Hello, Mechanic?

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Hello, Mechanic?

by fujobear

Summary

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>
> His cheeks were now turning red. “Ah, don't thank me just yet, haha. Still have to *actually* fix your car later. But you can trust me on taking care of it, I’ll be sure to be very careful!” Shane says enthusiastically. This makes Ilya smirk again.
>
> “Hm. Then I will thank you tomorrow again. See you.”

Shane Hollander works in an auto repair shop. Ilya Rozanov owns a ton of spare sports cars and has a lot of free time.

Notes

before anything else i just want to say thank you so much for all the support to my previous hollanov fic i cant thank you guys enough especially since its my first work here in the fandom,, i actually kinda dislike how i wrote it because i was JUST starting out but thank you all regardless hahaha

thank you all to my friends that helped beta read and basically make this whole fic come true with the amount of questions i've asked, you guys know who you are :-) thank you for being good betas that helped proofread alphas fanfiction love you all

english is not my first language so im sorry for any grammatical errors

i also dont know ANYTHING about cars or repair shops i literally had google, my friends, and a dream im so sorry for any inaccuracies

i told myself that this was just a silly little oneshot crack fic but here i am more than 11k words... well

this also took so long even though i started to write it almost right after my first fic, but i've genuinely been so busy with so many projects (the main one being creating a film) so im so sorry if this took so long hahaha this has been in the works for almost 2 months now

and lastly ive made a twt!! though right now its a bit bare bones, feel free to follow me anyways haha

enjoy reading! once again thank you guys for all the support i wouldnt have been so motivated to keep writing this if it weren't for the kudos and comments :-) love you guys

See the end of the work for more notes

Shane likes his life.

It was simple, and peaceful. A routine. Shane likes routines. He wakes up in a house that he has all to himself, and it was just an hour's drive away from his parents so he didn't feel very lonely. Since he lives alone, he gets to prepare for his days how he likes it, not having to worry about disturbing another person if there ever was one. His work doesn't require him to go until 8 A.M., so Shane wakes up at around 5 to go for a run or lift some weights before coming back at 6 to go take a shower and eat breakfast. The auto repair shop he works at isn't far away, so by the time the clock strikes 7:45, Shane was already there, fixing his tools and the equipment for the day.

Shane had always been a.. peculiar kid. Ever since he can remember, he was always messing with mechanical things. It started off with helping his parents with things at the house such as clocks or bikes, but once they realized that Shane might be gifted with this skill, they immediately enrolled him in related classes and activities. Fast forward to him now working at this repair shop. It may not be much, but Shane was enjoying himself. He was content, satisfied with the life he's living.

Today was just like any other day, the same exact routine done. That was how it was starting, at least. Normal.

As usual, Shane got to work before the shop opened, preparing for what the day has in store for him. His co-workers arrived some time right before or after 8. Only a few minutes late, and it wasn't that big of a deal in this type of work.

The day was fairly slow. They had customers, but most of the time, it could be solved quickly by just one person, at most two. This left Shane mostly on his own, having a lot of free time. He'd offer to be the one that will do the repairs, but his co-workers teased him about being the only one that does all the work all the time and how they should also “earn their keep”. With a bit of more persuasion, Shane defeatedly agreed on letting the others handle the customers today.

Right when his mind was about to explode because of boredom, another customer arrived. Just an hour before closing time, which means everybody else had their hands full, and finally, *finally* Shane would be able to help someone today.

Shane could easily say that the reason why he's content with this work is because he gets to use his skills to earn money, and how he really isn't working because he's doing the thing he loves. And though that is true for the most part, another reason why he likes this job is because he gets to help others. Be of use. That he was able to utilize what he knows to make someone live a better, more comfortable life now that their vehicle was repaired and/or cleaned. It felt good to know that he was needed. It felt accomplishing.

Shane stands up, off to greet the customer until he stops in his tracks after seeing the car pull up in their shop. A red McLaren Artura.

“Holy shit,” Shane mumbles to himself. And so did everyone else.

The shop has had its fair share of fancy cars drop by before. But not as fancy and expensive as this one. Customers whistled at the sight, employees stopping their repairing just to take a look. Everybody watched as the driver got out of the car and walked towards Shane, whose mind was still in the middle of processing. Processing the car, yes. But mostly the guy who got out of it.

He was *gorgeous*.

Dark blonde curls framed his face, sharp, piercing eyes and moles perfectly placed across his body, a prominent one on his cheek. Shane almost had a heart attack when they were revealed as the man took off his leather jacket and let it hang on his arm, now standing in front of him with just a white tank top and black pants. The leather of his shoes matched his jacket.

“Hi. This where I get my car fixed?” His voice was deep, and his words were coaxed with a thick accent. Was he European?

Well, it didn't matter where he came from. Shane only knew one thing: this man was sexy as fuck. From head to toe, down to his *voice*, he oozed charm and charisma. And it wasn't just Shane, too. Everybody else was being seduced by this man, who only ever genuinely asked an innocent question.

This makes Shane snap back to reality. Right, he was here to help. “Oh—um, yes. Yeah, we uh, repair cars here and stuff.” He lets out an awkward chuckle, giving a smile. He internally curses at himself for acting like such a wimp.

The man blinked, the corner of his lips then tugged upward. “.. Hm. Okay.” Was he smirking? He turns slightly, tilting his head to point at the car. “Car's been smelling like shit for some time now, and air inside is.. become more warm.”

“Shit?” Shane asked.

“Like.. like rubber, or something.”

Shane answers right away. “Oh, your car must be overheating.” A common problem. He immediately goes to check. This was good, getting back to work. It helped distract Shane from thinking any more thoughts about the reincarnated greek god next to him. “Mind if I open the hood?”

“Go ahead.”

Shane proceeds to do so. He's done this a million times now, but for some reason, he feels conscious with his actions today. His body always moved on its own, automatically doing the repairs he's done multiple times for years. So why is it that he was overthinking how he looks today, and second-guessing his moves with fixing the car?

It's most probably because of the guy closely watching him with his car. It was very expensive, after all. For a stranger to just mess around with it surely must be scary to watch. At least, that's what Shane thinks, though he swears he was being stared at when he was bending over to open the hood. But it was probably just him being delusional.

“That doesn't look good.” The man suddenly spoke, the accent slipping through his words once again.

“Huh?” Shane turns to look at the other, who only raises his eyebrows and looks at the car, signing for Shane to do the same. Shane turns back to the engine, which had smoke coming out of it. “Oh, fuck.”

Quickly, Shane got to work. He enters the car and turns off the air conditioner, then turning up the dial to maximum heat. He stays inside, keeping an eye on the temperature gauge. As it slowly moves downwards, he lets out a sigh of relief before getting out. “Don't touch the engine, it's very hot.”

The man nods, silently observing him. He's been doing so since Shane started working on his car. This gets him all conscious again once he realizes. “..Uh, we'll have to wait for the engine to cool down before I could do any more fixing. I think it'd be best if you just leave your car here and come back tomorrow since we're about to close. I'll work on the broken engine tonight,” Shane explains.

The man doesn't respond, only staring at him with an unreadable expression on his face. He doesn't know if whatever he just said made sense for the other, but he *did* try to speak slowly when he explained.

Shane thought that he'd like those “handsome and quiet, mysterious” guys everyone talks about, but now that there actually was one in front of him, he was unsure on how to react. But it doesn't matter, anyways. This guy was incredibly hot compared to Shane, who has been acting embarrassingly since earlier, so he knew he didn't stand a chance. He was sure of it.

He's been more nervous all 20 minutes the guy's been here than he has in past hockey competitions he played in when he was still in college.

And then suddenly, a smirk formed on the other's lips. “Okay, Mr. Mechanic.” the man says, outright *purring* the last two words. He said it in such a way where it was both playful and seductive. Shane didn't know how to act.

“Um, yes. Okay, th—”

“Ilya.”

Shane blinks, surprised at being cut off. Right when he was about to speak again, the man repeated.

“Ilya. Is my name.” He takes a step closer, pulling out his hand. “And you?”

“Huh?” Shane blinks once more before taking the other's—*Ilya's* hand and then shaking it. “Oh, Shane. My name is Shane.” He says, awkwardly chuckling and then offering a polite smile. Ilya accepts, he himself also smiling in return. It took everything in Shane to not melt at the spot.

“Shane,” Ilya repeated. Slowly, carefully. Like he was tasting the one syllable in his mouth and he wanted to be sure he'll remember it.

Shane didn't care much for his name, only ever being grateful it was more western which led to him not being bullied *that much* for being Asian. But now, with Ilya knowing about it and even repeating it in such a way, the name feels more precious. Like it had value. Shane could feel his cheeks start to heat up.

“Thank you, Shane. For repairing my car.” Ilya shakes his hand one more time before pulling away. Shane might just be deluding himself once again, but he could feel how Ilya purposely dragged his palm slowly across his, even extending his fingers just so their skin would be touching each other longer; he took his time letting go. It felt way more sensual than it should be.

His cheeks were now turning red. “Ah, don't thank me just yet, haha. Still have to *actually* fix your car later. But you can trust me on taking care of it, I’ll be sure to be very careful!” Shane says enthusiastically. This makes Ilya smirk again.

“Hm. Then I will thank you tomorrow again. See you.”

Shane watched as Ilya put on his leather jacket and then walked away. He lets out a sigh, one he's been holding in since earlier, before going off to grab his things and prepare for when he gets to repairing later.

Shane tries not to think about Ilya as he fixes the engine. He fails miserably.

He's never been nervous when waiting for a customer to arrive before, but Shane's been pacing back and forth for five minutes now. His co-workers pointed it out, and he says he's uneasy because he's scared he might have accidentally scratched or broken something in the car while fixing it, totally not because of the customer of the said car.

Ilya came around the same time he did when he first arrived at the place, which was before closing time. Not that Shane had it memorized or anything, he just so happened to glance at the clock and notice. Totally.

As soon as Shane sees those familiar blonde curls, he immediately turns to go arrange his tools, hiding the fact that he'd been waiting for Ilya to arrive.

“Shane.”

The sudden mention of his name, partnered with the thick accent that wouldn't leave Shane's mind even as he went to sleep, surprises him. This makes Shane turn around. “Ilya! Hi. Sorry, I, uh, didn't notice you arrived.”

Ilya was as dashing as ever today. Even more dashing as he smirked at Shane who adorably greeted him, albeit being a bit.. rambly.

“Yes, hello. I am here. You fix my car?” Ilya turns to look at his McLaren Artura, which was very obviously handled with care. It oddly looks cleaner than yesterday.

Shane shoves his hands in his pockets, raising his shoulders as he attempts to look and talk casually. “Yeah! I already made sure to test it a bunch of times before you got here. It's all good now, but you can test it yourself.”

Ilya continued to look at the car. “Hm, okay. No need for second testing, I trust you.” He goes back to Shane. “I pay now?”

Shane blinks. He doesn't know what he was expecting, but he feels stupid for being hopeful that maybe this little customer-worker thing they had would last a bit longer—which absolutely made no sense. Ilya was a customer who had a damaged car, so he probably went to the nearest auto shop he could find and Shane just so happened to be the only free employee. And really, what *thing*? Yes, very stupid, Shane feels. “Oh. Um, yeah. You paying with cash?”

“Yes, wait.” Ilya pulls an envelope from his pocket, then gives it to Shane. “Here.”

Shane blinks once again, holding back a laugh. He hasn't even said the total amount yet, but here Ilya was, already giving him money. In an *envelope* too.

With Ilya handing the envelope to Shane, staring at him with an expression that was clearly far away from being humorous, he had no choice but to accept. “Are you sure? I haven't even —holy shit.”

As Shane opened the envelope, he was met with a ton of money stuffed inside. Way too much than what Ilya actually has to pay for. He immediately closes it like he was caught dealing with something he shouldn't be before looking back at Ilya. “Holy shit, dude—This is way too much! Let me go total your amount first, we don't charge *this* high. Is this your first time at an auto shop?”

But Shane couldn't even move to go get the actual total as Ilya didn't budge. He wasn't accepting the envelope that was being handed back to him, only looking at it very confused, even more confused than Shane. Honestly almost offended at the sight of Shane handing him back what he gave. “What is this? Is not enough?”

Shane’s eyes widened, immediately rambling to convince Ilya not to pull out even more money. “No, no, no. I just told you, this is *way* too much! I only need about… this many!” Shane says, grabbing a handful of dollars inside. The envelope still sat in his hand heavily, looking the exact same.

Ilya stares at the dollars in Shane’s hand before flickering his eyes to look at Shane himself. He only shrugs. “Think of it as tip, then. You did good job, Mr. Mechanic.”

This makes Shane's jaw drop. He tries his best to regain his composure quickly, but this man is making it an impossible task. "*Tip*? This much? Ilya, look—I really can't accept this. It's way too much." He pleaded, but Ilya only smirked before turning and going inside his car.

"Just take the money, Shane. See you soon," Ilya casually says, honking his car and waving from the window before leaving the shop, like giving away money like it was nothing was such a natural thing for him to do. And it probably was.

The brand of the car, his expensive fashion style, even his overall *vibe* from the start screamed wealth. But still, with the envelope and his hand full of money he has no idea what to do with, it truly brings him back to the reality of insanely rich people like Ilya actually existing in real life. People that Shane, who was just a simple commoner who lives in a simple house and works at a simple job living a simple life definitely won't meet again.

He was proven wrong the next day.

Shane hadn't thought much of what Ilya said. *See you soon.* He assumed it was just him being polite, or a language error thing. But the next thing he knows, the same, red Mclaren Artura pulls up in their shop two hours before they were closing.

He didn't notice at first, busy with cleaning himself up as he just finished a repair. It took a co-worker nudging him, telling him 'that hot guy' is back for Shane to turn around and see Ilya get out of the car after parking. Ilya, who gave him way too much money yesterday after an easy fix with his car, is now walking straight to him as if he was the only employee in the shop. "Shane," he greets with a smile.

"Ilya? Hey! What are you doing here?" Shane awkwardly laughs, assuming that Ilya forgot something, or realistically, came to take back all the money he wasted on this random Canadian car repairer.

Ilya put his hands inside his pockets, shrugging. "Mirror broke."

Shane's eyebrows raised. "*What?*"

Ilya turns to open his car door, signing for Shane to go take a better look. He's already been inside this car yesterday, but he never truly seized the opportunity to *actually* look at the interior until now. After all, he was busy trying to calm down the growing smoke from the engine. He definitely didn't have the time to gawk at the inside of the Mclaren. Shane makes his way inside, trying his best not to gasp at the sight as he sits down.

Everything was sleek. The steering wheel was unique, having a thinner and more stylish design than most other steering wheels. It was high-tech, even having a big IPad as its infotainment system instead of the usual 'sat-nav' style. The colors were all different shades of black, except for the few red highlights.

Shane could imagine Ilya driving this car, sitting on the driver seat that was laying back more than his liking. But Ilya probably didn't mind. He probably prefers it this way. He'd look *cool* on it, even. With one hand on the steering wheel and the other on the gear lever, sitting way too at ease like he owns the place he's driving in because he knows he has a car that could make anyone's head turn. Partner that with his high-end clothes that he looks so sexy in, it's straight up unfair. He'd probably revel with the attention. Shane finds that hot.

He could feel his cheeks start to heat up, a thing he's been experiencing since yesterday. What was he thinking? He's here to work. Ilya's a *customer***.** To get back to the matter at hand, Shane shakes his head to force himself not to overanalyze the inside of a customer's car and fantasize about how attractive they'd look driving it. He pulls his eyes towards the rearview mirror. Or really, where the rearview mirror should be. It was missing—broken. Like what Ilya had told him earlier.

".. Huh." Shane blinks. Upon closer look, he notices the shape of the mounting button, where the rearview mirror should be attached. It looks a bit.. weird. Like someone purposely pulled the mirror down, trying to break it intentionally instead of it accidentally falling off.

Ilya's head pops from behind Shane's. "Everything okay?"

Shane immediately turns to Ilya. There's no way he'd purposely break his own car, this thing is *way* too expensive for that. And for what? Just to waste more money on repairing it in this random auto shop that was definitely way too cheap to even be in the same vicinity with this McLaren? No way. "Yeah. This is an easy fix, I think."

"You.. think?" Ilya asks as Shane gets out of the car, his accent making his voice go deeper as he pronounces the last word.

Shane nods. "Not really my specialty, you can say. Though I know how to do it, there's another guy we have here that is better with these kinds of things. Let me go call him."

Ilya blinks, eyebrows slightly furrowing as he clarifies. "..But you know how to fix it."

Shane takes a second to answer. "Um, well, yeah. Anyone here can. But I'm saying, we have someone that will definitely do it way better than I can. As in, make-it-look-brand-new better."

"But I do not need it looking brand new, I just want you to fix it."

"Well yeah, of course we'll be able to fix it. I'm saying.."

"No," Ilya lets out a frustrated sigh. "*You.* Want *you* to fix it."

Shane blinks, clearly confused. ".. Me?"

Ilya nods, satisfied that he got his message across. He repeats. "You."

He doesn't explain any further, and it leaves Shane hanging. Why is *he* the one that has to fix the mirror? Not that Shane was complaining. Hell, he could even feel his heart beat faster as

Ilya stared at him, as if he was the only person that mattered in the world when he said *'you'*. It felt way too.. intimate.

This would also mean that they would be able to spend more time together, and Shane had to fight his body as he tried to hold back a smile.

".. Okay." Shane nods, bashfully smiling. He fails.

It made sense. Ilya would want Shane to be the one fixing his mirror because they've already met before. He probably didn't want to waste his time meeting other people, it was obvious with the way he doesn't look or talk to anyone in this shop other than Shane. It was only for convenience.

Nonetheless, Shane can't help but be giddy that he was chosen.

"So what time your shift start?"

Shane slightly flinches at the sudden question. "Huh?" He looks at Ilya. He was way too focused on setting up his kit for the mirror. Though he definitely wanted to, he didn't think they'd *actually* be talking. "Oh. Uh, I start at 8. Though I usually get here before that."

"Hm. Okay."

Shane heads back inside the car, sitting down and getting to cleaning out the old adhesive. "So.. how'd you break this mirror?"

"Don't know. Randomly fell down." Ilya shrugs as he watches from beside him, arm resting on the car roof as he leaned close. To get a proper look at the repairing process, Shane assumes.

"That's.. this car seems fairly new, and looks very taken care of. I don't think it would just 'randomly fall down'." Shane turns to look at Ilya, who had no response. They both stare at each other before Shane breaks off the eye contact. "But some cars just do that, I guess."

"Yes." Ilya agrees, firmly. Shane doesn't push any further.

He gets to adding the new adhesive on the mount before Ilya asks once more. "You like cars?"

Shane turns, once again being caught off guard. "Oh. Um, yeah," he replied before going back to working. He goes to stick the mount back in place. "I like repairing them, figuring out what's wrong and then getting to fixing them. It's fun, and the work's meaningful."

He turns to Ilya once again after sticking the mount, leaving it to stick for now. “But it's also fun just checking them out. Though I'm a more practical guy myself, I still find sports cars pretty cool.” He smiled, and Ilya couldn’t help but smile back.

“I see.” Ilya nodded. “I have many sports cars. You should see my collection.”

It wasn’t that much of a surprise. It was expected, really. Now it made sense how Ilya wasn’t panicking about breaking his rearview mirror—he apparently has a *ton* of these cars anyways. But even so, Shane couldn’t help but still be impressed. “Really? Yeah, I’d love to see them someday.”

Shane shifts. He planned on getting out of the car seat so he can let the adhesive dry on its own, but Ilya was blocking the way with his body and he wasn't moving.

“You'd love to see them?” Ilya repeats, asking.

Shane blinks. “Sure.” That’s what he said, right?

Ilya seemed satisfied with that. He pulls away, letting Shane get out of the car. “Is my car all fixed now?”

Shane was back to his work station, cleaning up his tools. “Uh, no, not yet. Have to let the thing properly stick first.”

“Ah, okay.” Ilya says as he walks towards Shane, letting his back hit the table so he's facing the other. He put his hands inside his pockets. “So I will stay for a while?”

Shane tries not to think too much about the distance, gluing his eyes down so he can focus on putting away his things. “Yeah, sorry. But it won't be too long.”

“Is fine,” Ilya replies quickly. “No worries. We can just talk while we wait, no?”

Shane blinks before finally looking up at Ilya, who was already looking at *him*. He tilts his head, raising his eyebrows.

“W—”

“Shane!” A voice cut through the air, and Shane didn't have to turn to know who it was. He couldn't even if he wanted to, because he was already being headlocked.

“Hayden—!”

“Hey, buddy! It's been way too long, hasn't it?” Hayden ruffled Shane's hair, making the repairer chuckle and gently push him with an elbow. Hayden tightened his arm around Shane's head before letting go with a laugh—that laugh being quickly cut as he notices the scary six footer staring at him. “Oh, shit. My bad. You have a customer?”

“Oh, no—”

“Yes.”

Shane whips his head to turn to Ilya, who looks back at him offended. “What? I'm not customer?”

“No, no!” Shane cleared his throat, pulling away from Hayden. “It's just that.. you know. We're just waiting for the mount to stick before I can continue fixing it. I can go help Hayden in the meantime.”

Instead of a nod, or an “okay” like Shane expects, Ilya only frowns. He looks at Hayden, who feels like he's gotten between something similar to a lover's quarrel. “But he is the one fixing my car. Go find someone else.”

Ilya then turns back to Shane, voice going softer. “Surely there are other people available, yes?”

His words didn't feel like a friendly suggestion. Not a nudge for Hayden to get the hint, but a full on shove.

“But..” Shane hesitates, looking at Ilya then at Hayden helplessly.

Hayden had no choice but to back down. “Hey, man. It's fine.” He places a hand on Shane's shoulder before leaning close to whisper, “I might get killed by Ken here if you push it.”

This earns him another stare from Ilya, even when he already pulled away.

Hayden then pats Shane's shoulder. “Dinner soon, okay? Jackie and the kids miss you!” He waves as he goes to get help from another employee.

Ilya huffs. “Finally, he is gone.” He turns, and is then met with a frowning Shane. “.. What?”

Shane sighs. “I wanted to help Hayden, it's been so long since we've talked.”

“Is okay, you can talk to me instead.” Ilya shrugs. “His car is ugly, anyways. Mine is better.”

This makes the edge of Shane's lips turn upwards, contrary to his defensive words. “He's got a big family, he *needs* that type of car.”

“Ah, yes.” Ilya pretends to ponder as he makes his way back to Shane's space. “Jackie is the wife, *da*? I feel bad for her, having to marry that man.”

Shane stared at Ilya walking towards him, attempting to fight the growing smile on his face. “You've met him for two seconds. He's nice, Ilya.”

“Mm, he tried to steal you away from me.” Ilya hummed, now back to facing the other as he let his back rest on the table once more. He crosses his arms, slightly tilting his head. “That's not very nice.”

Shane gently shakes his head, going back to his tools. “He wasn't stealing me, his car needed repairing.”

“Yes, his car that is very ugly and could be fixed by someone else.” Ilya gazed up and down at Shane, his eyes then landing on the sewn patch on his hoodie. *A dog with black ears holding a hockey stick.* “You like hockey?” Ilya asks, eyes looking back up at the other’s face only a second later.

Shane blinks, looking at Ilya who eyes the said dog on his hoodie once more. This makes Shane look at the patch, too. “Oh. Uh, yeah.” He goes back to Ilya. “Used to play in college.”

Ilya shifts his weight, letting an elbow rest on the table behind him. “Used to? Mr. Mechanic does not play hockey anymore?”

A beat passes, silence filling the air.

Shane slowly turns tight-lipped, eyes now going back to his tools. Eyes that shared his story before he could even start talking. “Yeah. My parents ran out of money to keep supporting me, so that was that for hockey.”

He tries his best to direct all his attention back to cleaning his equipment—which had been spotless since way earlier due to Shane using it as an excuse to not look at Ilya—so he wouldn't have to think about how depressing his hockey journey was. He tries his best to not think about how he was good, *really good* as not just a player, but also as a captain during those college days. He tries his best not to cry, and he's thankful he hasn't. At least, not *technically***.** His tears haven't fallen down to his cheeks yet.

“So you had issues with money,” Ilya cuts Shane's train of thought. This makes Shane let out a bitter chuckle.

“Yeah, I had. *We* had issues with money.” He tries his best not to coax his words with self-deprecation, but he fails. He was starting to sound upset. Not just because of the topic, but with how Ilya was handling this conversation.

“Money is not an issue for me.” The Russian—Shane assumes, he's pretty sure *da* is Russian for yes—casually replies.

Shane's eyebrows were starting to furrow, and his lips were now turning downwards. “Great. Good for you, man.” He huffs, now putting his tools away more aggressively than necessary.

Ilya adds in quickly. “Then you can play hockey again. I can buy you equipment.”

Shane drops the equipment he was holding on the table, mirroring his heart dropping to his stomach. He turns his head immediately to face the other. “*What?*”

Ilya only stares at Shane, leaving him no choice but to continue talking. “.. Are you serious? Dude, no—there's no need for that.”

“But I want to. You want to keep playing hockey, yes?” Ilya pushes.

Shane forces his body to turn away. He can't have a proper conversation with Ilya, not with him looking so *earnestly* at Shane's eyes. “Yes, but that doesn't mean—I didn't—” Shane stumbles upon his words, giving up with a sigh as he gently slams his palms on the table.

“You don't have to do that,” He settles on these words, carefully and slowly saying each one. “Go waste your money somewhere else—or something.”

“Is not a waste if it’s you,” Ilya answers almost immediately. “Shane, come on.”

“I can't just take a huge amount of money from someone I don't know,” Shane does not mean to snap. He turns to Ilya. “I mean, someone I don't know *that* well. Ilya—”

“Then let us *get* to know each other well.”

Shane blinks, mouth ajar at Ilya’s words. It only drops even more as he continued. “Let us go out for lunch, or dinner. Anything. I’ll treat you.”

There's a million reasons as to why Shane should say no, the voice in his head *begging* him to be rational and not go out with this man he just met a day ago.

This annoyingly charming and sexy, greek statue-esque man that he just can't seem to reject.

“.. Okay.” Shane mutters, and he swears he caught Ilya's eyes brightening at the singular word that left his lips.

“Okay.” Ilya repeats, firmly.

A beat passes, and Shane could feel the tip of his ears start to heat up. “I should uh—I should check on the.. thing.”

Ilya nods. “Yes.”

Shane mimics the other, nodding before scurrying away back to the vehicle, equipment in his hands. He shakes his head gently as he sits down inside the car. *Focus, don't get distracted.*

He'll just eat out together with Ilya tomorrow, that's all. Nothing too crazy. He'll convince him not to do anything more stupid—like giving away his money so easily—as they eat. Yes, that's it. Shane will tell Ilya that he doesn't have to give him money for hockey equipment as soon as they sit down at whatever place they've decided they will eat at. Hopefully—no, he *will* not get swayed so easily. .. Again.

By the time Ilya follows Shane to his car, the mirror is now all fixed.

“You lie,” Ilya tells Shane, making him turn around so quickly Ilya feared for a second he would've snapped his neck broken.

“Huh?”

“Mirror looks brand new,” Ilya smirked. “You said you can't do good job fixing it.”

Shane blinks, taking a minute to process what was just said to him. “Oh,” he finally says, and he prays to whatever God is up there that the Russian wouldn't notice his reddening cheeks. “I.. it's—it's nothing, it doesn't even look brand new.”

“I do not lie, Shane.” Ilya reassures, and Shane tries not to blush even harder at how his name rolls off the other's tongue so easily. Like his name was *made* for Ilya to say again and again and again. “It looks great.”

And what else was Shane supposed to reply to that? He's *sure* Ilya was just exaggerating. He glances at the newly fixed mirror to double check, and it looks good at best. But who was Shane to deny a compliment from Ilya? “.. Thank you,” he reluctantly gives in.

“Lunch tomorrow?” Ilya asks, pulling away from the car door to let Shane get out. “Can also do dinner, if is what you would like.”

“No—uh, no. Lunch is fine.” Shane can't imagine having Ilya drive him to his home after the dinner, then bidding each other good night.

Wait, that's a crazy thought. Who said Ilya would drive him home? This is not a date—even if Ilya said that the sole purpose of this whole thing was to get to know each other well. But people go out all the time as friends or something, right? ‘Getting to know each other’ while eating at a place does not immediately mean that it's a date, *right?*

Not that Shane would know anything about it, he doesn't go out with anyone that's not his parents or Hayden and Jackie.

Ilya stops his mess of a mind with an envelope that looks identical to the one he gave yesterday, the one stuffed with loads of cash. “Payment.”

Shane's eyes widened at what was being offered to him, already knowing where this was going. “Ilya, don't tell m—”

“Take it, Shane.” Ilya cuts him off, leaving no room for arguments.

Seriously, with the amount of money Ilya was giving him, he could already start on buying hockey gear. And even then Ilya *still* insists on funding for him, anyways.

“I..” Shane could only stare helplessly, and when Ilya realizes he wasn't budging, he takes his hand, opens his palm and places the envelope there. Only then Shane snaps back to reality, now trying to give the envelope back. Now *Ilya* was the one that wasn't budging. “Ilya, I seriously can't take this, the rest of the money you gave yesterday was enough to cover your payment *today*, and there'll *still* be tons of money left!”

Ilya looks like he could not give a shit about such reasoning, a contrast to the growing panic on Shane's body. “Ilya.”

“Shane.” Ilya replies right after, just as firm as how Shane said it. “Take the payment. Rest is tip, you know this.”

In the end, Ilya left the auto-shop with a newly fixed mirror, a smirk on his face and a pouty Shane holding the envelope in his hand.

Shane did not sleep well that night.

For one, he was too busy thinking about the lunch Ilya had invited him to.

Even as he tossed and turned that night, also spending almost two hours trying on clothes he will wear for today—he managed to talk himself out of wearing a suit for the occasion, *thank god*—Shane couldn't find it in himself to say that he regretted saying yes.

He couldn't stop thinking about Ilya's offer, too. *You can play hockey again, I can buy you equipment*, he said. Surely he wasn't serious about that.

But then again, this is the same man that has been spending *way* too much money on him like it was nothing, labelling the rest of the payment as a 'tip' as if it were mere pocket change.

And perhaps it was just Shane deluding himself, the lack of sleep catching up to him as his thoughts soon wandered to the little glances and words of the Russian. Because every single time he would bend over, or lean forward to fix the vehicle, he'd feel those piercing eyes bore holes at the back of his head. He would also always end up right next to Shane every time he came over at the shop, like there was a magnet between them and he couldn't help but always end up there. Add that to the little things Ilya has said.

You should see my collection.

He tried to steal you away from me.

You. Want you to fix it.

Which could mean nothing.

Yeah, it definitely didn't mean anything. He was most probably just being nice, or like a language thing. Ilya wouldn't say these things on purpose if he knew how deep the meanings could go, definitely not.

Coming to the conclusion that Ilya was really just most probably being nice was the thing that helped Shane finally pass out.

Shane arrived at 7:53 A.M., which means he was late—late in his own judgement, of course. He technically wasn't.

Dropping his things off at his station, he goes to the bathroom in hopes of making himself look better than his scruffy self right now before he could start the day.

Thankfully there were no bags under his eyes, and his hair was only *slightly* messy. Messier than usual. After fixing a few strands and gently slapping himself on the cheeks to wake his body up, he takes one final look at himself.

Shane wore something different today. Normally, he'd be seen in either sports attire, sports attire *looking* attire, or a simple hoodie and joggers.

But right now, he was wearing something new: a white shirt, brown leather jacket and black pants. It's very similar to the one Ilya wore on his first day here, but it definitely does not look as good. In fact, Shane feels a bit silly wearing it. What the hell was he doing dressing up for Ilya?

He originally didn't even want to, but after sharing everything that has happened these past days to Rose—a very close friend from college that he dated before coming to terms that he was very gay—he was basically forced to scavenge his closet. '*You planned on wearing that?!',* she yelled from her phone when Shane showed her his original plan for his outfit today. The one he has on at the moment was the most he could do with what he had, which says a lot. But fortunately for him, Rose had set up a shopping trip for them this weekend because she felt too sad after finding out about Shane's boring closet.

Before he could change his mind and run back to his house to change, Shane forces himself to get out of the bathroom and just stick with it.

He definitely wasn't expecting to see Ilya as soon as he opened the door, though.

"Shane," Ilya greeted, and if Shane managed to pay a bit more attention, he would've noticed the up and down glance Ilya did on his body. He was leaning against his work station, hands in his pockets. His posture and whole demeanor was very casual, as if he was the one working here—although his outfit was anything but.

Ilya wore a white polo that was buttoned down *way* too low for comfort and some brown slacks. Shane tries to push away the immediate thought of them accidentally matching in a way after glancing at the outfit.

Damn, maybe he *should* have worn the suit.

The outfit was fairly simple, yes. But it was something about the way Ilya has styled it. How he *wears* it. If someone were to put that same outfit on Shane, he is very sure there would be no same jawdropping effect and he would just end up looking goofy. But then again, he's never tried wearing anything like that in his entire life, anyways. So who knows?

"Ilya," Shane finally responds after standing still for a few seconds. He now just then realizes how he's always in a surprised state whenever he greets the other each time they meet, he should stop doing that. He looks at the clock: 8:03 A.M. "You're.. early."

"Oh, so you notice?" Ilya leans forward, standing up right. Shane tries to defend himself—how he definitely does *not* notice that Ilya has arrived earlier than his usual arriving time, the time Shane gets all antsy trying to prepare himself to face Ilya again and again, he just happened to notice—but Ilya does not give him a chance to. "But yes, I am here. Early."

Shane could only nod, slowly making his way towards his table. "Uh, you said we were gonna meet at lunch?"

"Yes, I did say we eat lunch. But I had to come early." Ilya takes a step to the side, revealing his car. His car that looked insanely dirty it almost looked comedic. To say Shane was shocked was *definitely* an understatement. "Car is dirty."

“Yes,” Shane swallows, closing his mouth that had hung open at the sight. “I can see that.”

The car had mud everywhere, but they were splattered in a way where it looked like someone threw them on the vehicle intentionally, like painting an art piece.

For one, there was no mud at the tires at all, so it was confusing as to how it got everywhere on the car. Plus, the mud still looked a bit wet, like it was *just* dirtied. And don't get Shane started on the weird patterns and placements of the splatters, it looked like you gave a child a bucket full of mud and let them throw it all over the car.

Ilya tilts his head, leaning so he'll be in Shane's view. “You wash cars?”

Shane blinks. “Huh? Oh, yeah—well not ***me,*** specifically. But we do car washing.” He shifts, turning his head to point at the other side of the shop. “The guy that works over at that station does it, but he’s running a bit late.”

Ilya does not miss a beat replying. “Perfect, you do it for me, then.”

Shane immediately turns back to Ilya. “Uh, no. He’ll arrive any time soon, don’t worry. Usually does before it hits 8:10.”

“No, want *you* to do it.”

Shane was getting deja vu, and he could already see where this is going to end. Still, he tries. “.. Because you can’t wait for at most seven more minutes?”

It doesn’t work, Ilya only stares at him. Yeah, Shane could *definitely* see where this is going to end.

“.. Carwash it is, then. Let me go change.”

Shane couldn’t help but think about how maybe this was deeper than a simple carwash request, that perhaps Ilya already knew he would not like whatever Shane had on for today so he’d make him wash his car, knowing that he *will* get dirty and will have no choice but to change his outfit.

Unfortunately for him, the shop keeps a stock of extra clothes for carwashing, meaning Shane could still wear his outfit for lunch later.

But then Ilya stops Shane before he could continue spiraling about this whole outfit situation. “Wait.”

Shane freezes. “.. Yeah?”

“Don’t people remove clothes when washing cars?”

Okay, so Ilya definitely had some thoughts about Shane’s clothes.

“.. Do they?” Shane blurts out, clearly confused—just as confused as Ilya when he watched Shane about to leave to go change.

No one has ever made him or any of his co-workers do such a thing. In fact, they'd always leave as soon as they say they're up for a carwash, only coming back hours later to pay as if they'd just drop off their kid to daycare. No one cared about what they looked like cleaning cars, and no one definitely has straight up asked them about cleaning cars *naked.* "Do other auto-shops do that?"

Ilya shrugs. "They say people remove clothes when washing cars."

Shane tries not to think about who this '*they'* exactly is just to ask where they have heard such a thing, because this was definitely his first time hearing about it.

Well, he *did* know about those photoshoots on magazines where they have models do a car washing concept and everyone is either half naked or very wet, as well as those pornography videos where they do a *roleplay* of car washing, except Shane could only think about how the person was not cleaning anything because they were getting the soap all over *themselves* and not the vehicle whenever his co-workers showed him such videos.

But still, that couldn't be the reason why Ilya was asking the absurd question. There's no way Ilya saw Shane as on par with the sexy, half naked men and women dripping with water doing the carwash concept for shoots.

"Well," Shane clears his throat, straightening his posture as he lets his hands hang next to his pockets. "We have this little uniform thing we have for carwashes, a white shirt and some shorts." *Sorry to disappoint if that's not what you're looking for,* he doesn't add.

"Shorts?" Ilya asks, and Shane couldn't help but wonder *why* is that the word Ilya had to clarify.

".. Yes, shorts. You don't like them, or—"

"No. Shorts are good. I will wait here."

Shane slowly nodded before walking away to go change, wondering what the fuck just happened.

Shane comes back wearing the white shirt and shorts he had told Ilya about earlier, now also holding a bucket full of soapy water and a sponge. He goes straight towards the car and gets to work, trying not to think about how Ilya had done nothing but stare at him the moment he came back from the dressing room.

He lets the sponge soak up some soapy water and then gets to scrubbing as he awkwardly tries to strike up a conversation. "So, uh, how'd the car get so dirty?"

"Just did," Ilya shrugged, leaning on the work station sideways as he crossed his arms to continue watching Shane. "You know how cars are."

Yes, Shane definitely *knows* how cars are. Which means he *knows* that cars don't.. "just" get dirty like this. But then again, who was he to judge a customer?

Especially when that customer had done nothing but be nice and give him months worth of money.

“I see.” Shane bends over the hood of the car as he continues scrubbing, getting the front of his t-shirt wet. He hates the feeling, especially with how the fabric was *clinging* onto his body and is now becoming see through.

“You miss a spot,” Ilya suddenly calls from behind, making Shane freeze.

“Huh?” Shane bends backward, standing up straight as he turns to face Ilya. “Where?”

Ilya doesn’t say anything as he stares, eyes flickering to Shane’s torso before back at him. “Oh, nevermind. You already clean it.”

Shane blinks. “Uh, okay.” He hesitates for a moment before going back to cleaning.

He spends the next hour and a half scrubbing up the car with soapy water. It would’ve taken any other normal person much faster, but Shane’s always been particular when it comes to cleaning cars, or cleaning in general.

He made sure to *really* get in there, to clean every nook and cranny of the vehicle, even the ones that didn’t have any mud on them. He made sure to reach every corner, so he had been bending and stretching like he’s doing warmups as he cleaned.

And during those 90 minutes, Shane would often try to sneak glances at Ilya. Ilya, who hadn’t said anything, only stood there leaning on his work station, not even trying to strike up a conversation as he stared. He couldn’t help but feel conscious, especially since Ilya’s been looking at him so.. intensely. Like he was carefully observing each and every move Shane makes, and it’s *overwhelming***.**

“Just gonna..” Shane mutters, awkwardly shuffling past Ilya to go grab the hose. It truly doesn’t help that now his *whole* shirt was now clinging onto him, already all wet when he hadn't even started rinsing the car. He just wants to get this over with so he could go wash his body and change to much more comfortable clothes.

Meanwhile, Ilya only continued to watch Shane, staring at him as he pointed the hose to the car and then bending down to turn the faucet on.

Shane continues to clean the car, letting the hose spray all over the vehicle as the soap slid down its walls. Expectedly, the water gets everywhere, and now almost all of Shane’s body is wet. Maybe he’ll just take a full shower later.

Now finished with the service after drying the car with a microfiber towel, Shane lets the back of his forearm wipe his forehead, now turning to Ilya. He hesitated before doing so, because he’s sure he looks a mess right now. “All done.”

Ilya nods, humming as he pulls away from leaning on the work station. “Mr. Carwasher,” He says with a smirk, and Shane couldn’t help but blush.

“I’m just gonna go, uh, take a shower,” Shane says, folding the towel and letting it hang on the bucket he had used earlier. “I’ll be quick.”

Ilya only nods, his laidback posture a clear sign that he couldn’t care less if Shane took long.

“Should I even bother trying to say no?”

Shane had just finished taking a shower, hair still damp and now wearing his previous outfit when Ilya offers him yet another stuffed envelope.

“Think we both know the answer to that,” Ilya smirked. He pushes the envelope, nudging it on Shane’s chest. “Take.”

“You’re already treating me to lunch, Ilya.” Shane says, the corner of his lip tugging upwards even as he tried to fight it.

“Yes, and?” Ilya nudges the envelope once more. “You want me to commit crime? Ask for service and not pay?”

“Ilya.”

“*Shane.*”

Shane, after a few moments of staring at Ilya, sighed fondly, reluctantly taking the envelope. “This was going to go nowhere.”

Ilya’s smirk only widens, feeling very triumphant once more in making Shane take his money. “Yes, but *we* are going somewhere. Come, we might miss our reservation.”

“Reservation?” Shane asks, putting away the envelope in his bag and then slinging it over his shoulder. “You won’t take me to some, like, very fancy restaurant for lunch, are you?”

“Is not very fancy,” Ilya says as he goes to enter his newly washed car. Shane stops for a moment, not joining in the car just yet as he thinks about where to sit. After standing frozen for a while, and with Ilya staring at him confused through the windshield, Shane finally joins him in the passenger seat. He didn’t want to sit there at first, thinking it might be overboard, but sitting at the backseat might be even weirder, right?

“Thought you might not join me, Shane,” Ilya jests as he starts the engine. This earns an awkward chuckle from Shane as he puts on his seatbelt. “Don’t worry, restaurant I picked has big menu. I’m sure it will have something you like.”

Shane nods at that. He would be lying if he said he wasn’t nervous. Nervous about eating alone with Ilya, yes, but also about what food will be available. Surely they’ll have something that has no carbs, right? Or healthy carbs at least. A salad. Every restaurant has a

salad. Would they have ginger ale? Probably not. He shouldn't order ginger ale, too. What would Ilya think?

"Shane?"

This snaps Shane back to reality. He blinks, turning to look at Ilya driving right next to him. "Yeah?"

"I said," Ilya patiently repeats. "What do you like to eat?"

Shane could ask himself the same. What *does* he like to eat? It was a question he could never really answer properly. After all, he hasn't eaten anything he truly *liked* in ages. It's been years since he's (been forced to) quit hockey, but the habit of being so strict with his diet has never truly left him. He no longer doesn't need to be so meticulous with what he eats, or with the strenuous workouts and routines he does everyday. Especially now that his job doesn't require anything else but good knowledge about cars. But how could Shane just leave these habits behind if this is the only way he can actually feel like he's in control of his own life?

"Nothing much," Shane finally answers. He blinks before quickly continuing. "Wait, that sounds weird. I mean, I like to eat.. whatever, I guess."

He shouldn't lie. He'll only have himself to blame once he eats a meal he knows he'll regret ordering just because he was too conscious of what Ilya would think of him.

"Healthy food," Shane adds. "I like to eat healthy food."

A beat passes, and nothing else could be heard except for the low humming of the car as Ilya continued to drive. Shane feared he just said something he shouldn't have until Ilya finally spoke. "Okay."

Okay. No side comment, no weird look on Ilya's face, no teasing. *Okay.*

Shane could feel his body slowly relax at that as he mumbled, repeating the word. "Okay."

Shane *definitely* should have worn the suit.

He looks at the restaurant with its architecture and its interior design, and he immediately gets self conscious with what he was wearing. He turns to Ilya who had just finished talking to the valet—and that's another thing, this place has fucking *valets*—in absolute betrayal. "You said this place wasn't fancy!"

"Is not," Ilya looks at Shane with the most confused expression on his face, like *he* was the normal one here not freaking out about the restaurant that was clearly way too luxurious. "Is only 4.5 stars. Come."

Shane has to pick up his dropped jaw very quickly, as Ilya was already leading him to the host stand. “Reservation for Mr. Rozanov?” The staff has asked, and the next thing Shane knows, the both of them were already being led to a table inside. Shane tries not to think about how pretty Ilya’s last name is as he walks.

“This is insane.”

Ilya looks up from the menu, immediately directing all of his focus on Shane, who sat opposite him. “What? Do not mind the price, is my treat.”

“Huh? Oh, no,” Shane shakes his head, both hands also holding the menu. “I mean, yeah, the prices are insane, and thank you seriously for treating me, but it’s the whole.. restaurant.”

Shane could talk about it for *hours*. There were no lights opened thanks to the big windows, the sun lighting up the restaurant instead. It was comfortably quiet, unlike the usual places Shane went to where everyone was too noisy as they chatted or the staff were bustling around him loudly. There was greenery everywhere as well, and the materials they have used for the furniture were definitely high quality.

But most of all, the people around them were very obviously couples, and they *fit* right in. Surely nobody thought they were one though, right? Two men eating together at a high end restaurant alone was normal.

“Ah, yes. Is very nice place,” Ilya nods before going back to reading the menu, almost as if he couldn’t care less about the place. “But I will take you somewhere nicer next time.”

Next time. Ilya has said it so casually, dropped it like it was expected that there would *be* a next time.

Shane then gets reminded as to why he agreed to be here in the first place: to tell Ilya that he shouldn’t go through with giving him money for hockey equipment. He shouldn’t get distracted. “Il—”

“We are ready to order,” Ilya calls for a waiter. He looks back at Shane. “Ah, we order first, if that’s okay? So we talk while eating.”

Shane’s lips closed, then turning flat as he nodded. Sure, okay. He can wait until the food arrives. It might be rude to just spring it onto Ilya, anyways.

Shane ended up ordering something that fit right into his diet: smoked tuna served with a side of vegetables. Ilya was right, the menu *was* big and indeed had something he liked. Or, well, has eaten something similar before.

“You like it?” Ilya asked as he chewed on his chicken, his order being a plate of organic chicken breast with a side of shrimp and sage.

“Yeah, tastes good.” Tastes *normal*, really, Shane doesn’t say. For he’d eaten so many fish in his life that they all basically taste the same in his palate now, no matter the way it was cooked. But it’s fine, it was good for his body, anyways. Shane shouldn’t complain. Though this particular fish tastes a bit different. More firm, and tastes a bit like steak. “Thanks again, for treating me.”

Ilya offers him a smile. “Is nothing.” And Shane knew it definitely was.

Shane puts his fork down after finishing chewing, taking a breath as he readies himself on how he should tell Ilya he doesn’t need to fund his hockey equipment. It’s embarrassing just thinking about it, really. He’s a grown man with a job, he should be able to pay for his own equipment.

Shane left the restaurant completely defeated. Unsurprisingly, he was unable to confront Ilya. After all, every time he’d manage to gather the courage to speak, Ilya would suddenly talk about a random topic—mostly about Shane, actually. And Shane, like the good social person he has practiced to be, has returned the questions to Ilya so he has the chance to share as well.

This lets Shane know many things about the other. For one, Ilya has indeed confirmed that he is Russian, born from Moscow and then moved here to Canada just a few years ago. Although every time Shane tried to ask the reason *why* he moved here, or if the conversation was getting close towards the topic of family, Ilya always manages to smoothly switch the subject. At the very least, Ilya revealed that his father plays a big part in his wealth, but that was as deep as he would go.

Ilya also likes hockey. He used to play, too. Until an emergency happened and he had to go back to Russia. Another topic that he didn’t elaborate on, and instead shifted the spotlight on Shane instead, let him talk more about *his* journey with hockey.

The rest of the lunch had the same back and forth pattern, the conversation flowing smoothly between one topic then the next—which truly left Shane no room to bluntly tell Ilya, “Hey, you don’t have to pay for my hockey equipment by the way. As you were saying?”

And though it did irritate Shane a bit that he couldn’t do such a menial task, he also can’t help but feel.. happy. Conversing with Ilya was so easy, so *natural* between the two of them. There was no awkward silence, and the banter was smooth and fun. Shane has never met someone he enjoyed talking to so much he didn’t even realize the time.

It continued even during the ride back to the auto shop. Shane tried to insist that Ilya didn’t have to drive him back, but he never really won in telling Ilya no when it comes to being taken care of—which was a whole nother thing.

Ilya was kind. *Gentle.* The opposite of what his first impression was of him, and his co-worker’s *current* impression of him. They’d often tease Shane once Ilya leaves, asking about

the ‘scary spoiled Russian’ that seems to have taken a liking to him so much. If only they knew.

Shane tries not to act like a teenage girl who just got dropped off after her date as he thanked Ilya. “Thank you, for treating me to lunch.”

“Is no problem,” Ilya waves his hand dismissively, letting his arm hang over the rolled down car window as he looks up at Shane. “I hope you enjoyed.”

“Of course,” Shane says a little too quickly, and then adds on before he could think too much about it. “See you.”

Ilya grins at that. “See you, Shane,” he waves before rolling up the window and then driving away.

Shane stood there, staring at Ilya’s car like a love struck idiot. He sighs, slapping himself in the cheeks before going back to the auto shop.

They in fact, did not see each other. The next day, at least.

Hours after their lunch, Shane’s stomach had started hurting. Then he’d started vomiting, then his head had started aching.

After going over it with his co-workers before being forced to leave early, they all concluded that he definitely had food poisoning, which made a lot of sense. The tuna he ate yesterday was probably not cooked properly, and Shane only ever thought that that was just how fish tastes like in fancy restaurants. He should’ve trusted his instincts, but he was too busy being charmed by a certain Russian.

After not coming to work for a day, he was perfectly back in tip-top shape, now on the way to the auto shop. He was told to take a few days of rest, but Shane knew his own body. Though he came to work later than usual today just to be sure.

He knows he’s fine by now. Shane feels great, and he can’t wait to get back to work. The only reason why he’s so insistent that he’s all cured, definitely not because he misses a certain blonde curly haired customer.

“Shane!” Someone calls for him as soon as he steps foot in the shop.

Shane tried his best to hide his disappointment when he realized it didn’t come with the familiar Russian accent he was used to hearing when his name is called.

Going over to the co-worker that called for him after putting his things down, it turns out that Ilya *had* stopped by yesterday. Hearing it made Shane’s heart drop to his stomach, and the story was *just* starting.

It was around 8 A.M. when Ilya went to the shop yesterday, parking his car to his usual spot: right in front of Shane's work station. He stepped out, looking around when he couldn't see Shane. Someone asks him what he needs help with, but he only responds with, "*Where is Shane?"*

The story ends with Ilya leaving as soon as he finds out Shane didn't go to work due to food poisoning, leaving every worker dumbfounded.

"Oh, god." Shane mutters, cheeks heating up at the realization that Ilya *knows* about him getting food poison. He's so embarrassed he literally would not mind going back home and not see Ilya ever again.

Oh, and there's also the fact that Ilya left the shop once he realized Shane didn't show up for work yesterday. What the fuck is that.

Surely, this could all mean nothing once again. Perhaps Ilya really was *not* comfortable talking with the other workers there in fear of language barriers, Shane being the only one he's ever close with and that's why he always chooses *him* whenever his car has problems. This also could explain why he left when he realized Shane was absent.

But that doesn't erase the fact that Ilya found out about Shane getting food poison. Shane planned on acting normal once they met up again so that the memory of their lunch together remains in a good light. But now it was ruined. It wasn't Shane's fault, of course. But he still can't help but feel guilty for some weird reason.

The quick catching up with his co-workers comes to a stop when a customer arrives, and as they all turned to check, it doesn't take a genius to figure out which this expensive sports car belongs to.

"Shane," Ilya quickly walks over as soon as his car is parked. Now *there's* the familiar accent that usually came with his name.

"Ilya," Shane meekly responded, and the next thing he knew, his shoulders were being grabbed and slightly shaken by this tall Russian man.

"You are okay? You are not poisoned anymore?" Ilya frantically asks, eyes rapidly searching around Shane's face as if there would be any answer there.

Shane could only stare at Ilya in his position, completely frozen as they have never been this close to each other before. He knew Ilya was gorgeous, but with their current distance, Shane could basically see *everything.* His moles, the way his lips take a dip *right* in the middle, some of his curls that clung onto his forehead due to.. sweat?

"What? Yeah, I'm fine," Shane tries to calm Ilya down, wondering if he took 'food poisoning' way too literally. He lets his hand rest on Ilya's left shoulder, and that seemed to do the trick with Ilya's body relaxing. "I just had a stomach ache, that's all." That was definitely not all.

“Is it because of fish? I’m so sorry, Shane, I did not know—”

“Ilya,” Shane firmly says, and that stops Ilya’s panicking once more. Really, he’d thought that he’d be the one getting all flustered due to embarrassment. Who knew that Ilya would be the one getting all worked up? Worked up about *Shane*, just to add. “I’m fine now. Okay?”

Ilya stares at Shane, hands still gripping on his shoulders. After a while does he only let out a sigh, calming down. “Okay.”

Shane nods, gently patting Ilya’s shoulder before pulling away. He wonders why Ilya hasn’t done the same. “Now, what’s the problem with your car this time?”

“No problem,” Ilya says, and with the way he looked all serious made Shane a bit nervous. “Shane.”

Now Shane’s *definitely* nervous. Why did Ilya come here if his car had no problem? “.. Yeah?”

“Come to my house.”

Shane’s face immediately drops at that, eyes widening and jaw opening as if he’d just heard the biggest news to ever grace this world to date. “*What?*”

“Come to my house,” Ilya repeats, grip on Shane’s shoulders slightly tightening. “Let me cook you good food. Better food than restaurant. One that will not give you poison.”

“Ilya, I didn’t *really* get poisoned—”

“We can have good time. Can even watch hockey, if you would like. Just the two of us. Let me make it up to you. Come to my house.”

Shane never truly understood the phrase, ‘butterflies in your stomach’ until now. Never understood why people blushed other than embarrassment, really. Not until he met Ilya. Ilya Rozanov.

In just a span of a few days, this man had made Shane experience or think about things he’s never experienced or thought about before all his life. He wonders what other things Ilya will introduce him to if he’d spent more time with him.

And for once in his life, he’ll let himself be selfish. Take the rest of the day off—which is supposed to be the plan for the next few days, actually—to spend it with Ilya, maybe finally eat something that’s out of his diet because Ilya made it *for* him, and spend the rest of the time actually *relaxing*.

“Okay,” Shane softly responds. “I’m coming to your house.”

End Notes

just now realizing how funny an outsider pov of this fic would be lol

posted this fic on twt!

thank you so much for reading! i might prioritize my filo socmed au first before writing another full on fic like this but dont fret because i WILL keep writing about these two until we reach season 2 and maybe even keep writing more they have truly rotted my brain

once again, all kudos and comments are appreciated :] thank you for reading have a great day!

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