging now, shoulders hunched like he knows what’s coming. The hallway stretches ahead of them, too narrow, walls closing in, music pounding dully through the brick like a warped heartbeat.

“Ilya—!” Rose’s voice echoes behind him.

He doesn’t slow.

“Hey, man, I’m leaving-“ the guy says, half-turning, panic finally cracking through the fake calm. “I said I was-“

Ilya closes the distance in three long strides. His fist connects before the guy finishes the sentence.

It’s a clean punch. Brutal. All the rage Ilya has been holding back detonates in that single motion, shoulder twisting, knuckles slamming into the guy’s jaw with a sharp, sickening crack. The impact snaps the guy’s head to the side, his body staggering back into the wall with a startled, broken sound.

The guy crumples halfway, catching himself on the brick, eyes wide and unfocused. Ilya surges forward again.

“You don’t touch him,” he snarls, voice low and shaking with fury. “You don’t even fucking look at him.”

“Holy shit- what the hell?” the guy yells.

”What did you give him? What the fuck did you do?” Ilya sneers. The guy just shakes his head, eyes blown wide.

He grabs the guy by the front of his shirt, hauling him upright, ready to hit him again, harder this time, consequences be damned.

“I should fucking kill you,” Ilya growls.

“Ilya!”

Svetlana’s voice cuts through the red haze like a blade.

She’s suddenly there, fast and decisive, grabbing Ilya’s arm with both hands and yanking him back with surprising strength. Her heels skid slightly on the floor as she plants herself between them, braced and furious in her own right.

“That’s enough,” she snaps, gripping him tighter. “Ilya. Enough.”

Ilya strains against her for half a second, breath ragged, vision still narrowed to the guy’s stunned face. His fist is clenched, knuckles already throbbing, every instinct screaming to finish it.

Svetlana doesn’t let go.

“Look at me,” she says sharply. “Let him go. Shane needs you.”

That lands. The fog lifts just enough.

The guy scrambles to his feet, terror fully set in now. He doesn’t say a word. He doesn’t look back. He just turns and runs, disappearing down the hallway, then out toward the bar, swallowed by noise and bodies.

Ilya stands there, chest heaving, adrenaline burning through his veins like acid. Svetlana releases him slowly but keeps herself close, just in case.

“Go,” she says more gently now. “Go to Shane.”

Ilya doesn't hesitate this time. He turns and runs back down the hallway, fists still shaking, heart hammering, every thought fixed on one thing only, getting back to Shane.

Ilya finds Shane exactly where he left him.

Rose has him braced against her, one arm wrapped tight around his back, the other gripping his forearm to keep him upright. Shane's head lolls forward, chin dipping to his chest, eyes half-lidded and unfocused. His weight is wrong, too heavy, too slack, like he's barely holding himself together.

The sight hits Ilya harder than the punch ever did.

"Hey," Ilya says immediately, dropping to Shane's level. His hands are gentle but urgent, cupping Shane's face, thumbs brushing his cheeks. "Hey. Shane. I'm here."

Shane blinks slowly, like it takes effort. His gaze drifts, then finally finds Ilya's face. A weak sound leaves his throat, half breath, half relief.

"Ilya," he murmurs, barely audible.

Ilya presses his forehead to Shane's for a second, grounding himself as much as Shane. "I've got you," he says again, voice rough. "You're safe. You're with me."

Shane nods, or maybe his head just dips. It's hard to tell.

Rose's voice is tight. "He's getting worse."

"I know," Ilya says. His hands are already checking, pulse at Shane's wrist, too fast; skin clammy; breathing shallow and uneven. None of it lines up with a few drinks. None of it

lines up at all.

Shane sways suddenly, knees buckling.

Ilya lunges forward, catching him easily this time, pulling him fully into his chest. Shane melts against him, boneless, eyes fluttering.

“Hey- no, no,” Ilya says quickly, fear slicing through his ribs. “Stay with me, baby. Don’t go to sleep. Okay? Just look at me.”

Shane’s lashes tremble. “Tired,” he whispers.

Rose swears under her breath. “Ilya. That’s not alcohol.”

Ilya’s jaw tightens. The word lands fully now, heavy and awful and unavoidable.

“Someone gave him something- something bad,” Ilya says. He looks up at Rose, eyes dark and furious and scared all at once. “I think it was that guy. Must’ve put something in his drink.”

Svetlana appears beside them, face pale, eyes sharp. “I thought so. He went downhill too fast.”

Shane’s fingers twitch weakly where they’re tangled in Ilya’s jacket. “Feel… bad,” he mumbles.

“I know, baby,” Ilya says, heart pounding. He rubs slow circles between Shane’s shoulder blades, steady and grounding. “You’re doing great. Just stay awake for me, okay?”

He looks at Rose and Svetlana, decision already made. “We’re going to the hospital.”

Rose nods instantly. “Yeah- I mean-“

“I don’t know what that fucker gave him,” Ilya says, the panic finally bleeding into his voice. “I don’t know how much. I’m not risking it.”

“No arguments,” Svetlana says. “Let’s get him out of here.”

Moving Shane is slow and careful. Rose takes one side, Ilya the other, Shane’s arms slung over their shoulders. His feet drag uselessly, steps uncoordinated. More than once, he nearly goes down, and each time Ilya’s heart leaps into his throat.

“Easy,” Ilya murmurs constantly, like a mantra. “I’ve got you. Almost there.”

The bar feels hostile now, too loud, too bright, too full of people who don’t know what almost happened. Ilya keeps his body angled around Shane, shielding him instinctively as they push through the crowd.

Outside, the cold night air hits them hard. Shane shivers violently, curling inward, breath hitching.

Ilya shrugs out of his jacket without hesitation and wraps it around Shane, tugging him close. “There,” he says softly. “I know. I know.”

Rose already has her phone out. “I’ll call the Uber for you guys. I’ll get the others and we’ll be right behind you.”

Ilya looks down at Shane, whose eyes are slipping shut again, mouth slack with exhaustion and something worse. “Yes okay- thank you. I’ll text you the hospital.”

Rose nods. She squeezes Shane's arm gently. "We're right behind you, okay?"

Shane doesn't respond.

The Uber pulls up too slowly, then finally stops. Ilya practically folds Shane into the backseat, sliding in after him, keeping Shane upright with one arm wrapped around his shoulders.

The door shuts. The car pulls away.

Inside the cab, everything feels unreal, too quiet, the city lights streaking past the windows like smears of color. Shane slumps heavily against Ilya's chest, breathing shallow, head tucked under Ilya's chin.

"Hey," Ilya says softly, panic buzzing under his skin now that there's nothing left to punch. "Shane. Stay awake. Talk to me."

Shane's brow furrows faintly. "What… happened?"

Ilya swallows. His throat feels tight, raw. "Someone put something in your drink," he says carefully. "You didn't do anything wrong. Okay?"

Shane makes a small, confused sound. "Bathroom," he murmurs. His body tenses slightly. "Someone else's… hands."

Ilya's chest tightens painfully.

"I know," he says, voice shaking despite his effort. He presses a kiss into Shane's hair, hands steady even as his mind spirals. "You're safe now. I promise."

He keeps one hand cupping Shane's jaw, thumb brushing his cheek whenever Shane's eyes start to close.

"No sleeping," Ilya murmurs. "Just stay with me. Count the lights with me, yeah? One… two…"

Shane blinks slowly, trying. "Three," he whispers, slurring the word.

Ilya exhales shakily. Good. He's still here.

But even as he holds Shane, anchors him, keeps talking, keeps him awake, one thought pounds relentlessly through Ilya's mind, sharp and terrifying and impossible to ignore.

What did that guy do to him in the bathroom?

The hospital lights are too bright.

They hit Ilya the moment the sliding doors part, sharp and unforgiving, washing everything in sterile white. He half-carries Shane inside, arm locked tight around his shoulders, Shane's weight heavy and slack against him. Shane's feet barely cooperate, shoes scuffing the floor as they move.

"Hey, we need help," Ilya says immediately, voice strained but steady. A nurse snaps his head in their direction. "My husband, he was- drugged. He's not okay."

That does it. Everything moves fast after that.

A nurse is suddenly there, then another, hands reaching out, guiding them toward a wheelchair. Shane barely reacts when they ease him into it, his head tipping forward before Ilya catches it, fingers firm under his chin.

“Hey,” Ilya murmurs, brushing Shane’s hair back from his forehead. “Stay with me.”

Shane blinks, slow and unfocused. “Ilya,” he whispers again, like it’s the only word he has left.

“I know sweetheart. I’m here,” Ilya says instantly. “I’m with you. I’m not going anywhere.”

They wheel Shane down a hallway that smells like disinfectant and something faintly metallic. Questions start coming, measured, professional, urgent.

“What was he drinking?”

“How long ago?”

“Any known allergies?”

“Did he lose consciousness at any point?”

Ilya answers everything he can, voice clipped, jaw tight.

“Two drinks. Maybe less.”

“About an hour ago.”

“No allergies.”

“No, he didn’t pass out, but he’s barely awake.”

They move Shane onto a bed in a curtained room. A blood pressure cuff goes on his arm. A pulse oximeter clips to his finger. Electrodes on his chest. Shane stirs weakly at the touches, brows knitting together, discomfort flickering across his face.

“Easy,” Ilya says, immediately at his side. “You’re okay.”

A doctor appears, calm and serious. “Shane, can you hear me?”

Shane’s eyes flutter open. He looks at the ceiling, then vaguely toward the voice. “Mm.”

“What’s your full name?”

Shane’s lips part. Nothing comes out. Ilya’s chest tightens painfully.

“It’s okay,” the doctor says gently. “How old are you?”

Shane frowns, like the answer is buried under too much fog. He swallows, throat bobbing, then shakes his head weakly.

“I can answer,” Ilya says, stepping in without hesitation. “His name is Shane Hollander. He’s twenty-nine. No medical conditions. This isn’t normal for him.”

The doctor nods. “We’re going to run blood work and toxicology. We’ll see what’s in his system.”

“What about-” Ilya stops himself, breath hitching. He forces the words out anyway. “What about assault?”

“Do you have a reason to believe assault has taken place?” The doctor asks, writing something down on his clipboard.

Ilya’s breath seizes. “I- I don’t know.”

The doctor’s expression doesn’t change, but something in his eyes sharpens with understanding. “We’ll document everything. Right now our priority is his safety.”

They draw blood.

Shane barely reacts when the needle slides into his arm. His eyes are half-closed again, lashes resting against pale skin. Ilya keeps one hand wrapped around Shane’s other wrist the entire time, thumb pressed against the inside, counting his pulse without meaning to.

Too fast. Still too fast. A nurse asks Shane a few more questions. Where he is. What day it is. Who the man beside him is. Shane manages to turn his head toward Ilya, eyes unfocused but searching.

“Mine,” he murmurs faintly.

Ilya swallows hard. “Yeah,” he says softly. “I’m yours.”

Eventually, they stop asking.

“He’s exhausted,” the nurse says. “And whatever he consumed is making him drowsy. We’ll keep monitoring him.”

Shane’s eyes finally slip shut for real, his body going heavy against the mattress. His breathing evens out a little, still shallow but steadier than before.

Sleep takes him quickly. Too quickly.

Ilya pulls a chair up beside the bed and sits down hard, elbows on his knees, hands clasped so tightly his fingers ache. He watches Shane's chest rise and fall, watches the faint movement of his lashes, the slight furrow between his brows that never quite leaves even in sleep.

He reaches out, careful not to disturb anything, and lays his hand over Shane's forearm. Warm. Real. Safe. For now.

The adrenaline drains out of him all at once, leaving behind shaking hands and a hollow ache in his chest. His mind replays everything in brutal fragments, the way Shane looked in the hallway, the way he nodded when Ilya asked if the guy touched him, the way his body went limp in Ilya's arms.

What did he do to him? The question circles endlessly, cruel and unanswered.

Ilya leans back in the chair, staring at the ceiling, jaw clenched. He should've stayed. Should've gone to the bar with him. Should've noticed sooner.

He leans forward again, resting his forehead briefly against the edge of the bed.

"I'm so sorry," he whispers in Russian, barely louder than breath. "I should've protected you."

Shane doesn't stir. Ilya stays anyway.

He doesn't let go of Shane's arm. He doesn't close his eyes. He watches the monitors, the steady beep-beep of Shane's heart the only thing keeping his own from spiraling completely out of control.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

> “Ilya,” Shane says gently, “listen to me.”
>
> Ilya hesitates for a second, then glances over. His eyes are red-rimmed and exhausted, filled with something that looks dangerously close to self-blame.
>
> “You were there,” Shane says softly but firmly. “You came. You found me. You stopped it. That’s what matters.”
>
> Ilya shakes his head weakly. “Not fast enough.”

Chapter Notes

> So sorry for the long wait guys! I was caught up with a bunch of school work, but now I'm back.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shane wakes slowly. It’s thick and heavy, like clawing his way up through deep water. His body feels sore all over, limbs weighted, head pounding dully behind his eyes. His mouth is dry, tongue thick, throat aching like he’s been breathing through cotton.

He blinks. White ceiling. Soft beeping. The faint hiss of something mechanical nearby. For a second he thinks he might still be dreaming. Then...

Hospital. The realization drifts in without panic, just confusion. He tries to move his hand and finds resistance, warm, solid resistance. Someone is holding onto him. Shane turns his head slowly.

Ilya is asleep in the chair beside the bed, folded forward awkwardly, one arm stretched out so his hand rests over Shane’s forearm. His other hand is fisted loosely in his own jacket. His hair is mussed, dark circles heavy under his eyes, his jaw slack with exhaustion.

Shane stares at him for a long second. Memories comes back in flashes, disjointed and wrong. Music. Lights. The bathroom. Hands where they shouldn't have been. Fear cutting through the haze like a blade. His chest tightens.

"Ilya," Shane whispers. His voice comes out rough, barely sound at all. Ilya is awake instantly.

He jerks upright so fast the chair scrapes softly against the floor. His hand tightens around Shane's forearm, grip grounding but gentle, like he's afraid Shane might disappear if he lets go.

"Hey," Ilya says, already leaning in, already there. "Hey- hey. I've got you."

His other hand comes up, fingers sliding into Shane's hair, stroking slowly, soothingly, over and over again. Shane leans into the touch without thinking, eyes burning unexpectedly. "Where-" Shane starts, then swallows hard. "What happened?"

Ilya's throat works. He takes a breath, visibly steadying himself. "You're in the hospital," he says softly. "You were drugged. At the bar last night."

Shane's brow furrows. His head aches when he thinks too hard, but pieces are clicking together now, settling into place with sickening clarity. "That guy," Shane murmurs.

Ilya nods. His hand never stops moving through Shane's hair. "Yes, I think so."

Shane squeezes his eyes shut briefly. His stomach rolls, not with nausea this time, but something heavier. "I-" His voice cracks. "I'm sorry."

Ilya stiffens. "Don't," he says immediately, voice breaking despite himself. "Don't you dare apologize."

Shane opens his eyes again, looking lost. “I shouldn’t have- I should’ve told you I felt weird sooner. I shouldn’t have gone off alone. It was stupid.”

Ilya leans in closer, pressing his forehead gently to Shane’s temple. “No,” he says firmly. “None of this is your fault. Shane, you have to know that.”

Shane nods weakly, though it’s clear he doesn’t fully believe it yet. There’s a pause. The machines hum quietly around them. Ilya exhales slowly, dread coiling in his chest again.

“The doctor asked me something earlier,” Ilya says carefully. “And they’ll probably ask you too, when they come back.”

Shane looks at him, eyes clearer now, more present. “What?”

Ilya's looks down, as though he's gathering the courage for whatever he's about to say. Shane holds his breath, dreading the worst.

“They asked if you’d want a rape kit done,” Ilya says quietly. “If you remember anything. Anything at all.”

The words hang between them, heavy and awful. Ilya watches Shane’s face closely, every muscle in his body tight with fear. He doesn’t know what answer he’s hoping for. He doesn’t know which outcome would hurt less.

Shane is quiet for a long moment. “I don’t remember everything,” he says finally. His voice is steadier than Ilya expects, but there’s something fragile under it. “It’s like… gaps, flashes of pictures.”

Ilya nods, not trusting himself to speak.

“But I remember the bathroom,” Shane continues, swallowing. “I remember leaning over the sink. Feeling sick. And then- hands.” His fingers curl slightly into the sheet. “Touching me. Kissing my neck. I thought it was you, because, you know, who else would it be? But it wasn't. It wasn't you Ilya.”

Ilya’s breath catches painfully.

“I tried to push him,” Shane says, eyes unfocused as he stares at nothing. “I swear. I remember that. But my body just- failed. I couldn’t move right.”

“That’s enough,” Ilya says hoarsely. “You don’t have to-“

“And I remember you,” Shane interrupts softly, finally looking at him again. “Hearing your voice. Seeing you. You were there, protecting me before anything could happen.”

Ilya’s eyes sting. Shane’s mouth trembles. “I’m sorry."

That’s it. Ilya breaks. He leans forward and pulls Shane into his chest carefully, mindful of wires and soreness, but firm enough that Shane can feel him, solid, real, there. Shane melts into him immediately, burying his face against Ilya’s neck, fingers gripping his shirt like he’s afraid to let go.

Ilya holds him tightly, one hand cradling the back of Shane’s head, the other wrapped around his shoulders.

“Stop apologizing,” Ilya whispers fiercely. “Please. You didn’t do anything wrong. He did. I should’ve-“ His voice cracks, guilt flooding in. “I should’ve been there. I should've protected you.”

Shane shakes his head weakly against Ilya’s collarbone. “You came,” he murmurs. “You found me.”

Ilya presses a kiss into Shane’s hair, breath shuddering. “I’m so sorry I wasn’t sooner.”

"Ilya-" Shane starts, but Ilya stops him by holding him closer.

"No. Let me be sorry for this," Ilya sighs. They stay like that for a long moment, breathing together, the world narrowed down to the simple fact that they’re both here. That Shane is alive. That he’s safe now. And that Ilya will never let this happen again.

Later that day, the room feels different. The frantic edge has dulled into something quieter and heavier, like the aftermath of a storm that’s passed but left wreckage behind. The lights are softer now, afternoon sun filtering weakly through the narrow window. Shane has slept on and off, nurses coming and going, doctors explaining things slowly and gently.

People have come, too.

Rose and Svetlana first, both pale and furious and careful with their hugs. A few other people drift in and out, bringing coffee, murmuring reassurances, not quite knowing what to say but clearly unwilling to leave Shane alone in this. Shane’s parents arrive not long after, fear etched deep into their faces the moment they see him in the bed.

Through all of it, Ilya doesn’t leave.

He stands when he needs to, moves when asked, but otherwise stays anchored to Shane’s side, hand always within reach. Even when Shane sleeps, Ilya stays, eyes tracking every rise and fall of his chest, body wound tight like vigilance alone might keep something bad from happening again.

It’s mid-afternoon when the police arrive. Two officers. Calm voices. Serious expressions.

Rose is there when they come in, standing near the foot of the bed. She stiffens visibly, jaw setting.

"We called it in last night," she tells Shane quietly. "After we saw the guy leaving the club. Security helped. They've got him."

Shane nods slowly. His face has more color now, eyes clearer, but the weight of the words still lands hard.

"We want to ask you a few questions," one of the officers says gently. "Only if you're up for it."

Shane glances at Ilya instinctively. Ilya feels his chest tighten. "You don't have to," he says immediately. "Not now. Not ever, if you don't want to."

Shane reaches out, fingers brushing Ilya's wrist. "It's okay," he says softly. "Really. I want to help."

There's a pause. Then Shane adds, quieter, "You can wait outside, if you want."

Ilya hesitates. Every instinct in him rebels against leaving Shane alone with anyone, even for this. But Shane's expression is calm, resolute in a way that tells Ilya this is something he needs to do himself.

"I'll be right outside," Ilya says finally, voice low. "The whole time."

Shane nods. "I know."

Ilya squeezes his hand once more before stepping out into the hallway. Shane's parents are already there. They're sitting side by side in the stiff plastic chairs, his father silent and rigid, hands clasped together tightly, his mother turned slightly inward, arms folded as if holding herself together through sheer will.

Yuna looks up the moment she sees Ilya. Her eyes soften immediately.

"Ilya," she says, standing. "Come, sit."

He does, stiffly, perching on the edge of the chair beside them. For a moment, none of them speak. The muffled sounds of the hospital drift around them, distant footsteps, low voices, the hum of machines.

Then Yuna turns toward him fully. "Thank you," she says.

Ilya blinks, caught off guard. "For?"

"For staying," she says simply. "For protecting him last night. For not leaving him alone."

Something in Ilya cracks. He opens his mouth to respond, but no words come out. Instead, his vision blurs suddenly, heat rushing up his throat. He looks down at his hands, clenched tight in his lap, shoulders starting to shake despite his efforts to stay composed.

"No, you shouldn't thank me. I- I should've been there," he says hoarsely. "I shouldn't have gone outside. I should've noticed sooner. I-" His voice breaks. "It's my fault. I let it happen."

Yuna doesn't hesitate. She stands and steps in front of him, kneeling slightly so she's at eye level, then pulls him into her arms without asking. It's firm and warm and unmistakably maternal. Ilya leans into her, breathing heavily.

"Oh, sweetheart," she murmurs, rubbing his back. "No. No, you didn't."

Ilya’s breath stutters as he finally lets himself cry, just a little, shoulders shaking, forehead pressed against her shoulder. The guilt he’s been holding in since last night spills out, hot and relentless.

“Ilya. You didn’t do this,” Yuna says gently but firmly. “Someone else did something terrible. That’s where the blame ends.”

Ilya shakes his head weakly. “I was supposed to keep him safe. I promised him. I promised you-"

“And you did,” she says, pulling back just enough to look at him. Her eyes are glassy too, but steady. “You found him. You got him help. You stayed. You’re still here. You've done everything right Ilya.”

She cups his cheek briefly, a tender gesture that makes his chest ache. “Shane loves you,” she says softly. “And he’s here, safe and sound, because you didn’t give up on him for even a second.”

Ilya wipes his face, embarrassed but grateful. “I love him,” he says hoarsely. “More than anything.”

Yuna smiles sadly. “I know."

The ride home the next day is quiet.

Rain streaks faint lines across the windshield. The world outside the car looks muted, washed out, colors dulled by gray winter light. Ilya drives with both hands tight on the steering wheel, knuckles pale, jaw set so firmly it aches.

Shane sits in the passenger seat with the blanket the hospital gave him pulled loosely over his lap. He still feels tired in that deep, bone-heavy way that sleep hasn't quite fixed yet. Every movement reminds him of soreness lingering in his muscles, a dull reminder that his body went through something it never should have had to endure.

He watches Ilya quietly for a long moment.

Ilya hasn't said much since they left the hospital. He answered the doctors politely, thanked the nurses, handled the paperwork with careful precision — but underneath it all there's a tension in him that hasn't eased for even a second.

His shoulders are tight. His breathing shallow. His eyes too focused on the road ahead. Shane knows that look. It's guilt.

"Hey," Shane says softly.

Ilya's grip tightens slightly on the wheel, like the sound of Shane's voice pulls him back into the present. He glances over immediately, his expression softening at once, though the strain is still there underneath.

"Are you okay?" he asks quietly.

Shane nods. "Yeah." He hesitates, then adds gently, "Are you?"

That makes something flicker across Ilya's face, pain, shame, something he tries to swallow down immediately.

"I'm fine," he says automatically.

Shane doesn't push right away. He just watches him, patient and steady, until the silence stretches long enough that it becomes impossible to pretend.

Ilya exhales shakily. "I should have known," he murmurs finally, voice low and rough. "I should have noticed something was wrong sooner. I should not have left you alone."

Shane's chest tightens. "Ilya-"

"I just keep thinking," Ilya continues, words tumbling out now that they've started, "about how scared you must have been. About you being there and not able to move, and I-" His voice cracks. "I was not there."

The guilt in his tone is so raw it hurts to hear. Shane reaches across the center console slowly, his movements still careful, and places his hand over Ilya's forearm. The contact makes Ilya suck in a sharp breath.

"Ilya," Shane says gently, "listen to me."

Ilya hesitates for a second, then glances over. His eyes are red-rimmed and exhausted, filled with something that looks dangerously close to self-blame.

"You *were* there," Shane says softly but firmly. "You came. You found me. You stopped it. That's what matters."

Ilya shakes his head weakly. "Not fast enough."

Shane squeezes his arm.

"You came when I needed you," he says quietly. "That's the truth."

The words hang between them. Ilya's throat works. He doesn't argue again, but the guilt doesn't vanish either, it lingers in the tightness of his shoulders, the way his jaw stays clenched. Still, he shifts his arm slightly under Shane's hand, leaning into the touch just a little.

They don't speak much after that. But the silence changes. It becomes less sharp, less suffocating.

When they get home, the house feels strange. It's exactly the same as it was before, the same warm lighting, the same faint scent of laundry detergent and coffee lingering in the air, the same couch with the blanket thrown over one arm.

But it feels different now. Quieter. Like the space itself is holding its breath. Ilya unlocks the door and steps aside automatically so Shane can go in first, his hand hovering near Shane's back without quite touching him, like he's afraid even gentle contact might hurt.

Shane steps inside slowly. For a moment, he just stands there. Home. Safe.

Behind him, Ilya closes the door softly. The click echoes in the quiet. Neither of them moves for a few seconds. Then Shane turns. Ilya is standing just a few feet away, looking at him with an expression so full of worry and relief and lingering guilt that it makes Shane's heart ache.

"Ilya," Shane whispers.

That's all it takes. The distance between them disappears instantly. Ilya steps forward and pulls Shane into his arms carefully but firmly, one hand cradling the back of his head, the other wrapping around his shoulders.

Shane melts into him. He presses his face into Ilya's neck, breathing in the familiar scent of him, cologne, cold air, something uniquely Ilya that immediately makes his chest loosen. Ilya holds him like he's afraid to ever let go again. His hands tremble slightly as they move over Shane's back, soothing, grounding, reassuring himself that Shane is really here.

“I’m sorry,” Ilya whispers into his hair, voice breaking. “I’m so, so sorry moya lyubov.”

Shane shakes his head weakly against him. “No,” he murmurs. “No, you don’t get to apologize for this.”

Ilya tightens his hold instinctively. “I should have protected."

“You *did* protect me,” Shane says softly. “You always do.”

Ilya presses his face into Shane’s shoulder, breathing unevenly. For a long moment, neither of them says anything else. They just stand there, holding each other, letting the quiet of the house settle around them.

Later, after they’ve moved to the couch, after Ilya has insisted on getting Shane water and blankets and hovering close enough that their knees touch, Shane begins to feel the exhaustion catching up to him again.

His body feels heavy. His eyelids droop. Ilya notices immediately.

“You should sleep,” he says softly.

Shane nods a little. "You'll stay?” he asks quietly.

The question is small, vulnerable. It makes something twist sharply in Ilya’s chest.

“Of course. I am not going anywhere,” he says at once.

He shifts closer on the couch, pulling Shane gently against him so Shane can rest with his head on Ilya’s chest. Shane settles there with a quiet sigh, one hand fisting lightly in Ilya’s shirt. Ilya wraps both arms around him, holding him securely, his chin resting on top of Shane’s head.

He doesn’t move. Doesn’t look at his phone. Doesn’t turn on the TV. He just sits there, listening to Shane’s breathing slowly even out as sleep takes him. Every rise and fall of Shane’s chest feels like something precious. Something fragile he will guard with everything he has.

After a while, Shane shifts slightly, half-awake, his voice barely a whisper. “Ilya?”

“Yes,” Ilya murmurs immediately.

A pause. Then, very softly. “I’m okay.”

Ilya’s throat tightens. He presses a gentle kiss into Shane’s hair. “I know,” he whispers. “You are safe now.”

Shane’s hand tightens weakly in his shirt. "And I want you to be as well."

"Shane-"

"No. Please, we'll never move on from this if you keep blaming yourself. You did everything you could. You did enough Ilya," Shane insists, lifting his head to look Ilya in the eye.

Ilya nods slowly, leaning forward to press a soft kiss to Shane's forehead. "Okay," he mutters against his skin.

And this time, when Shane drifts back into sleep, Ilya feels his body relaxing, happy with the man he loves in his arms , trusting, safe, and warm.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed this little angsty story.

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