

A Mean Boy from Boston

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A Mean Boy from Boston

by [WillowMcKinley](#)

Summary

When Yuna accidentally interrupts Shane and Ilya sharing an intimate moment, Ilya is completely willing to play the bad guy to control the situation. Even though he wants for the approval of Shane's parents, he will sacrifice it to establish clearly-needed boundaries. As if Shane would let him take this on alone.

Meanwhile, Yuna does not entirely realize what she had stepped into, and she is left upset and defensive. David is horrified that his wife has apparently not been heeding his many (*many*) warnings to text ahead of time.

One day Ilya may be the favorite son, and Shane can watch fondly as he solves puzzles and eats ice cream at his parents' house. It just takes some time and work and adjustment to get there.

Notes

The song mentioned in this fic is "Gordie Howe" by Bob Davies. Here is a [link](#), if you're interested in listening when it comes up!

Chapter 1: I would love you if you were a white duck.

Shane knows that Ilya is going to crack some lame joke about him being a stalker for this, but he cannot stop himself from staring at the man from the bend to the hallway, peeping at Ilya on the couch as he watches some show on the food channel.

Ilya throws his arms up in complaint as if he is watching a bad call by a ref in a sports match. Shane is kind of in love with him.

He feels himself hovering. He knows Ilya is going to be a menace. But.

But Ilya's trade had just been announced. And Shane feels. A way. About it.

He also feels what he guesses to be about four billion bees all under his skin and buzzing and stinging. So. Not great.

"Shane!" Ilya calls from the couch. Though he has not turned around to look at him, Shane suspects Ilya has caught him looking from the reflection of some shiny surface in the room. Cheater. "I can feel you *creeping*! Creeping like big creep!"

"Shut up," Shane says, huffing.

Ilya pats the seat next to him. "Come, sit. Anthony did not leave cake in oven long enough. [Отпетый дурак](#)! He knows judges have spoken to him about this!"

Shane walks around the arm of the couch but he doesn't sit. Ilya looks up at him, and he pats the cushion again.

"Now you are creeping even closer," Ilya says with a tut. His exasperation is fond, achingly so. "Okay. Fine. Be such way." He flicks his fingers at Shane, a faux-dismissal.

Shane stares at him. Ilya pretends to watch the baking show. Shane hasn't decided which of the room's shiny surfaces has given him away, but he suspects it still is. Shane tries to figure out if this is a situation where Ilya wants him to beg or for Shane to take charge. Shane doesn't know which way he'd rather it be either.

Ilya rests his hand in his pants, under his sweats. His gold cross shines in the morning light pouring in from the window, snug between his thick, bare pecs. He is so gorgeous. Shane swallows down the saliva pooling in his mouth.

He carefully lowers himself to his knees, telegraphing his desire as he shuffles closer to Ilya. He places his head in Ilya's lap. Ilya digs his finger in Shane's hair. He pets through Shane's hair, again and again, as Shane settles into his seat in the carpet, resting his weight on his calves. Shane drinks his fill from the sight of Ilya's stomach, the way it tightens as Shane breathes hot against his drawstring.

Shane's eyes lids weigh heavily, drooping closed before he slowly blinks back them open. The corner of his lips twitch into a small smile.

Ilya continues watching his show, at least performatively. He shouts, "Ridiculous! She is clearly best of bunch! What shit!" when he finds the editing seems to have a bone to pick with a contestant who by all rights doesn't deserve it. During a commercial, Ilya rolls up Shane's tee shirt up to his armpits. He taps Shane's shoulder, and Shane lifts his arms up so Ilya can take the collar up off around his head.

Shane rests his head back down and buries his head deeper in Ilya's lap. He can't seem to get himself to settle, but he does love sitting here, head in Ilya's lap. He wraps his arms around Ilya's waist. Comfy. His spine feels stretched perfectly as he extends into Ilya's lap, his thighs warm from blood flow.

Ilya scratches Shane's scalp. Shane tingles where his fingers drag. Ilya places his other hand on the back of Shane's neck and squeezes. He still chides contestants and judges alike for their follies, but he does settle, some, so as not to jostle Shane. "Love your freckles, baby," he whispers, "So pretty." He rubs his thumb under Shane's eye. His other hand roves down Shane's shoulders to his upper back. "This cottage must be heaven. See a new freckle every day."

Shane's shoulders relax under his touch. Tensions melt. Knots unwind, until Shane is just a pliable shape of clay, to be sculpted under Ilya's warm touch. He hums, low and dreamy. Shane drops his arms from their hold so he can drag Ilya's waistband under his cock. Ilya huffs out a small breath. He brings one hand back up to Shane's hair to grip into his locks. Shane nuzzles his cheek against Ilya's length.

"So sweet for me, baby," Ilya murmurs. "So perfect."

Shane licks a stripe up Ilya's cock. He kisses Ilya's cock head, already dribbling a bead of precome. Ilya's nails scrape in his hair. Shane kisses down Ilya's shaft, and he sucks Ilya's ball into his mouth. His mouth is hot, but Ilya is even hotter.

Ilya pets through Shane's hair. "Damn, sweetheart, your mouth is so hot on me. Gonna keep me warm, baby?"

Shane kisses Ilya's other ball and then licks up Ilya's shaft. He presses several kisses to the cockhead, before swallowing Ilya down to the base.

Ilya grunts, crunching in. He cradles Shane's face as Shane sucks lightly. Ilya curses in Russian. Shane relaxes into Ilya. Ilya's cock is heavy and hot in his mouth. He doesn't think about Ilya's trade. Or anyone's reactions. Just Ilya. Just Ilya's hot breaths. The way he grunts. How Ilya calls him gorgeous and perfect and pretty and sweet. Everything revolves around the way Ilya's fingers play in his hair, curling around locks. The way Ilya tugs his hair suddenly, and how the sharp grip sends waves of pleasure from his scalp down to his cock.

Shane doesn't hear the TV. He doesn't know if Ilya muted it or turned it off or if Shane's pleasure has muffled the outside world. Ilya praises him in Russian. Shane is still learning, and this bliss does not help his focus, but he catches familiar endearments.

The world narrows in. Just Ilya and Shane. Just the two of them. Just Ilya's thick heavy cock on Shane's tongue and Ilya's warm, sturdy thighs under his cheek and Ilya's firm, calloused hands in Shane's hair and against Shane's skin. Shane only knows Ilya's soft pants and gentle touch and the way his voice breaks with pleasure because Shane is so *good* for him. Shane feels wrapped in a blanket fresh from the dryer. Ilya's cock is hot and velvety and thick and perfect inside his mouth, filling Shane, filling his mouth. Heavy and warm on his tongue. Shane feels as if the whole of himself is pressed flush against his skin. He does not feel the constant unease inside himself, as if where he is meant to be does not align with where his body sits. No, he is full and warm. Plush stuffing pushes at his seams without bursting them.

Shane rests his palms on Ilya's thighs, so thick and strong and sturdy. Ilya could lift the whole world with the strength, and he often says he does, carrying Shane to bed, holding Shane against the wall as he fucks into him.

"How about you kick off your sweats for me, baby, hm?" Ilya requests. Shane feels his voice travel through him, like ripples in water. Low and strong and sure. "Wanna see you," Ilya murmurs sweetly.

Shane dopily blinks his eyes open. Shane does not wish to move his mouth from Ilya's cock. He sluggishly moves his hands to his own sweats, pushing at the hem. Ilya helps him shimmy out from them, taking his hands off Shane's skin and hair only just long enough to do so. Shane slumps forward once his sweats are around his ankles. He wraps his arms around Ilya's calves and holds his palms against Ilya's ankles.

Ilya's hands return to Shane to rove over him, to cup his cheeks, to stroke his jaw. He cups the back of Shane's neck, and he grips Shane's shoulders. Shane feels so loved. So cared for. So overwhelmingly thought of.

Ilya takes such good care of him. He pets Shane's hair and loops his finger around Shane's locks and makes Shane feel so close and captive and together. *Unalone* in a way he never knew it was even possible to be, before Ilya.

Ilya's cock is just so big and makes him feel so full. Ilya is so warm and so wonderful, and Shane had *needed* this. He swears he could doze, so happy and loose. He feels the world through a gauze. Soft and gossamer and beautiful.

"Shit!" Ilya curses. Shane wonders if he's about to come, for about a second. Typically, Ilya is better at holding off than that. "Fuck," he curses again, before pushing Shane off his cock. Shane reels back in alarm, wondering what the fuck he's done to elicit this response.

He blinks his eyes open dazedly. Ilya's face is red, but serious.

Ilya uses his hold on Shane's neck to force Shane to force eye contact. Shane knows his eyes are glazed over, because he can't really focus on what Ilya's saying. Ilya looks worried, though, in a way that makes Shane's stomach churn, because he thought everything was *good*, and suddenly it's *not* and he doesn't know *why*.

"Lie down on the couch, for me, okay?" Ilya commands. His voice is low and hushed, but still serious and strict.

Shane shakily crawls up to the cushions, trying to arrange his head back in Ilya's lap, but Ilya's grip on his neck is strong and firm. The hold is the only thing that tethers him from drifting off.

"One minute!" Ilya calls, but Shane doesn't understand the command. More softly, Ilya tells him, "Close your eyes. Rest. I will be back, okay? Wait for me." Ilya presses a kiss on Shane's forehead. "Is order. Be good."

Shane nods to show he's heard the command, but he feels cold as Ilya's hand leaves his neck. A blanket is thrown over his shoulders, and Ilya tucks it up to his face while Shane tries to figure out what the hell is happening. He is not very good at it. Each thought is staticky and weird and slips from his head like water through a sewer grate.

Shane tries to be good. He keeps his eyes closed, even as he hears Ilya move around the kitchen, his voice uneven and questioning. He does not look back to him, even as he tracks his light footsteps on the hardwood to the kitchen.

He tries to untangle what he's done wrong. He hears Ilya's voice grow to an almost shout from what he thinks is the kitchen. Shane has only ever heard him sound like this on the ice. Maybe also in interviews with rude press.

"You *cannot* invade privacy like this," Ilya says, sternly. He sounds commanding, but not nearly as sweet as Shane is used to. He's dropping articles like he's upset, but Shane still can't figure out why.

"Key is for emergencies. This?" Ilya asks harshly. Shane can sort of imagine him waving his arms or hands in emphasis. "Not emergency. Is grocery. Sound same but different."

He hears some other muffled sound, but thoughts tumble around in his head. He tries to grasp at context or relevance, but they keep slipping through his fingers. Even with the blanket, he feels very cold. The AC shouldn't be set this low, since they spend so much of their time here naked.

"Is *sleeping*," Ilya insists. "Needs rest after big day and big announcement and big stress. Plan is for dinner today. *Dinner*."

Shane hates this. He hates feeling dizzy and like he's sinking through the cushions and dropping into freefall. His stomach hurts and he's really confused and nothing makes sense. His chest feels tight.

"Key. Give key. Now," Ilya demands.

Shane doesn't think the order is for him, and he doesn't have one anyway, but it feels weird and gross and confusing, and he doesn't know what he did to make Ilya upset or leave to begin with.

"Will get back," Ilya insists, "After discussion. At dinner," he emphasizes again.

Shane hears some noise he can't parse through, and a large frustrated sigh.

Ilya is back, then, after what feels like forever, hands on Shane's neck and in his hair. Shane opens his eyes, and Ilya is kneeling at his side, looking beautiful and calm, if serious.

"Good boy," he purrs. "Very good for me. Stay very still and so good when told. Perfect."

A knot releases in Shane's stomach. He feels the heavy chains locked across his chest opened with a key and start falling away by their own weight.

Ilya crawls under the blanket and covers Shane with his own weight. Shane feels himself warm up, a bit, thankfully, as he melts into the cushions.

"Whuh—?" Shane asks, confused.

Ilya kisses Shane's cheek, forehead, temple, hair. "I will tell you, yes? But let me take care of you first."

"Mkay," Shane mumbles, happy to have Ilya around him and warm and perfect. Much better.

Ilya kisses Shane's cheek again. His hand holds Shane's neck and jaw, cradling him so, so preciously. "Shane, baby," he murmurs. He brackets his arms around Shane, and he kisses down to his neck. He sucks on the tendon. Shane's hips jerk forward, and he ruts his cock against Ilya's stomach.

Ilya kicks his own sweat down to his ankles and lets them bunch at the end of the couch. "Oh, my sweet love, you did so well. Waited so patient. So quiet." He rolls Shane over to his side to face into the back of the couch. He hugs Shane close to his chest and spoons around him, pressing his chest to Shane's back, his thighs under Shane's own, their calves entangled. Ilya rubs his toes over Shane's ankles, and he kisses the back of Shane's neck again and again and again.

Shane feels so warm. His head is still caught in prickly tangles, but a layer of cotton and fluff has settled amidst them, protecting him from snagging. None of the sharp edges touch, no loud metals can clang against one another. All he can feel is Ilya's chest on his back, the way Ilya wraps his arms around him and squeezes tight. Ilya pinches his nipples and gropes his chest and digs his fingers into Shane's muscles. Shane squirms. He rubs his ass back against Ilya. Ilya's cock slots between his cheeks, and Shane gasps.

Ilya grunts, and his arms lock around Shane. He thrusts forward, and his cock drags between Shane's thighs. They both choke, and Ilya's hand flies to Shane's cock. He rubs his palm over Shane's cockhead to gather precome. He spreads it across the inside of Shane's thighs and on his own cock.

Shane moans. Ilya bites his neck so hard that Shane gasps. Shane reaches his arm behind him to grab Ilya's neck and turn him to Shane's lips for a kiss. Ilya bites his bottom lip and sucks it into his mouth as he gives Shane's thighs another testing thrust.

Ilya reaches around Shane's thigh, gripping it in place. His nails dig into the inside and leave scratches that send shivers of pleasure through Shane's spine.

“Love you,” Shane whispers, as they break the kiss to breathe.

“Love you,” Ilya answers. He rocks his hips forward, still slow, still building momentum. “Love you so much. Need to be with you. Need to see you, know you’re mine.”

“Yeah,” Shane agrees, in part nonsensically. “Yours.”

“In and around and surrounding you,” Ilya continues. His sack slaps against the back of Shane’s thighs, hot and sharp. “Need to be everything.”

“You are,” Shane mumbles.

Ilya sucks Shane’s earlobe into his mouth. Shane shudders. “I am yours, darling.”

“Mine,” Shane says breathily, dreamily. He grabs Ilya’s arms and hugs them to his chest. Ilya crosses his arms over Shane in a tight embrace, and Shane holds him in place as Ilya starts fucking his thighs. Ilya’s cockhead brushes against his balls, and Shane whines. Ilya moves so slow and so *erotically*. He fucks Shane as if they are at sea and it is only the waves that rock his hips forward through Shane’s thighs. Ilya kisses Shane’s neck, and he sucks a kiss right under the ear. His tongue flicks up at the shell of his ear, his breath hot and loud and damp. He sucks in Shane’s earlobe. His chest is so hot against Shane’s back. Hot and protected and safe.

Ilya slides his hand down Shane’s chest. His hand pauses over Shane’s pelvis. He digs his fingers into Shane’s pubes. He gives them a sharp tug that has Shane bucking in his hand. Shane grips into Ilya’s forearm still wrapped around him.

Ilya tugs on Shane’s cock, and Shane’s nails break through Ilya’s skin. Ilya strokes Shane with one hand while the other gropes Shane’s chest. Shane’s chest squeezes through his grip. Ilya sucks a hickey into the side of Shane’s neck while he moans. Neither will last long. Shane had been confused and cold for a moment, but not even that could fully soften his cock after he’d held Ilya’s in his mouth for so long.

Ilya bites deep into Shane’s neck, and Shane climaxes in Ilya’s hand. Come splatters across the blanket and over their skin. His thighs tighten around Ilya’s cock, and the pressure milks an orgasm out of Ilya. He comes with a gasp, loud and hot in Shane’s ear.

Ilya squeezes Shane tight in his arms, before he wipes them both off with the cleaner edges of the blanket. He promises to throw it in the wash with a quick kiss over what is surely a very large bruise on Shane’s neck. Ilya reaches around over the side of the couch, moving as little as possible to reach into the storage under the coffee table and grab a fresh blanket. Even if he hadn’t been so precious, Shane still has his cock trapped between his thighs. That fucker isn’t going anywhere soon.

Ilya throws the soft chenille over them, and Shane is happy to cuddle back up into Ilya, their bodies aligned from Ilya’s chest to Shane’s back with their legs entwined. Ilya holds him, murmuring praise. “So good for me. So, so perfect.”

Shane feels warm and soft and good. He knows that the world will come rushing back in eventually, but for now, his brain is gloriously, deliriously empty of everything but Ilya's soft breaths in his ear.

Ilya kisses Shane, his neck, his ear, his hair. He gropes Shane's chest like he doesn't even quite realize he's doing it, massaging his fingers into the muscle.

Shane tilts his head back to beg for another kiss, which Ilya happily grants. Ilya holds him until Shane comes down from the high and the outside world starts filtering back in. Distant and small, at first, with the hum of the fridge and then a bird call outside. He nudges at Ilya, and they both roll around. Shane plasters himself against Ilya's back, and Ilya combs the carpet for the remote. He turns the sound of the TV on to a very dull and low volume, centralizing the sounds for Shane to process. Shane buries his face between Ilya's shoulder blades and smiles. He kisses Ilya's spine as Ilya describes what happens on screen to contextualize the audio.

"I think Nancy is about to under-season her batter. Does not look like enough vanilla or cinnamon," he says, like he could do any better.

Shane mutters response where he has something to say, but largely he lets Ilya's voice soothe him. As he comes back to himself, he can feel anxiety for Ilya's trade and confusion for earlier's interruption sit at the fence of consciousness. Shane can't hold them off all day, but at least he won't open the gate any earlier for them than he needs.

When the episode changes over, Ilya shifts in Shane's hold to face him. He brushes his thumb over Shane's cheek. "So beautiful," he whispers.

Shane grins. "Me or just my freckles?" he asks. Shows Ilya he's a little more himself.

"Both, my love," Ilya answers. Sometimes he is slower to shift back than Shane is. That's okay, too. "What do you think of lunch? Sit and eat while the blankets run?"

Shane considers this. It's not like him to lie in bed—or on the couch—all day. Even when he feels all intense and distant. But it is tempting. Always is. But no. They will be visiting Shane's parents for dinner, and he will want to feel like he's done more than fuck and sleep before he gets there. His mom thinks he should rest more, but he always feels like a teen who's slept in and wasted the day when he visits her without more to show for it. He knows she'll ask how his day was, and there's only so many times he can lie very obviously about doing something other than having sex all day before he starts feeling like some sort of addict. He prefers the word "insatiable..."

Shane nods. "Sounds good."

"Good," Ilya says. He kisses Shane's forehead, and then he stands up. He grabs his sweats, which have fallen to the floor, and he hikes them up. Shane mourns his loss of the sight of Ilya's cock. All of Ilya is eye-candy, but his cock...! Or mouth candy...? Shane's not a wordsmith. He shakes his head, and Ilya helps him get his arms through his sleeves. Shane pushes his head through the collar of his tee while Ilya pulls Shane's feet through his

pantlegs. Ilya pulls Shane to standing. He pats Shane's ass, before resting his hands on Shane's hip.

Shane throws his arms around Ilya's neck and lets his weight rest there before pulling Ilya into another kiss. Ilya's tongue swipes along Shane's bottom lip before pushing between. Ilya's hands rest heavily on his lower back. The weight of them holds Shane in place, preventing Shane from scattering into pieces and across the room. They could stay here just like this for the rest of the day. He's loose. So happy. The sun pours through the windows and drowns the carpet in gold light. His feet warm under their rays.

They pull apart. A string of spit snaps between them as Ilya presses his forehead to Shane's. He kisses their lips together, quick, like he can't help himself. Shane breathes in Ilya's breath and allows himself a moment.

And then, "What was that about, earlier?"

Ilya sighs. "Maybe we eat, first?"

"That bad?" Shane asks with a grimace.

Ilya pecks his lips, alleviating the frown from his face. "No. But we will both need energy to have that conversation."

Shane frowns, but sighs. "Fine." No inviting trouble. No borrowing grief from the future. He's been working on this.

Ilya snakes his arm around Shane, and he guides him to their bathroom. Shane might have protested, but his head is still fuzzy and his legs are just a little weak.

They pass through the kitchen, and Shane is surprised to see the table covered in reusable grocery bags. "Where'd all this come from...?" Shane asks.

Ilya huffs. "Was wondering if you realized..." He tightens his grip around Shane. "Lunch, yes?"

Shane isn't hungry, but he does feel... sort of empty. So, he nods. Ilya sets up a bath. Shane knows Ilya wants to get started on lunch, but he cajoles Ilya into the tub with him. He wraps his arms around Ilya's neck, and Ilya can't help but follow the kiss into the water. The warmth of the water sinks into Shane's skin. Ilya settles out against him.

Shane feels more himself after Ilya uses a sudsy cloth to clean his thighs. He kisses the moles on Ilya's face and rubs the cloth over Ilya's chest in turn. Ilya massages his scalp with the shampoo. Even though Shane is so particular about his routines, Ilya knows how to do it right, so Shane always feels so clean and refreshed under Ilya's charge.

They rinse out, and they readjust. Ilya lies his back against the tub, and Shane rests his head on Ilya's chest. Ilya's heart beats steadily under his ear as Ilya pets through his wet hair.

"Can I ask yet?" Shane says, dry.

Ilya huffs. “Can’t wait to lunch after all?”

Shane snorts. “If I’m clear-headed enough to ask, I figured now’s a time as any.”

Ilya sighs. “Yes, yes. Well. Do best not to get the floor wet. I’ll make you clean it.”

Shane rolls his eyes. “I’ll throw the towel in with the blankets.”

“I’m the one doing laundry! You just make more work for me!” Ilya protests.

Shane snickers. He grabs Ilya’s jaw and squishes his cheeks with one hand. “Alright. I can take it. What was up with that?”

Ilya grabs Shane’s hand from his face. “This time, was your mother who walked in on us having sex,” Ilya says. He squeezes Shane’s hand, while his other arm flexes over Shane’s chest.

“What?” Shane asks, startling. Sure enough, water spills over the edge of the tub and flows on to the tile.

“I just asked...” Ilya tsks.

Shane turns around in Ilya’s hold, and Ilya releases his arms for Shane to shuffle around enough to make eye contact. “*What?*” he asks again.

“While you were brain-dopey and cock drunk,” Ilya says. He rubs his fingers over the nobs in Shane’s spine. “She brought groceries.”

“Does she—did she—?” Shane asks.

“No, no,” Ilya answers. He dances his finger pads over Shane’s shoulders, as if tapping the freckles on Shane’s back. “I told her you were napping. We could see your dark, fluffy hair tucked under the blanket, but nothing more.”

Shane groans. “I didn’t believe my nightmares could get worse,” he says, covering his eyes with his fingers. “And somehow!” He tries not to press too hard, but Jesus fucking shit. He hears his heartbeat in his temple. He thinks his eye may explode from the proximity of it. “I don’t want to think about my mom knowing what a submissive is! Let alone that I *am* one!”

“I took care of it,” Ilya says, which does not instill the confidence Shane thinks he means it too.

Shane sits on Ilya’s lap and rests his forehead on Ilya’s shoulder. “They can’t keep doing this. My heart can’t take it.”

Ilya breathes heavy. “I took her key. I said we may give it back at dinner.”

Shane sighs. “I thought—” he pauses, scrubbing his face with his hands. He reaches over and grabs his face wash from the ledge and uses the nervous energy to dig into his pores. Ilya

allows him a second to collect his thoughts. Shane rinses his face and sighs. "I'll talk to her. I'm sorry."

"No," Ilya says. "I'm sorry."

"Ilya—" Shane tries.

"No," Ilya shakes his head. "I am. I know you want me to get along with your parents. I was... not kind."

"Oh, Ilya, no," Shane says. "I... I do, but—"

"I will apologize," Ilya says. "I just... I did not want her to see you..."

"Thank you," Shane says, pressing his forehead to Ilya's. He kisses Ilya's lips lightly. "I mean it. Let's just... we'll talk to her, okay? Them having a key, it's never been a problem like this before. I still want them to have it in case of emergencies, but..." He kisses Ilya's cheek over his mole.

"Alright... But lunch now? Finally?" Ilya asks.

Shane huffs. The water is starting to cool, anyway. "Alright, alright."

They help each other stand, and they dry each other off with the nice, fluffy towels. They drop both on the tile to soak up some of the water that had spilled over.

They dress in their room. Ilya slips on the joggers that makes his ass look insane, and Shane puts on the tiny running shorts he once got from Reebok that he knows drive Ilya wild. He throws on Ilya's Boston tee, because it smells like him, and he's feeling a certain way. Ilya's lips upturn at the sight, and Shane flips him off as he heads back to the bathroom. "I'll get the laundry started. I know you're still thinking about lunch."

"Yes!" Ilya cries. "Very important! I am always saying this!"

Shane grabs the towels and some of their sweats from the regular load for the basket. While passing through the kitchen, he can really appreciate how all-out his mom went, food-wise. He sighs.

Ilya grabs ingredients from the piles. "I think... Since we have full fridge now... baked yellowtail with roast veggies? And miso soup. We still have brown rice in the cooker."

Shane drops the basket because he has to hug him. "Please. You're the best."

"Yes, yes, I am, glad you understand," he says, waving dismissively, but Shane can see his smile.

Shane breaks away to finish grabbing the blankets, and he carries the whole basket to the laundry room to get started. He really, really hates how come can crust into blankets. Blegh.

By the time he gets back to the kitchen, the room smells of roasting squash and carrot. Ilya even threw some kale in the crisper. Shane's diet had been one of the growing pains of being in a real relationship. Before they were really seeing each other, Shane had never minded cheating on his diet while with Ilya. They never saw each other enough for it to have mattered. But now... they make so much more time for each other, and Shane can't spend all of it just... eating whatever.

It's been a learning curve. And as easily as this meal could have been full of teasing and debating and cajoling and whining and all of it *playing*—Shane's glad it's one less thing for him to think about.

He sets the load, and he heads back to the kitchen to wrap his arms around Ilya and dig his face into his back. Ilya huffs. He holds Shane's hand over his chest, as he seasons everything. He grabs rice from the cooker, and that's good too.

Ilya laughs as Shane clings to him, even as he tries to move more of the groceries into the fridge or their proper places in the pantry. "I am trying to pick up! *You* want it off table!"

"No, no, I do. Keep going," Shane says, waddling behind Ilya with his arms still wrapped tightly around him.

Ilya starts batting at his arms. Shane grabs tighter, and then they're wrestling in the middle of the kitchen, Ilya trying to escape. They scramble into the middle of the floor, and Ilya slams Shane into the fridge like they're on the ice. Shane barks a laugh and hooks his foot around Ilya's ankle so they're both tumbling to the ground.

"Jesus fuck!" Ilya curses as they both land on the floor. They keep wrestling, once they both reclaim their breath, and they roll on the floor. They end with Ilya pinning Shane's heads above his hands against the hardwood floor and both of them breathlessly giggling into each other's mouths.

"Dirty check, Hollander!" Ilya growls.

Shane smirks. "I don't see the refs calling it."

"Is clearly clipping!" Ilya protests.

Shane looks around for a ref. Nope. Doesn't see one. "Guess they didn't catch it."

"You! Sly little—!" Ilya huffs.

Shane wraps his legs around Ilya's back and he rolls them over until he's sitting on Ilya's lap. He grips at Ilya's chest, while he's here. Ilya sits up, and they adjust. Ilya gropes his ass while they kiss against the island. They kiss until the timer buzzes for the oven, and they reluctantly get up to eat.

Shane sets the table while Ilya portions out servings for them both. Shane knows Ilya will probably make himself a snack in between lunch and dinner, but to share a meal with him

like this is something he thought he couldn't have for so long. Now that he has this, he doesn't think he could ever take it for granted.

While they eat, Shane has Ilya go over exactly what was said and how. He sort of half remembers it now, and god, if that isn't embarrassing. At the same time, he's *very relieved* that he didn't have the nightmarish experience of getting caught naked and—as Ilya put it—brain-dopey and cock drunk.

"It's okay," Shane says, reaching over to place his hand on Ilya's. "We'll talk to them. They'll understand."

Ilya scoffs. "It's okay, Shane. I don't mind being the big bad Boston boy who is a bad influence and takes all the blame. They already think that of me anyway."

Shane bites his lip. He hates that everyone sees Ilya this way. He hates that Hayden still makes these jokes, and Ilya keeps letting him. Ilya keeps *acting* it, because he's nervous Hayden will still think that of him anyway, and it's just a nasty cycle the two of them keep getting into. Shane doesn't like that even though they've started spreading rumors about their charity, people still believe their "friendship" is a PR stunt or a practical joke or a reality TV prank.

Ilya knows how to get him out of his head and helps him relax and allows him to be himself and encourages him to try things that scare him and it just keeps surprising him that people don't see that. Even on the ice, Shane plays harder and more aggressive and more loudly. Shane becomes more and more himself, every day he spends with this man. Shane spends so much of his time terrified of getting caught because Ilya makes him so fucking happy, he just doesn't know how people don't see it.

Shane rubs his thumb over the back of Ilya's palm. "No. I won't let them, okay? That's not you."

Ilya quirks an eyebrow.

"That's not *all* of you," Shane amends. He takes another bite of food, mulling over the evening. He doesn't really want to go over to his parent's house today. He wants to go out to their firepit and talk and look at the stars and see if Ilya has another fairy tale for them to practice Russian. He tells Ilya as much.

"We can. When we get home," Ilya says. "Will be nice."

Shane rubs his thumb over Ilya's knuckles. Still scabbed from a blow to some policeman's teeth during his last game before their break. "Booo," he mumbles quietly.

Ilya's eyes are so lovely and glassy. "Next time. If not for the announcement—"

Shane's spine snaps straight. "Oh my god, that was today."

"Yes," Ilya responds, a slight laugh to his shoulders.

"I forgot. I am so sorry," Shane apologizes.

“I am glad,” Ilya says, pulling Shane’s hand back to him so he can entwine their fingers.
“That you did not spend all morning so stressed I fear your back will crack in half like twig.”

“Shut up,” Shane says, but he grins.

“Only I can fold your back in half,” Ilya teases.

“Literally shut up,” Shane says, pushing his hand at Ilya. He cops a feel of Ilya’s chest, since his hand is there anyway. Ilya flexes under his palm, and Shane unsuccessfully fights the giggle bubbling up his throat.

They finish lunch and get the dishes in the washer. Shane decides he needs to bring a peace-offering, but he’s not sure exactly what. Stressing over this, at least, helps him not stress over what people online are saying about Ilya moving to Ottawa. Which is bad. He is sure.

He decides to make mochi, because it’s easy with the microwave, and it doesn’t take up too much kitchen space while Ilya uses the counters and ovens to prepare himself his snack of a chicken wrap with fries. Which isn’t really a snack, so much as a second lunch.

Ilya hip checks him as he scoots around the island, and Shane rolls his eyes but grins. He throws his hip out to get him back as he passes by again. Ilya grabs Shane around his waist and pulls him closer. He kisses the back of Shane’s neck and continues moving.

“What flavor?” Ilya asks, looking over Shane’s shoulder to watch him bake.

“Mn,” Shane answers. “Rose,” he says, as he folds the dough.

“My favorite,” Ilya hums with a grin.

Ilya finishes eating, while Shane packs up the sweet. After they move the laundry to the dryer, Shane entices Ilya back to bed.

They tumble into the mattress together, tangling their legs and burying their fingers in each other’s hair as they fall. Ilya rests his weight across Shane’s body, one leg sliding between Shane’s.

Shane pushes Ilya’s head down to his neck and holds him there. Ilya kisses his neck, and then he sucks a kiss. Shane smiles. He tilts his head to give Ilya more room. He grabs at Ilya’s hands, still around his neck, and he tugs them down until they rest on his hips.

“Tighter,” he begs.

Ilya digs his fingers deep into Shane’s hips. Ilya pulls back from Shane’s neck with a pop, and he kisses lower down Shane’s neck.

Shane holds Ilya’s hands to his hips, even as Ilya’s fingers twitch to slide up and grope his chest. Shane also wants for that too, but he has a plan today. He has a mission.

He only moves his hands to reposition Ilya’s head to the other side of his neck. Ilya continues kissing him, continues sucking hickies into his skin. Shane writhes under Ilya’s mouth. This

is nice. So good. Normally, they get distracted, by now. Normally, hands are wandering much further at this point. Shane drags his hands up to Ilya's hair and plays with the curls. He drags his nails across Ilya's scalp and shudders when Ilya's teeth dig into his skin.

Shane knots Ilya's curls up to his knuckles. He pushes Ilya's hair back, and he kisses Ilya's forehead. He throws his head back with a loud moan as Ilya sucks another deep kiss to his skin. Ilya's hands tighten around Shane's hips, and Shane can feel the benefit of his grip strength exercises. The same hands that grip his hockey stick and make beautiful, beautiful goals.

Ilya tilts his head, sucking another deep bruise into Shane's neck.

Shane wraps his arms around Ilya's back, and he digs his nails into the skin. He embeds long, deep scratches down Ilya's back. Ilya grinds his cock down on Shane's hips, and Shane bucks his hips up to meet him.

Ilya lets his lips off Shane's neck only to grunt, low and loud. His hands grip Shane's hips tighter still to position Shane still as he pistons his hips forwards.

Shane holds Ilya to him by his nails, and Ilya breaks his own skin as he rocks himself forward along Shane's hips.

Ilya pistons forward again, and he bites down deep at the joint of Shane's neck. Shane groans. He grabs at Ilya's ass and pulls his hips deeper toward his own.

They rut together, as Ilya sucks bruise after bruise into Shane's skin. Shane brings his hands back up to dig his nails into Ilya's shoulders, trailing fresh lines out to his upper arms. They mark one another, leaving bruises and scratches in each other's skin with desperate possession. Their cocks rock against one another until finally Shane comes with a groan against Ilya's thigh. Ilya follows him soon after, shuddering a moan into Shane where his teeth are locked in the crux of his shoulder and neck. Shane strips from his shorts and briefs and tosses them over the side of the bed, and Ilya kicks down his joggers to hug against Shane.

They cuddle, and Ilya drags up a throw blanket over their hips. He nuzzles up under Shane's jaw to suck another small kiss into Shane's skin. He grins. "I don't think a turtle neck will hide this," he says, pressing a kiss lower down Shane's neck.

Shane rolls them both over to drape himself over Ilya. He presses a quick kiss to Ilya's lips, and then he buries his nails into Ilya's pecs to drag several more lines into Ilya's skin.

Ilya laughs. He presses his finger to Shane's forehead and rubs out the crease in Shane's brow. "I know this look! I *know* this look! You are so mad!"

"I'm not," Shane says. He says it confidently, but once it's out of his mouth, he realizes this might not even be true. Ilya seems to be so much more in tune with Shane's emotions than Shane himself is. Shane has no idea how he does it. It's almost like a magic, how Ilya will tell Shane how he's feeling before Shane himself knows to feel it.

Ilya laughs, rubbing his finger between Shane's brow. It is very soothing. Shane only realizes he might actually be angry because he is less so now. "Is okay. To be upset."

"It's not just that," Shane says with a sigh. "I just... You were defending me. You always do. And even if you were having bad day or acted like an asshole, I hate that—I hate that everyone just keeps expecting the worst of you, but especially my parents." He blows a heavy breath from his lips.

Ilya pushes Shane's hair back. He pecks Shane's lips. "And Mr. Particular is mad, maybe, that his plans were interrupted, and his space had people in it he did not expect to be there, and two things that shouldn't touch did touch? Hm?"

Shane scowls. Ilya always has to be right. "You think you're so smart."

"I am so smart," Ilya answers. He pinches Shane's nose between his knuckles.

Shane bats his hand away. "I just. I don't understand why she did that," Shane says with what he knows is petulance, no matter how hard he fights to keep it out of his voice.

"Oh? You don't understand why she thinks her son is having nervous stress fits? And may not feed himself?"

"But..." Shane says with honest confusion. "But *you're* here. She knows that. She knows I eat better around you." This part still bothers him, because it can't really be that. Ilya somehow knows how to get Shane to eat better than anyone and to an extent that Shane cheats on his diet more than he should.

"And then I cooked with what she gave us," Ilya says, with a reluctant sort of sigh. "Because I want to make you a good meal on a very stressful day for you."

"It's your day," Shane says immediately. "We shouldn't be so worried about me."

"I like seeing you so worked up over me," Ilya says with a small smirk.

Shane snuggles his face into Ilya's neck. He tells himself he's not pouting, even if he knows Ilya might say otherwise. Ilya isn't actually right about everything, no matter what he says.

Ilya kisses his forehead. "Right now, we change, we go to dinner, we talk, yes? Sound good?"

Shane sighs. He pushes himself up and rolls off the bed. He strips out of the Boston tee-shirt, and he folds it up before dropping it in the hamper. Ilya grins at him from the bed. Shane knows not everyone is so *particular* about clothes, but he is always a bit surprised by the apparent giddiness Ilya has for it. Sure enough, he turns to Ilya, who has a silly, boyish smile on his face, even though he's seen it... well. Maybe not so many times. Maybe not enough. The move it to ensure they see each other more. To have more time like this, to have more moments. So that maybe one day Shane rolling his socks into a tube will be more normal and less novel. Shane hopes not, though. Shane hopes Ilya never gets bored of him. Shane knows he will never get sick of Ilya, or the way he smiles at him or how his nose scrunches up when he looks for the right word or how he always has to be right, even when he's not.

Shane grabs them a wash cloth and wets it with warm water from the en suite, before wiping them both down. Ilya sucks in a kiss over his pec, one just for himself, before Shane leaves him to grab his clothes. He sticks his ass out at Ilya as he drags up a sexy pair of bikini-cut underwear that Ilya had bought him. Ilya wolf-whistles at him, which rewards Shane for his teasing. His heart flutters, and his dick twitches, despite having come twice already. He flips through his very well-folded athleisure and grabs the pair of yoga pants tucked in the far back of the drawer.

He hesitates, hand hovering over the fabric. For the first time since he had decided his course, he actually stops to think if he should continue.

He does not stop for long. The two of them will need whatever edge they can scrounge together. He pulls out the soft material and slides them slowly over his hips. Somehow, he still receives a lecherous whistle, even without flashing his whole goddamn asshole.

“I did not know you had such sexy clothing, Shane. Thought you only had plain, boring sports clothes,” Ilya goads.

The pants sit very low on his hips. The V of his pubic bones stand out against the waistband. He sets his hand on his hips. His heart beats under his fingers, Ilya’s hand a bruise against his skin. His heart thuds in his throat.

Shane goes digging through Ilya’s drawers, and he throws on another Raiders tee. This one has the Cup on it with the Raiders Logo and the year they won it. Ilya raises an eyebrow. Shane huffs. “We are going to *war*,” Shane warns.

Ilya snorts. He muffles laughter into his shoulder as he moves to sit up. “Any orders for me, Sarg’?”

Shane stands stiffer. He puts his hands behind his back and barks, “Fatigues, solider!”

“Aye, aye,” Ilya says with a sloppy salute. He crawls out of bed to throw on his boxer briefs and the teeniest shorts he owns, and then, finally, his new Ottawa tank top. “Now what, Sarg’?”

Shane smooths out a non-existent wrinkle on Ilya’s top. Ilya’s chest is strong and firm under his hand. “Head clear, eyes open, soldier,” Shane says, already slipping from the authoritative voice. Not as much his thing as the being on the receiving end of one.

“What else?” Ilya asks, reaching out to Shane. He places his hands over the bruises he’s left on Shane’s hips. Shane shivers.

Shane hooks his fingers in Ilya’s waistband. He presses his forehead to Ilya’s to convey the severity of his orders. “The enemy is wily, soldier. She’ll try to divide and conquer. Pay attention to your surroundings, and don’t let yourself get cornered.”

“Ah, I see, I see,” Ilya muses. “Permission to speak freely?”

“Granted,” Shane answers, a bemused smile breaking through whatever is left of the façade that he’s managed to hold onto.

“You are sexy like this,” Ilya grins. He kisses Shane’s lips.

“Insubordination,” Shane mumbles into his mouth.

“Yes, yes,” Ilya says dismissively.

Shane kisses Ilya again. He closes his eyes and rests his forehead on Ilya’s. He grabs Ilya by his chin and makes sure they hold eye contact when he insists, “Let me handle this.”

“Okay,” Ilya answers, nodding honestly and freely.

Their lips meet once more. Shane doesn’t want to stop. He doesn’t want to leave Ilya. That’s the whole point of all of this. Everything.

Shane knows himself. He is never going to do anything like this ever again. He is honestly feeling like he’s crawling out of his skin a little, because there’s a gap of skin between his tight shirt and his low-cut yoga pants, and he is hyper aware of a breeze of air conditioning on his stomach. But he also feels, well. Sexy. In a way he only ever really does with Ilya. He feels desirable. And he knows how his neck looks and he feels Ilya on his hips and he wants to *enjoy* it.

“Okay,” he says, breaking away once more. “We got this.”

“Whatever you want,” Ilya says. He rubs Shane’s forearm.

“We’re gonna grab the mochi. And we’re gonna head to my parents. And when we get home you’re gonna tell me Russian fairy tales by the fire,” Shane says, repeating the plan.

Ilya brushes Shane’s hair back. “I will tell you of the white duck. Original story of love you if you were a worm. You would love me if I was a white duck, yes?”

Shane does not get it. But he does know the answer to this one, because Hayden told him about the weird worm meme. “I would love you if you were a white duck.”

“Okay,” Ilya says, patting Shane’s cheek. “Now we stop delaying, yes?”

“We’re not,” Shane says, frowning. They are having a normal conversation.

“No, we are. Makes sense why, of course, but we should keep moving. Sooner we finish dinner, the sooner we can get home,” Ilya says, even though Shane knows it isn’t quite how it works. Sometimes staying depends on the conversation and what kind of activities they’re doing and how much food they eat. Well. He imagines his parents will not want to keep conversation long, with what Shane has in mind.

Shane sighs. “Let’s go,” he says, because he can keep bickering with Ilya about if they were dragging their feet or not in the car. He lets Ilya drive one of his fancy cars that Shane still doesn’t get in any meaningful way, but he knows Ilya loves it.

They arrive quickly, and Shane doesn't even complain about his speeding. More than twice.

In the driveway, Shane turns to Ilya and grabs his hand. He doesn't dare drag this out or it will become another fight. Which would normally be hot, if they weren't in need of a united front. "We got this," he says again.

"Shane. We are having dinner with your parents. Not crushing Napoleon under our heels," Ilya says, patting Shane's cheek.

"My mom would *never* invade Russia in winter," Shane responds with a sort of horror and offense at the implication she would ever be so foolish. Underestimating the enemy is a guaranteed way of losing any battle.

"We will see," Ilya says mysteriously.

Despite himself, Shane huffs out a small laugh. "You are such an asshole," he says. And he knows that he sounds so affectionate and so in love, that it is impossible to believe the two of them have not given themselves away to the whole of the world.

Chapter 2: We're the greatest of them all.

Ilya opens the door first and Shane follows him out, sort of eager and excited. He makes sure the mochi is safe in his hands, when he turns to his parents' house. Then, he feels sort of nauseated and full of dread.

Ilya comes around to him. He kisses Shane's temple. "I am reading this correctly? I can be inappropriate? Should be, even?"

Shane nods. Ilya grins wolfishly, and he wraps his arm around Shane's waist. He rests his palm low on Shane's hip. He uses his leverage to push Shane forward to the house, even though Shane feels like he's walking on un-guarded skates on this gravel path instead of his un-branded sneakers. Some part of Shane truly believes this will be what his mom holds the most ire for tonight.

His parents meet them at the porch. Their faces drop when the vague, unspecific blotches of their skin come to clarity with proximity as unquestionable evidence of sexual intimacy.

Ilya must catch their expressions too, because his fingers grip deeper into Shane's hip, pressing Shane's bruises in a way that makes Shane shiver. Shane swallows down a smirk. He knows the placement brings attention to the color and shape of the print, if they have been too distracted by Shane's mottled neck to notice.

"Hey," Shane calls, doing his best to sound how he normally does. He is vaguely aware that he doesn't actually know what his normal is, but he suspects from the way his dad's face flusters to some unsettling shade of magenta that he has room for error.

Mom's face flicks through several different emotions before she settles to her game face. Even if she suspects Shane's play, Shane won't change course. That's one of the benefits of being the best in the league. Even if the opposing defenseman can see his trajectory, it doesn't mean shit if they can't out-speed. His mom knows this.

Dad chokes out, "Hey," but the awkwardness of the situation has him finishing the greeting with a very questionable, "sport!"

"We brought dessert," Shane says, holding out the plastic container of mochi.

His mom's face softens when she accepts it. The expression doesn't hold long, turning stony when she sees the color of the small squares. He knows her favorite is matcha.

Shane presses further. "Dad, it has coconut in it. Just a warning."

Dad's allergy is mild. Sometimes he even chances a piña colada if a bar has a particularly decent happy hour deal. His gastro-intestinal system will despise him for it, but he lives.

His mom's performatively neutral and placid face dips into a frown. "Shane," she starts slowly.

“Hm?” Shane hums in question. He doesn’t even have to pretend for it to be half-interested, because Ilya has started rubbing circles into his hip with his thumb. It’s not even wholly sexual, considering. It’s nice and comforting and perfect, and Shane can tell he genuinely wants for Shane to weather this storm. Shane plans to redraw his boundaries and personal space to allow this always, as long as they’re with people they trust.

Mom narrows her eyes. She clutches the reusable dish tightly in her hands.

“It is my favorite,” Ilya says, helpfully. He takes the pass and moves the puck forward. “The rose one.” There are other recipes for rose mochi without coconut. His mom knows this. His dad might know this, but he mostly only knows the matcha recipes. Even if he did know this, he would not be thinking of it at this moment, let alone noting it as interesting.

“Thank you, kid,” Dad steps in. “We appreciate it. Really.”

Mom accepts the intercession with grace. She presses a new angle. “Did you two forget to change before coming over?”

Shane looks between himself and Ilya. “Oh,” he says, as if realizing, “I think it’s okay for me to forget my Reeboks when I’m not planning on getting photographed.”

He presses on the bruise of him having forgotten them in public and giving the same excuse. He is a lot better about it now, usually opting for them just in case. He often underestimates the paparazzi’s willingness and ability to follow a hockey player, even one as prolific as himself. The only exception is when Ilya’s near.

“You wore the shorts today,” Ilya helps. “The little itty-bitty ones they gave you. With the stripes and the X logo.”

Shane’s dad looks a little faint at the phrase “itty-bitty.”

“That is not,” she says very slowly, “what I meant.”

“Then what...?” Shane asks, furrowing his brow. He pulls this one with Hayden quite a bit. Shane knows he misses his fair share of social ques, but Ilya always seems to know when he utilizes the fact himself.

Ilya recognizes the faint, as expected, because he tucks his face in Shane’s neck to hide a laugh. That his lips meet one of the many hickeys on Shane’s neck may be more incidental than intentional, considering it would be more difficult to miss one given how covered Shane’s neck is.

Dad does his very best to smother the way his face contorts. “How about let’s step inside?” he diffuses.

Shane is not sure if Dad realizes that Shane and his mom are at war yet, but he has played intermediary before and has helped draft many a treaty. He may be acting on instinct.

They move to the living room to relax while the lasagna finishes cooking in the oven. Ostensibly.

Ilya and Shane near sit on each other's laps as they can as they settle into the loveseat. Their thighs squish flushed together and warm. Ilya reaches out to the coffee table to grab at the mochi Mom had set down. He begins eating it, occasionally feeding Shane a bite while Shane rests his head on his shoulder. At the pace he's going, there will not likely be any left for after dinner.

Dad keeps small-talk going by talking about his bird-watching book, and what he's seen in the yard so far this summer. Ilya is invested in a way Shane cannot begin to fathom and is a tad jealous of, if distantly. Shane just knows that if he himself were saying half these things, Ilya might actually get bricked up. Shane just hopes the fetish is more about Ilya's domesticity kink and *Shane*, than any possibility for substance that could transfer.

"Thank you for groceries," Ilya says, between bites of mochi. "We ate yellowtail and miso for lunch."

Mom's smile tightens. "You're welcome, Ilya," she responds, and Shane wonders if she will leave it at that. Sure enough, she continues, "I wasn't under the impression you appreciated the gesture."

"No, no," Ilya clarifies. "Do appreciate groceries. Do not appreciate coming in unannounced with spare key for emergencies. Groceries could be picked up now. Or with text back. Would be even more grateful."

Dad quirks an eyebrow at this piece of information. As Shane had suspected, Mom had not told him that particular detail. Shane has learned from the best. He would never give up a united front, even if he disagrees with this particular point.

Shane eyes the situation from Ilya's side. He curls up closer to Ilya, hugging Ilya's arm as Ilya feeds him another bite of mochi. This man is truly terrible for his diet.

"Maybe," Mom says slowly, "I am a little confused as to why you're taking such a hard stance when from what I could tell, you were watching a cooking show with a hand down your pants and Shane was napping."

Shane huffs. Ilya places another mochi on Shane's tongue, and Shane sucks his fingers into his mouth.

"Maybe," Ilya says, "If I were a nice Montreal boy, is okay to come in unannounced, without asking. But I am mean Russian, so is *not* okay."

In the corner of his eye, Shane can see his dad flinch. Good. Shane never did like that comment, and his dad should feel guilty hearing how it sounds.

"I apologize for being harsh this morning," Ilya concedes. His fingers slip from Shane's lips, dragging down his chin. "But I do not apologize for taking the key."

Shane shows his appreciation for Ilya's support by pulling himself up to his knees so he can kiss Ilya. It is not the kind of peck that he has only recently allowed his parents to witness.

He wraps his hands around Ilya's face, and he sucks Ilya's tongue into his mouth. Ilya rests his hand on Shane's hip, just a bit too close to his ass.

"Shane!" Mom interrupts. She finally asks, and with a hard edge in her voice, "What is this?"

"What is what?" Shane asks, pulling back slowly. He feels winded from the brief contact. He sits back down next to Ilya.

"What is this *display*?" she asks, ice in her tone.

Shane picks his legs up to the couch so he can cuddle into Ilya's shoulder. "Mom, c'mon. I have no idea what you're talking about."

Dad looks like he's having flashbacks. Hm. Unexpected benefit.

The heavy tension in the air is interrupted by the oven timer ringing in the kitchen.

Dad hops to his feet immediately. He's rushing to the kitchen like his feet are on fire.

Mom follows more slowly. "I'll set the table," she says.

The regroup is necessary. Tactical.

"Having fun?" Shane asks, low. Quiet enough his voice won't carry to the kitchen. He can't hear more than a low murmur come from there either.

Ilya kisses the top of Shane's head. "Are you?"

Shane snorts. "I am both the horniest I've ever been and the most uncomfortable I'll ever be."

"Even more than when I sexted you before the game? And you almost killed me in the stairwell of your apartment?" Ilya teases.

Shane knocks his head against Ilya's. "Yes!"

"Your father is very uncomfortable," Ilya comments.

"*Good*," Shane says with a huff. "Those fucking assholes."

"Shane..." Ilya says slowly. He brushes a lock of hair out of Shane's face.

"What?" Shane hisses. "They talk about family dinners and supporting us and all that crap, but the moment I remind them that I'm an actual adult they flip the fuck out."

Ilya runs his finger over the panty line under Shane's yoga pants. "Is hard, yes? When son walks around looking like precious baby?" He dips a finger underneath and snaps Shane's underwear.

"You're disgusting!" Shane says, pushing at Ilya.

Ilya allows himself to move at Shane's direction, grabbing Shane's hand and holding it against himself. He tackles Shane down to the cushions.

Shane laughs as he goes down, even as he tries to buck Ilya off his hips. They wrestle, and unlike when Shane is happy to allow himself to be pushed down for sex, he keeps fighting long and dirty. He nearly brains Ilya on the corner of the coffee table, and he has to grab the strap of his tank top to prevent him from rolling into it. Shane loses his balance, and they both go crashing to the floor. Shane narrowly avoids the corner himself—Ilya quickly pushes the table away from them both as they land.

They catch their breath on the rug. Shane pushes up on his hands and stares down at Ilya. "Thank you. I mean it."

"Oh, such hardship for me," Ilya says with an exaggerated pout, but Shane can hear the undercurrent of uncertainty. "Getting to flirt with hot boyfriend. So terrible."

Shane presses his forehead to Ilya's. "I'm serious. Thank you. They're treating you like how they first met. Like they don't know who you are to me."

With Shane's sincerity, Ilya's levity dissipates. "Is this okay? Will this... not damage your relationship terribly?"

Shane wants to snort, but he doesn't want to discourage Ilya meeting him with sincerity in turn. "No. I mean—maybe. Not—not terribly. I know... I mean, I don't know, how things worked with you and your dad, but... we're okay. My mom and I, we've really gotten into it, before. Real nasty. This isn't half as bad as when I told her I wasn't going to do a Lunar New Year shoot for a magazine. Mom and I don't even really celebrate."

Ilya gives him a look like he can't quite parse what Shane is saying. And Shane, well, he doesn't get it. But he gets that he doesn't get it.

"We're only so close because we can disagree. And then we can work it out, and compromise, usually," Shane continues. "Though in this case, I'm not sure what that would look like."

"I have her key. I do not think we should give it, if you do not think she will respect it," Ilya says seriously.

Shane sighs, pushing back to sit on his heels. He helps pull Ilya up to sitting. "Me neither. It was one thing when you were just groping my ass, but..." he trails off.

Ilya knows what he is saying. Shane is sure he had been unsubtle in how unmoored the interruption had left him.

"I think she's about to crack," Shane says. "I think she thinks I'm being childish, but she hasn't come up with a good argument yet. We just have to stay on track."

"Sir, yessir, Sarg," Ilya teases. He kisses Shane's lips, but just a quick thing. Shane knows they have done more and gone further in this house already, but in this moment he is

genuinely fearful he may forget himself in Ilya's embrace.

The two stand together, just in time to be called to the dining room. Ilya smacks Shane's ass, and Shane takes it for what it is. Encouragement and teasing and promise... and Ilya being a fucking asshole.

"Thank you for dinner," Ilya says, as he sits at the table. Shane debates sitting in his lap, before deciding that this might actually be too far, of all the things he's done so far. Mostly because he does not think he would be able to control himself, if he sits there.

He sits in his own chair, but he hooks his ankle around Ilya's and pins his leg to the leg of the chair. There. That feels right.

Conversation finally shifts to Ilya's trade. Mom has kept the most up to date on media and fan response. The best they could have hoped for is what they expected, which does seem to be what they're getting: rampant speculation, dramatic betrayal, and unchecked derision. Ottawa's fans, at least, seem excited. What little of them there are.

Ilya has fun, though, pulling up a few tweets and reading them aloud. Shane rolls his eyes at the drama with which Ilya performs them, choosing only the funniest to highlight and share.

Shane feels a low-level buzz under his skin. As comforting as this is, he knows he will feel a lot worse when he is not surrounded by his closest loved ones. This past year has already been tough, distance-wise. Two hours will be a lot more manageable. Shane just knows that instead of just late-night phone calls after games, he's going to be driving over as much as he can.

"You're handling this well," Mom says, catching Shane and his train of thought.

Ilya reaches over and rubs his thumb over Shane's cheek. He knows Ilya would want him to specify that it is not just his cheek, but his freckles. The act helps ground him. Keeps him in the now. Even if he knows he will still freak the fuck out over the speculation and rumors later, when he is alone and at his weakest.

But for now. For now, he is handling it well.

"Well... yeah," Shane admits.

Ilya pats his cheek. Maybe a little too hard in front of Shane's parents, but just as grounding. "Of course," Ilya brags, "He has very sexy distraction."

Dad snorts. "We can *tell*." Like, he can't help himself.

Ilya barks out a laugh. He pats Shane's cheek again.

Shane pinches Ilya's hand. Ilya shakes his hand out as he takes it back.

"Shut up," Shane grumbles.

“Well, I’m glad I didn’t walk in on *that*,” Dad says, sort of awkwardly, sort of genuinely humorous. He’s trying. Maybe it’s not enough, but Shane can tell he is.

Shane grins, sharp. “Well. Ask Mom. She did.”

Ilya perks up beside him. Stiff and attentive. Shane knows it must be Pavlovian. Shane only gets this way on the ice or in bed.

Mom freezes. She stills. Like a predator. She looks between the two of them. “Hm,” she sniffs.

“Was not my hand in my pants,” Ilya adds.

Shane is so disgusted he almost calls off the whole operation.

Based on his Mom’s face, she must be thinking the same, except her operation is the dinner.

“Okay!” Dad says, sort of big and loud and a little high-pitched. “Okay! We don’t need to talk about this!”

“Why?” Shane asks, but he doesn’t look at Dad. Instead, he keeps his eyes on Mom. They are finally Talking, and both know it.

“Shane, buddy. I love you, kid. You know this. And I support you being gay, I do. But I do not need to be thinking this much about your sex life,” he says. Very earnestly. Shane would be more touched if he weren’t too busy watching his Mom’s face.

Ilya pinches Shane’s cheek. “Too bad,” he says with a faux disappointment. “Is very exciting.”

Shane bats his hand away. “I think it’s fine. Mom doesn’t seem to have a problem with it.”

By now, Dad seems to have pushed down enough of his discomfort to have realized that Shane is making a point.

Shane knows it had been a risk, allowing his mom time to formulate a strategy. But Ilya’s kept a strong offensive line to hold pressure while Shane has been waiting to strike.

“I don’t think that’s a fair characterization,” she says slowly.

“What do you mean?” Shane asks. “I’m not sure how else to interpret entering mine and my boyfriend’s home while we’re fucking. I think we’re beyond privacy at this point.”

“Shane,” Mom says tightly. She still hasn’t apologized. Shane knows he had not really given her space to. But part of him had wanted her to initiate. Not just in response to Ilya. And she still hasn’t. Shane knows his mom can apologize. She does. She has. But he hates feeling like sometimes he has to fight for it. He knows he’s lucky to have a parent that knows how to say “sorry.” He *knows*. But that doesn’t mean the battle for that sorry doesn’t hurt. “Really? Ten in the morning?”

Shame floods Shane's gut. Hot and heavy and nauseating. Ilya's hand reaches for Shane's thigh in an instant. Shane puts his own down to cover it. He had known. He had accepted the risks of this strategy. "Yes," Shane says. He enunciates the word clearly. He lets it ring in the air like a bell, and he does not try to rip it back into his mouth. Ilya squeezes his leg, tighter still.

"Wow," she says, still clipped, still judging, still sharp, "I can see that Rozanov has been quite the influence on you."

Shane grips Ilya's hand so tightly, he almost thinks he can hear a crack. Grip strength something he trains for, too. "I'm not sure that you do," Shane says coldly.

"Yuna," Dad says, near the same time Ilya softly says, "Shane."

"No, Ilya," Shane snaps. "All you've done today is defend and comfort me. You've been so protective of my privacy and space and sanity, even when today was supposed to be about you. You moved to Ottawa to be with me."

Mom and Dad look almost surprised. Like they had forgotten that Ilya had done that. That Shane's stunt had distracted them from the fact that Ilya has sacrificed so much for them, despite the fact that half the reason for the very same stunt is to take their fucking minds off the shit storm that is press coverage.

"Today is about us," Ilya corrects gently. He sets his other hand atop of Shane's. "Moved to Ottawa for *us*."

"I'm not going to let them think you're the bad guy, just because you're willing to stand up to them for me," Shane continues. "So you snapped at her? Made a joke? Which was funny, anyway," he finishes in a grumble.

"Do you agree with him then? That we shouldn't have a key?" Yuna asks.

"I want you to have a key. I do. *Ilya* wants you to have a key. It makes me feel relieved when I'm on the road or in Montreal, knowing you two can check up on the place for me. And he wants you to have a key for that very reason. But only if you use it *for emergencies*," Shane struggles. He takes a deep breath. Ilya rubs circles with his thumb into Shane's thigh. "No coming for phone chargers or dishwasher tabs. No dropping off groceries or just stopping by."

Dad looks between them while Mom stares him down. "It sounds like... it sounds like you're talking like the cottage is both of yours," Dad says slowly.

Shane is stunned for a moment. *Stunned*. *What* do his parents think he and Ilya even *are*? "What?" he asks. "*It is*. It's *ours*. In every way but on the deed, and that's *temporary*." They have planned their lives around each other. Yuna has played a role in that planning. Marriage has been a matter of when since before they even used the word "boyfriend" out loud.

"What next? Making him your emergency contact?" Yuna says, dry and caustic and dripping with sarcasm. It splashes against Shane's throat like poison.

Shane swallows. He knows she's trying to rile him. He knows. He knows she's probably hurt or something but. But. "At least if it were him, I wouldn't worry about my emergency being monetized," Shane says under his breath.

"Shane," Ilya says softly, while his dad says it with a warning.

"Is that what you think of me?" Mom asks.

"Ilya and I are a team," Shane says, grabbing Ilya's hand and entwining their fingers. He sets their hand on the table. For some reason, this feels far more exposing than anything else he's done today. "Ilya has been an influence on me. A good one. The best one. He's made me brave and smart and passionate and mean and weird and so much more myself than I've ever been in my life. He is the one I go to when things are hard. He's the one I rely on more than anything or anyone. He makes sure I eat when I'm hungry and helps me sleep when I'm exhausted. And whether he's in Boston or Ottawa, he makes hockey the most fun I've ever played."

Ilya reaches out to Shane. He tugs Shane into a hug. Shane starts timing his inhales to Ilya's, realizing he had started breathing heavily.

Yuna stands up. Her chair scrapes against the wood flooring. Shane flinches at the noise. "I need some air," she says, wetly. She walks out to the back porch through the sliding door.

Dad gets up, too, but he is gentle with his chair. Shane barely registers his movements as he follows after her.

Shane lets his head fall to the table. Ilya places his palm on Shane's neck and rubs his thumb between the vertebrae. Shane grabs his other hand where it's intertwined with his own, and he holds it between them. He clutches Ilya's hand like a lifeline.

"That was... not good," Ilya says, succinctly.

"No," Shane says. "No, it was not."

"Do you want me to...?" Ilya asks.

Shane isn't sure what he's asking, exactly, but he shakes his head no, minutely against the table. "No... no," he articulates. "It's not that. It's..." he trails off, wondering how he should frame this for Ilya. "I don't know why they acted like that. I'm sorry. I'm sorry they were so rude."

Shane can *hear* Ilya give him that sardonic half-smirk that Shane loves. "We did provoke them."

"Oh, you were *provocative*, alright," Shane says, lifting up Ilya's hand between his own to kiss the back of his palm. "I think we got the point across, at least."

"Would be *hard* not to," Ilya teases.

Shane tilts his head to look at Ilya. "Am I crazy? Was this crazy?"

Ilya laughs at him. Dick. “Yes! It was very crazy! All of this has been very crazy! You are crazy! Your mom is crazy! And me and David are crazy for loving crazy!”

Shane glares at him, a lock of hair falling over his eyes. He reaches out and pokes Ilya’s inner thigh, right in the bruise Shane had left under his shorts’ hemline.

Ilya jolts. He grabs Shane’s wrists and holds them tight together. “Shane. My love.”

“I just—” Shane struggles. “I don’t know what I’m doing.”

Ilya snorts. “Shane, I do not think a single one of us here do.”

“I feel stupid. I’m going to go grab clothes from my room,” he says, standing up to do just that. Ilya stands with him. They head to Shane’s room, and Shane puts on a Metros sweatshirt over his clothes.

Ilya accepts a pair of sweatpants, but when Shane moves to give him a tee, Ilya smiles. “And cover up such pretty scratches? No, no. Let me keep these.”

Shane rolls his eyes. At least the love bites on his thighs are covered. This feels a lot more comfortable.

Shane sits on the twin bed. Ilya sits down next to him, and they sink into each other on mattress, thigh to thigh. Ilya wraps his arm around Shane’s back and kisses Shane’s temple. “It will be okay. You have had such fights before, yes?”

“It still fucking sucks,” Shane grumbles, falling into Ilya’s side.

“It does,” he says. He kisses Shane’s cheek, then his neck.

Shane groans. “They’ll notice if you add another one,” he groans.

Ilya lips flick into a smirk against his neck. He grabs at the hood of Shane’s sweater and shoves it over Shane’s head. “Easy fix.”

Shane rolls his eyes, pushing Ilya away.

Ilya grabs at him and drags him with him down to the mattress. He holds Shane in his arms, and Shane feels his breath even out. His heart rate slows to something reasonable for the first time since before Ilya had told him they had been witnessed.

He hears the door open in the back from the porch. Hears his parents shuffle through the rooms.

He feels like a child again. Small and quiet and listening to them talk in hushed tones. Some part of him always thought they had known. That even though they had whispered though tough conversations, this had been their way of letting him in. So that they had never needed to talk about any of it, but they could all know together. He places a finger over Ilya’s lips. Ilya raises an eyebrow, but he allows Shane this. He squeezes Shane tighter.

“Shane, honey?” his mom calls.

“Kid?” Dad asks.

Shane buries his face in Ilya’s neck.

“Do you think he...?” Mom asks.

“Hey, hey, it’s okay,” Dad says, soft, hushed. Just barely audible.

“David,” she snaps. “Clearly, this is not okay.”

Shane feels like he’s eight years old, and a kid on his team had called him a name he shouldn’t have, and Mom has opinions about what she wants the school to do. Like he’s twelve years old, and a teacher had sent him to the principal for a “face” Shane had made that Shane hadn’t even know he was making, and Dad had been the one called in. And Dad also had not understood what the problem with the face was until Mom had started crying with laughter. Fifteen, and hockey and school are already at odds, and his attendance record shows for it. Seventeen, and Ilya Rozanov is a very good youth player in Russia that Shane might have to look out for.

“It will be,” Dad says. “It will.”

“I don’t know what I’m doing,” his mom admits.

Ilya tilts his head to Shane. He raises his eyebrows. *See?* The look says. *I told you.*

Shane rolls his eyes at him. *Fuck off*, he mouths.

Ilya shakes with silent laughter.

“When did he get so big?” Mom asks, quietly. “I feel like I blinked, and he was this whole person with his own life and his own path, and we—we weren’t a part of it anymore.”

“C’mon,” Dad says, choked and gruff. “He’s an adult. We knew—well, maybe we should’ve known there’d be a learning curve.”

“He thinks we’re—I’m the enemy,” Mom says, frustrated. “And. I didn’t get to apologize.”

“Hon,” Dad says slowly. “You didn’t want to.”

“But—” she says quickly. She pauses, thick. “I should have.”

“Yeah... Maybe. Maybe,” he says slowly. Kind.

“You’re not slick,” Mom says, dry and sarcastic. She sighs. “I miss when it was us against the world. Just the Hollanders.”

“That’s what’s getting you in trouble,” Dad says.

“I can see that,” she says with a sigh.

Shane squeezes Ilya's hand. He wishes his mom could have said all of this to him directly. He pushes Ilya, rolling him off the bed. He doesn't once let go of his hand. He grabs a white tee from his drawer, and they head to the kitchen. He sticks his hand around the door and waves it, before he tosses the shirt out onto the hardwood floor.

"I have peace terms," Shane announces.

Mom rolls her eyes at him, but Dad laughs. "Well, let's hear them," she says, pushing her hair back with her fingers. Dad sits down next to her. He continues to rub circles into her back.

Ilya sits across from them. Maybe Shane is still feeling just a bit feisty, because he sits on Ilya's lap after all. He needs the support. He's wearing the sweatshirt. Ilya's in sweatpants. Compromise.

Mom sighs, but she has a small smile at his temerity, which is just like her. She does seem to be reassured by the added layers that Shane is genuine in his attempt to broker an agreement.

Ilya wraps his arms around Shane's waist to keep him steady. "You get the key back. You only use it for genuine emergencies or with invitation," Shane proposes.

"Deal," she says simply.

"I will change the locks if you don't," Shane warns.

"Kid," Dad steps in, "We promise."

Shane nods. Acceptable. Ilya takes the key from his shorts pocket, underneath the sweats layer, and he hands it across the table. Mom takes it with a considering frown.

"I'm sorry," she says, brusquely, but finally. "I'm sorry for entering your house without permission. I'm sorry for being so rude to Ilya in return. And I'm sorry for not respecting your space."

"Mom," Shane says. "Thank you." He forgives her for the qualification.

"Ilya," she says. "I love you. I do. I love how happy you make my son. I love how funny and vibrant you are, and how you bring such joy to all our lives."

"Thank you," Ilya says.

"I'm sorry I lost sight of that," she finishes.

"I... love you, too. You both," Ilya says, stilted and awkward and so genuine it makes Shane's heart hurt.

"Mom," Shane says. "We are a team. I—I still think so. But... all four of us. Which brings me to term two," Shane finishes.

"Oh, there's more!" Mom says, her tone hitching up.

“I can’t put him as my emergency contact,” Shane says. “You know I can’t. But I want you to include him. I want you to call him, if anything happens.”

Mom is frozen.

“We can do that,” Dad promises.

“I want him to have the final say,” Shane finishes.

Mom sucks in a sharp breath. Even Dad falters.

Ilya’s arms around Shane tighten.

“Shane,” Mom says. Measured. Fragile.

“If you can’t agree, we walk,” Shane says.

“What does that look like in this situation?” Mom asks.

“Yuna,” David says. “*Yuna*,” he says again, more urgently than the first.

“You keep the key. We go home without dessert—” Shane starts.

“Ilya’s eaten enough, I’m sure,” she mutters.

Shane continues as if he hadn’t heard the dig. “You’re iced out. You stay my emergency contact. Make whatever decisions you want. You don’t get the call from Ilya or anyone else as long as I’m conscious enough to make that choice myself.”

“Shane,” Dad tries.

“Oh, hardball,” Mom says with a small whistle. Shane thinks she might actually be impressed with him. “Counter offer: Ilya makes the final decision, but he has to promise he’ll take our input into consideration.”

“I will,” Ilya says. Maybe too quickly, but Shane’s trying to remember they want to all be on the same team. Ilya slips his thumb under the hem of Shane’s sweatshirt, rubbing a comforting circle into the skin.

“Deal,” Shane affirms.

Seeing the tensions cool down, Dad risks a joke. “I have a proposal for a term.”

Mom looks at him. Shane can tell it is a joke, because she doesn’t look as if they had discussed it before, and there’s no way Dad would break rank like this even if it was for something he cared about. “Alright,” Mom says consideringly. “And what would that be?”

“No more talking about my son’s sex life,” he jokes.

“Homophobic,” Shane retorts immediately.

Ilya buries a snort in Shane's neck. He shakes into Shane's body, burying his face from both of Shane's parents.

Dad looks taken aback. Genuinely upset to think he has hurt Shane *or* Ilya in this specific way. "No, bud," he says, bereft. "Never. I'd say the same thing if you brought home a girl."

Mom has a hand to her face, fingers pressing in, just above her eyebrow. She tucks her other hand under her elbow. Her eyes close with dispassionate serenity.

"It's homophobic to talk about me with a girlfriend," Shane continues. "It makes me think you wish I had one."

Ilya's shakes grow stronger until he's basically rocking Shane in his arms.

"Oh, bud—" Dad tries again and in great distress. "No, I mean, I just—"

"Shane," Mom says to interrupt his spiral, "Stop bullying your father."

Shane looks at her. She looks back at him. Shane raises an eyebrow. She sighs. She turns to Dad. They look at each other for a drawn-out moment, during which Mom glares Dad down and Dad raises a questioning eyebrow. Mom tilts her head to Ilya. Dad looks to Ilya, and then back to Mom. He raises his eyebrows again, and Mom nods. Ilya's eyes bounce between them all in baffled amusement.

Dad clears his throat. "Ilya," his dad says, waiting to make sure Ilya looks at him from the nook of Shane's neck. "For what it's worth. I'm sorry, too. I don't want Shane to date any random nice man from Montreal. I'm glad it's you."

Shane drops a kiss into Ilya's hair. Ilya looks up. He swallows. Maybe not enough for Dad to notice, but Shane does, and he's sure Mom does too. "Thank you," he says. "I am... very glad. That Shane has you two."

"You do, too, Ilya," Mom amends. "Even when we act like assholes."

Shane absent-mindedly scratches Ilya's shoulders. He doesn't quite aim for his scratch marks, worried he'll break open the scabs if he's not gentle enough. He just wants to remind Ilya that he's here for him, as Ilya has been for him.

"Hah!" Ilya snorts, the bravado to cover up the soft squishy vulnerability Ilya hates. "Shane is asshole, too. Happy to see where he gets it from."

"Shut up," Shane says. He bites his nails in deep, now with less comfort and more of a scold. Okay. Probably both.

"He really is, huh," Mom says, amused and fond and like a total asshole herself.

Shane cuts in. Might as well prove it, if they think it already. "We could have been worse," he tells her. It's a bit of a threat. That they will be worse, if pushed.

Mom blanches. She doesn't even bother hiding it, because they have laid everything on the table to talk about it.

"Is true," Ilya adds. "I could have called him my good boy." Well. Now everything has been laid on the table.

"I think I need more wine," Mom says, flicking her fingers at Dad.

Dad gets up to grab her the bottle. He comes back with mochi, pushing it in front of Shane and Ilya. Sure enough, Ilya grabs another bite.

"I haven't talked about my sex life once, but that still seemed too much for Dad. Conditions seem inadequate," Shane says, picking negotiations back up.

Yuna snorts. "Yes, your hickeys count."

"Are you willing to buy our concealer?" Shane fires back.

"Christmas gift," Yuna lobs.

Ilya darts his eyes between them. He gives Shane a knowing furrow of his brows. Shane continues scratching his shoulders. Ilya's eyes narrow. "Agreed. Exceptions clause for it if it's funny?" he adds.

"To whom?" Mom snorts again. "Ilya thinks everything he says is funny. And so do you."

Shane frowns. He does not enjoy Ilya's very pleased and smug grin at Mom calling Shane out on finding Ilya funny. Just because he does, doesn't mean he wants to see Ilya smirk about it. "Ilya thinks people's reactions are funny. And even if—if, which is a load-bearing word—" Shane says. Ilya mouths *load-bearing* with disgusting glee. "If I found him funny, question stands."

"At least one laugh from each couple," Mom offers.

"Done," Shane agrees.

Ilya hides more laughter in Shane's back, between his shoulder blades.

"Are you making fun of me?" Shane asks.

"No, no," Ilya hums. "I would never get in the way of your enrichment."

"Hah hah," Shane responds with a dry laugh. He continues scratching into Ilya's skin, and he drops a kiss on top of his shoulder.

He misses whatever his Dad does that has his mom hiss, "David!"

Shane glances over to catch Dad chewing, rice flower on his fingertips.

Dad swallows. "What?" he asks, faux-innocence in the question.

“Do *not* touch another one of those,” Mom scolds, referring to the mochi in front of him.

Dad holds his hands up. It really highlights the evidence there on his hands. Shane doesn’t think he’s hiding it. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Mom glares at him.

Shane uses their preoccupation with each other as an opportunity to rock his hips back on Ilya’s cock.

Ilya is a good sport about it, at least. His hands grip Shane’s hips tighter, but he doesn’t otherwise give away what Shane has done. Shane’s parents are too busy being weird at each other to notice anyway.

Mom pushes the mochi dish away from Dad. Shane grabs the container and feeds Ilya another bite. He would complain that Ilya should already be full, after breakfast, lunch, second lunch, first dessert, and then dinner. At the same time... he’s exceedingly content.

“How about we start up the fire in the back?” Dad asks. “We can set up a s’mores station.”

Like Ilya needs a third dessert. Still, Shane’s lips quirk in a smile. “Only if you let Ilya teach me a Russian fairy tale.”

“Can do,” Dad says, too fond for Shane to bear.

Shane hides his face in Ilya’s neck. He never thought he could have this. For all he’s battled with his parents today... to have this: sitting in his boyfriend’s lap, dinner with his parents, apologies and laughter and sunshine. That Shane could face what he thought was the worst again and again, and still come out happier for it.

They move to the fire pit, and Shane sits in Ilya’s lap, because he can. Because they can do this. Because even if this had started as trying to prove a point... he realizes that he can just. Show affection with Ilya and have it be less of a deal than the one he had made it in his head. His parents can be assholes, but also they love him, and they love Ilya, if even almost despite themselves sometimes.

Mom gets the fire ready while Dad brings marshmallows, chocolate bars, and graham crackers from the pantry.

Ilya starts telling the story of the white duck in Russian, and Shane practices translation by repeating the story to his parents in English. He also works on his vocabulary by repeating unfamiliar words until Ilya gives him a thumbs up.

The story of the white duck is a one of a woman being transformed into a white duck by a witch. Shane sniffs. This is nothing like love you if you were a worm. The King didn’t even know what had happened to the Queen until she pecked him!

“Ah, I see, you are concerned,” Ilya teases. “Have no worries. I would know you if you were a duck. I know you would have beautiful freckles, even with feathers.”

“Shut up,” Shane says, rolling his eyes.

Once the two ducklings and one drake have been transformed into three beautiful children, Mom begins her own tale, sharing the story of Princess Kaguya.

Shane feels a little touched, the way his Mom describes the love the Woodcutter and his Wife have for the child they find in the bamboo stalk. He does not think he will end up on the fucking moon anytime soon... but he guesses that is not the point of the story.

Shane takes over next. He practices his Russian by telling his parents of the princess who never smiled. This time, Ilya translates for him, helping Shane through pronunciation as he stumbles over his words.

Shane likes the story of the princess who never smiled. It's a silly tale that culminates in a mouse, a beetle, and a catfish pulling a man out of mud, and the sight is so absurd, the unsmiling princess finally does. Shane does not know what the tale is meant to impart, but he feels sympathetic to the princess. Ilya makes him smile every day. Maybe that's all that matters from it.

His dad does not know many fairy tales, but he does start singing “Gordie Howe” by Bob Davies. Shane and his mom join his dad in singing. Ilya laughs and laughs and laughs.

The fire is so bright and warm in front of them. The sky above is full of stars all drenched in the light of the milky way. Ilya holds Shane tight as he belts out, “Greatest of them all!” As his parents dissolve into laughter, Shane changes the lyrics. “*We're* the greatest of them all!” Ilya hums with him. Shane can't think of a single place he'd rather be.

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