

Run From Me (I'll Still Catch You)

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Run From Me (I'll Still Catch You)

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Summary

Shane exhaled sharply. "I want you to chase me through the woods."

Ilya's fingers stilled in Shane's hair. "Like a race?" His voice was calm, but Shane could feel the way his chest tensed beneath his cheek.

Shane shook his head. "No." The word came out breathless, half swallowed against Ilya's collarbone.

or

Shane proposes a fantasy and something about it hits too close to home for Ilya. How will they get past it?

Notes

Hi, I'm back at it again since y'all love this so much! There will only be 2 chapters in this story. The first chapter does have angst and comfort. But please just wait for chapter 2 please. JUST LET ME COOK WITH THIS ONE.

Translations are in the end notes.

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

Chapter 1: The Things I'm Afraid I Might Become

The lake was always so still. Shane wasn't sure why that surprised him every time. Maybe it was the thought that during long months away with the hockey season, nature would've gotten bored and moved on without them. But no, same slightly uneven gravel driveway, same soft wood floors that he had insisted he needed, the same windows that shone moonlight through on Ilya's skin as he slept.

The gravel crunched under the tires as Shane shifted into park, the familiar sound of small stones pinging against the wheels bringing an unexpected comfort. Ilya was already unbuckling before the engine fully cut off, stretching his arms above his head with a satisfied groan.

Ilya's foot hit the gravel with that particular impatient stomp Shane had learned meant he was vibrating with restrained energy. Not the kind from travel fatigue, but the coiled-up anticipation of having Shane alone for two uninterrupted weeks again. Shane watched from the driver's seat as Ilya circled the car. Their silent language had grown sharper than any playbook.

Ilya's hand wrapped around the door handle before Shane could even reach for it, not that Shane would have. They'd settled into this rhythm months ago, of Ilya doing certain things and Shane letting him. Not because Shane couldn't, but because the weight of Ilya's care settled something restless in his chest.

The keys jingled as Shane finally pulled them free. He knew Ilya was watching and could feel his dark eyes tracking the deliberate way he pocketed the keys. It was ridiculous how something as mundane as driving could still twist his stomach into knots after all this time. But that was the point, wasn't it? That stubborn little piece of himself he couldn't—wouldn't—hand over, no matter how many other ways he'd learned to submit. Shane was the driver, Ilya was not.

Ilya opened the door for Shane, his fingers brushing deliberately against Shane's hip as he did. The touch lingered just long enough to make Shane's breath catch, that familiar electric current running through him even after all these months. Shane stepped out, pausing to let Ilya crowd him against the car door, their bodies slotting together effortlessly. The gravel shifted under Shane's sneakers as Ilya leaned in, his lips grazing Shane's ear.

"Two weeks," Ilya murmured against Shane's ear, his voice rough with the kind of relief that only came after months of stolen moments between flights, hotels, and games. Two weeks where they didn't have to calculate risks or watch the clock. Two weeks where Shane could let Ilya's hands guide as he pleased.

Shane tilted his head, exposing his throat instinctively, and Ilya's teeth grazed the spot just below his jaw, not hard enough to mark, just enough to make Shane shiver. "Missed this," Shane admitted softly. The admission wasn't new, but the ease with which he said it still sent warmth curling through Ilya's chest.

Ilya pulled back just enough to catch Shane's gaze, his fingers tracing the curve of Shane's cheekbone. "Missed *you*," he corrected, the words weighted with something deeper than possession, something settled, certain. It wasn't just about having Shane beneath him anymore; it was about the way Shane leaned into his touch without hesitation now, the way his breathing steadied when Ilya's palm pressed on the back of his neck.

Ilya didn't kiss him so much as claim him. His mouth hot and demanding against Shane's, his hands sliding up to cradle Shane's face with that perfect balance of control and tenderness that still made Shane's knees weak. The kiss tasted like eight months of learning each other's rhythms, like the quiet understanding that Shane would melt into it without hesitation now, his fingers curling instinctively into Ilya's hair.

When Ilya pulled back, he didn't go far, his thumb brushing over Shane's kiss-swollen lips. "Go make us some coffee," he murmured, the command softened by the way his eyes tracked every minute reaction across Shane's face. "I will bring the bags in."

Shane nodded, the movement small and automatic, already leaning into the familiar pull of Ilya's voice. He didn't need to ask what kind of coffee Ilya wanted—he knew. Just like he knew the exact moment Ilya would step back to let him go, the space between them charged with unspoken trust.

The cottage smelled like sunlight and happiness, the lingering warmth of summer trapped in the wooden beams. Shane kicked off his shoes by the door. The coffee grinder whirled to life under his hands when he entered the kitchen, the sound comfortably drowning out the rustle of Ilya hauling their bags up the steps. He didn't need to turn around to know Ilya had paused

in the doorway, watching him. The weight of that gaze was as familiar as the ache in his shoulders after a long game.

The coffee grinder clicked off, and Shane didn't turn to Ilya, just tilted his head slightly, the curve of his neck exposed in silent invitation. He heard the sharp intake of Ilya's breath before footsteps crossed the floor. Ilya's hands settled on Shane's hips, his mouth warm against the nape of Shane's neck. "You are showing off," Ilya murmured, the words vibrating against Shane's skin.

Shane smiled, pressing back into him as he scooped grounds into the filter. "You like it." There was no question in his voice, just quiet certainty, the kind that had taken months to settle into.

Shane could feel Ilya's smile against his neck before the words came. "Ah, so you think you know me so well, yes?" It wasn't a challenge so Shane continues. Just the quiet amusement of a man who'd spent years pretending indifference and now found himself utterly known.

Shane's hands didn't falter as Ilya's fingers slipped beneath the waistband of his pants, his touch firm and deliberate. The coffee machine hissed to life, steam curling upward as Shane adjusted the filter with practiced steady fingers. It was almost meditative, the way he could let Ilya's hands roam while his own moved through familiar motions. Months ago, this would have short circuited his brain; now, it was just another layer of their rhythm, as natural as taping your stick before a game.

Shane reached for two coffee mugs as the machine dropped its last few splashes, his movements calm despite Ilya's fingers tracing his body. The ceramic clinked softly against the countertop. Familiar things. His things. Their things.

Ilya didn't pull away, Not when Shane stretched for the sugar tin, not when he pivoted slightly to grab the creamer. His hands stayed, possessive but not restricting, mapping Shane's ribs underneath his shirt. The dichotomy of it still made Shane's breath catch sometimes, how Ilya could be so demanding on the ice and so endlessly patient with him. Shane knew this was just Ilya wanting to touch him. Ilya was not looking for anything more. That was the thing about their dynamic now: the ease of it, the way Ilya could press close just to feel Shane's warmth, just to remind himself Shane was real and solid beneath his hands.

The mugs were still steaming when Ilya finally let his hands slide away from Shane's waist. Shane didn't rush to fill the space with words; he didn't need to. Instead, he curled his fingers around the ceramic handles, letting the heat seep around him as he turned toward the patio door. Ilya followed, close enough that Shane could feel the warmth of him without touching, their movements synchronized like a perfectly executed line change.

The patio was familiar as Ilya followed Shane outside, the morning air still crisp with lake-chilled freshness. Ilya sank onto the outdoor couch with ease, his movements careful as he took both mugs from Shane's hands. Then came the unspoken part, the thing that still made Shane's pulse stutter even after all these years. The sight of Ilya spreading his thighs, his arms resting along the back of the couch, his entire posture an open invitation.

Shane settled between Ilya's thighs with confidence. The moment his back met Ilya's chest, Ilya's arms wrapped around him like a living seatbelt, locking him in place with an unshakable certainty. Shane exhaled, long and slow, feeling the tension bleed from his shoulders as Ilya's chin came to rest atop his head. It wasn't submission, not in the way people might assume. It was surrender, the kind that came from knowing every inch of the man behind him would hold him together before he ever had the chance to unravel.

The coffee was bitter and perfect, just the way Ilya liked it. Shane could feel the steady rise and fall of Ilya's chest against his back, the rhythm syncopated with the distant lap of lake water against the rocks. It was the kind of quiet that didn't need filling.

Shane traced the rim of his coffee mug with his fingertips. The question had been sitting in his mind since Ilya had signed with Ottawa a few weeks back. Ever since Boston's press release had gone out with *"We wish Ilya Rozanov the best in his future endeavors."* He waited until Ilya's fingers flexed against his ribs, that silent *"what is it?"* that needed no words between them now.

"Did you..." Shane hesitated, then let his head tilt back against Ilya's shoulder. The words felt clumsy in his mouth after months of learning how to speak without speaking. "When you signed with Ottawa. Did you ever—" He broke off, fingers curling against his own thigh.

Ilya's breath was warm against Shane's temple. His fingers paused their idle tracing along Shane's ribs. "Did I what?" No irritation, just that deep patience that still surprised Shane sometimes.

"Regret it." The word dropped between them, heavier than it should've been. Shane exhaled sharply through his nose. "Leaving Boston. For this. For... me. I know we've talked about this but I still feel like I'm...I don't know, manipulating you, maybe."

Ilya's arms tightened around Shane, his exhale warm against Shane's temple. "Boston was just a chapter," he murmured, his Russian accent softening the edges of his words. "This—" His palm flattened over Shane's chest, right where his heartbeat thudded steadily. "*You* are the whole story."

Shane felt the weight of Ilya's words settle deep in his chest, warm like the coffee still cradled between his palms. He hadn't realized how much he'd needed to hear that until the tension he'd been carrying since the trade announcement finally unspooled. The lake stretched before them, undisturbed except for the occasional ripple from a distant fish breaking the surface.

Shane exhaled, letting his head fall back against Ilya's shoulder. "What if you wake up one day and realize you gave up too much?" The words tumbled out in a rush, "Boston was your whole career, and a great team. And Ottawa is...not great at all. And I know you say it doesn't matter, but they've been your whole life and everyone is talking about why the hell you would move to Ottawa and..." He gestured vaguely at the minimal space between them, at the way their bodies fit together like well worn gear.

Ilya's laugh rumbled against Shane's back, deep and unbothered, his fingers tracing over Shane's ribs. "You think I give a shit about what everyone is saying?" He pressed his lips in Shane's hair, his voice dropping into that rough, affectionate tone that still made Shane's stomach flip. "Boston was good to me, yes. But hockey is hockey. It is not my life." His thumb brushed over Shane's pulse point, deliberate. "You are."

Shane swallowed against the sudden tightness in his throat, but Ilya wasn't done. "And Ottawa—" He huffed, shifting just enough to reach for his coffee mug with one hand, the other still anchoring Shane against him. "They signed me as captain already. You know what that means?" His fingers tightened around Shane's hip. "It means I get to build that team into something great. Not just play for it. Not just follow." His voice dropped lower, edged with that familiar determination Shane had seen on the ice a thousand times. "And I will drag that team to the cup if I have to carry every single one of them on my back."

The conviction in his voice made Shane's breath catch. Because that was the thing about Ilya. When he committed, he committed completely. No half measures, no looking back. Shane turned his head just enough to catch the set of Ilya's jaw, the way his eyes burned with quiet intensity even now, lounging on their patio with coffee cooling between them.

"So," Shane started, fingers tracing the rim of his mug absently, "your new house—is it all ready after our vacation here?"

Ilya's fingers paused and he thought about it. "House is ready," he said, as if he'd been waiting for the question. His voice carried that particular blend of smugness and warmth that meant he'd planned something. "Bedroom is done. Kitchen...mostly."

Shane snorted into his coffee. "Mostly?"

"I have a few boxes left." Ilya shrugged, the motion shifting Shane against his chest. "For when I go home after this."

The word **home** landed between them. Because that was the thing, Ilya had been slowly migrating his life out of Boston for months during his off days, long before the trade was publicly announced. Ilya had put his Boston home up for sale and was amazed it sold as quickly as it had. Then he began his search for homes in Ottawa. He chose somewhere out of the city and somewhere more private. He would still have neighbors and Ilya contemplated if they would like him or not.

Shane twisted slightly in Ilya's arms, just enough to catch the stubborn set of his jaw. "Boxes," he repeated, voice soft. "You've been moving in for months and you still have boxes?" The words weren't accusatory, just curious, the way Shane had learned to ask things when he needed the truth but didn't want to push.

Ilya's fingers tightened around Shane's waist, just enough to ground him, just enough to remind him he wasn't slipping away. "Да," he admitted, his voice rough with something that wasn't quite hesitation, wasn't quite fear, but something close. "Boxes." He exhaled sharply through his nose, his breath stirring Shane's hair. "You want to know why?"

Shane shifted in Ilya's arms, turning fully now, knees pressing into the couch cushions as he faced him. The coffee mug forgotten between them, steam long since dissipated. He reached up, fingers brushing the stubborn line of Ilya's jaw. "Yeah," he said softly. "I want to know why."

Ilya's fingers curled around Shane's wrist, holding him there against his jawline like an anchor. His dark eyes flickered with something unreadable, not quite hesitation, but the weight of words he'd been carrying. "Because I wanted you there when I unpacked them," he admitted, his voice rougher than usual. "The important ones."

Shane's fingers stilled against Ilya's jaw. The admission hung between them, heavy with unspoken meaning. He could feel the way Ilya's pulse jumped beneath his fingertips, the slight tightening of his grip around Shane's wrist—not restraining, just anchoring them both.

Shane knew what Ilya wasn't saying, that the boxes weren't just boxes. They were the last pieces of Ilya's old life, the ones he'd left untouched because unpacking them alone felt like admitting this was permanent. Like admitting he'd chosen Ottawa for more than just Shane. Like admitting he'd chosen Shane over everything else.

Shane felt the breath leave his lungs in one slow, shuddering exhale. It wasn't just love. This was something deeper, wider, more terrifying in its vastness. The kind of feeling that made his ribs ache with the weight of it. Ilya had willingly rebuilt his entire life around him, piece by deliberate piece, and Shane hadn't even realized the magnitude of it until now.

Shane set his mug down with a sharp clink.. Before any could spill, he twisted fully in Ilya's arms and threw himself against him. Only not with the careful hesitation of their early days, but with the full weight of years worth of trust. His knees dug into the couch cushions as he straddled Ilya's lap, fingers fisting in Ilya's hair.

Shane's arms locked around Ilya's neck, his face buried in the familiar warmth of his shoulder. "I love you," he choked out, the words muffled against Ilya's skin. "I love you, I love you—" Each repetition came rougher than the last, his fingers twisting in the fabric of Ilya's shirt like he was afraid gravity might reverse itself.

Ilya didn't hesitate. His arms locked around Shane's waist unyielding. His fingers dug into the small of Shane's back, pulling him impossibly closer until there wasn't a sliver of space

between them. The force of it knocked the breath from Shane's lungs, but Ilya didn't loosen his grip. Not when Shane's knees pressed harder into the couch cushions, not when his forehead bumped against Ilya's shoulder.

Ilya's hands slid up Shane's back, fingers pressing between his shoulder blades. "Я тебя люблю," he murmured against Shane's temple, his voice thick with something that wasn't quite laughter. His arms stayed locked around Shane's waist, his grip firm even as Shane's knees dug harder into the couch cushions. The weight of Ilya's arms around him was the only thing keeping Shane from floating away entirely. They stayed like that, tangled together on the couch, until the coffee grew cold and the sun climbed higher in the sky.

The cottage had become something sacred between them. Shane could feel it in the way the old wooden beams creaked underfoot, familiar as the sound of Ilya's laughter. Could see it in the way the afternoon light filtered through the kitchen window, painting golden stripes across Ilya's shoulders as he rummaged through the fridge. This was their sanctuary, where the outside world couldn't touch them, where the only rules were the ones they'd chosen for themselves.

Later that evening, the knife thunked against the cutting board as Shane diced tomatoes, the sound blending with the sizzle of garlic hitting hot oil from the pan Ilya's was tending to. Shane's fingers moved automatically, his body angled just enough so his hip brushed Ilya's whenever the Russian stepped back to check the oven. The kitchen smelled like rosemary and the lingering scent of the lake still clinging to their skin from the afternoon.

The knife slipped from Shane's fingers, only for a moment, when Ilya's palm slid up the back of his thigh beneath the loose hem of his shorts, fingers tracing the sensitive skin there with deliberate familiarity. Shane caught the knife handle before it clattered to the cutting board, exhaling a shaky laugh as he shot Ilya a look over his shoulder. "You're gonna make me lose a finger like that," he muttered, but there was no bite to it, just that warm, syrupy fondness that still caught in his chest sometimes. Ilya's fingers lingered on the back of Shane's thigh, just resting there. Warm and possessive. Shane didn't shift away. Instead, he leaned his hip more deliberately against Ilya's side, letting the contact bleed through the thin fabric of their clothes.

The knife stilled in Shane's hand as Ilya's fingers traced higher, with that same lazy possessiveness that still made Shane's breath hitch sometimes. Not because it was leading anywhere, but because it *wasn't*. Because after everything, Ilya could touch him like this—just to touch him, just because he *could*—and Shane would melt into it like sunlight through lake water.

The knife moved through the tomatoes with practiced precision. *Thunk, thunk, thunk.* Each slice falling away cleanly under Shane's steady hands. He was deep in the rhythm of it, shoulders loose, the world narrowing to the blade and the cutting board and the scent of basil clinging to his fingertips. Behind him, Ilya's presence was a warm, solid weight against his back, close enough that Shane could feel the heat radiating from him.

Then—

"Shane." Ilya's voice was low, and cut through the rhythm of the knife like a blade through water. No urgency. No demand. Just his name, spoken with that particular cadence that sent a familiar shiver down Shane's spine.

Shane's hands stilled. He didn't turn, didn't question it. Just waited, fingers curled loosely around the knife handle. The kitchen was quiet except for the soft hiss of a pan simmering.

"Look at me," Ilya murmured, close enough now that Shane could feel his breath against the back of his neck.

Shane turned without hesitation, dropping the knife. The fluid motion of someone who knew exactly where Ilya would be standing, how much space separated them, how his own body would pivot to meet him. Ilya's gaze locked onto his instantly, dark and unwavering, the kind of eye contact that didn't just *see* Shane but *claimed* him. Shane's breath caught, but he didn't look away. He'd learned this, too. How to hold Ilya's stare without flinching, how to let it sear through him until his skin prickled with the heat of it.

Ilya's smile was barely there but it still made Shane's stomach flip even after all this time. It wasn't the sharp, mocking grin he used on the ice, nor the lazy smirk he'd perfected for press conferences. This was something else entirely, something private and knowing, the curve of his lips betraying the hunger bubbling beneath his calm exterior. Shane didn't look away. Couldn't.

Then Ilya's fingers were on his chin, rough enough to make Shane's breath catch but not enough to hurt. Just enough to remind him who he belonged to. The kiss wasn't gentle, it was fire and teeth and Ilya's tongue sliding against his own like he was trying to memorize the

taste of him. Shane groaned into it, fingers clutching at the counter's edge to keep from sinking to his knees right there in their kitchen.

Just as suddenly as it started, Ilya pulled back, lips slick and swollen. "Finish the food," he murmured, voice low and rough, "the fish will be done soon." His thumb brushed over Shane's bottom lip once, possessive even in the softness of the gesture, before he turned back to the stove like nothing had happened.

Shane exhaled shakily, fingers flexing against the counter. His lips tingled. The knife felt heavier in his hand when he picked it back up, his grip adjusting automatically as he returned to chopping. The rhythm was slower now, as his body was still thrumming with the aftershocks of Ilya's kiss.

The fish came out of the oven just as Shane was scraping the last of the chopped tomatoes into the bowl. It was perfect timing. Ilya slid the fillets onto their plates with the same practiced ease. The lemon butter sauce was glistening under the cottage's warm light. Shane quickly grabbed two plates, loaded them both up, then headed for the couch. The weight of Ilya's gaze following him like a physical touch against the back of his neck.

Shane settled onto the couch with his plate balanced carefully on his knees, legs stretched out in front of him. The cushions dipped as Ilya joined him, close enough that their thighs pressed together from hip to knee. Shane didn't have to look over to know Ilya's expression. That quiet, possessive satisfaction that always settled over him when they were like this, wrapped in their own private world.

Ilya's fork scraped against his plate, the sound muffled by the soft hum of the cottage around them. The lake outside was almost dark now. Shane speared a bite of fish, the fork pausing halfway to his mouth when Ilya's knee nudged against his for grounding. The last golden sliver of sun dipped below the treeline, painting the forest in deep blues and purples. Shane watched the colors shift through the window.

"It's always so beautiful here," Ilya murmured, his gaze fixed on the darkening woods. His fingers brushed Shane's knee.

Shane swallowed his bite of fish and grinned, gesturing toward the window with his fork. "It's amazing. It's honestly more 'home' than my actual apartment." he blurted, words

tumbling out faster than his thoughts could catch. "Oh, and the way the sun hits the water in the mornings. And the pine trees smell insane after rain, and—" He paused, fork hovering midair, realizing Ilya was staring at him with that *look*, the one that made Shane's pulse stutter even now.

Ilya's fork clinked against his plate as he set it down, his gaze never leaving Shane's face. The corner of Ilya's mouth twitched, his fingers tightening around Shane's knee. "Just you," he said, voice rough with something dangerously close to reverence, "I just love you so much."

Shane's fork clattered onto his empty plate, the sound echoing in the comfortable silence between them. "I love *you* so much," he breathed, watching the way Ilya's dark eyelashes cast shadows against his cheeks in the dimming light. "So much it feels like my heart can't hold it all in sometimes." His voice cracked on the last word, rough with the weight of it.

Ilya's hand clamped around Shane's wrist mid-gesture, tugging hard enough to send his fork skittering across the empty plate. Shane didn't resist—couldn't, really, not when Ilya pulled with that particular urgency that still short-circuited his thoughts. One moment he was sitting upright, the next he was sprawled halfway across Ilya's lap, their dinner plates shoved aside on the coffee table with careless clatter.

Ilya just held Shane for a moment. One hand cradling the back of his head, the other splayed possessively holding his waist. The weight of him was resolute, the way Shane melted into his grip even more so, but the reality of it still punched the air from Ilya's lungs sometimes. That he could do this. That Shane let him.

Shane exhaled against Ilya's collarbone, letting the tension bleed from his shoulders as Ilya's fingers carded through his hair. It wasn't submission, not exactly, more like surrender, the kind that came from knowing every touch was a promise, every grip an anchor. Ilya's palm slid down the curve of Shane's back. "What's going on up there," Ilya murmured, lips brushing Shane's forehead. Not an accusation. A reminder. And a question.

Shane's fingers stilled against Ilya's chest as his gaze flickered back toward the window. The trees stood tall against the fading light, their silhouettes swaying slightly in the evening breeze. Something restless now stirred beneath his ribs. He exhaled sharply through his nose, fingers tightening against Ilya's shirt. "Just...thinking," he murmured, the words muffled against Ilya's collarbone. "About the woods here."

Shane hoped Ilya wouldn't ask more questions, but of course he did. Ilya's fingers stilled in Shane's hair, his thumb tracing the shell of Shane's ear in that way that always made Shane shiver. "Thinking what about woods?" Ilya pressed, voice low and roughened by the evening quiet.

Shane's fingers curled into Ilya's shirt, the fabric warm from his skin. He inhaled the scent of pine and lakewater clinging to them both, and felt the steady thud of Ilya's heartbeat beneath his palm. The words stuck in his throat, absurd and thrilling all at once.

"It's stupid," Shane muttered, forehead pressed to Ilya's shoulder.

Ilya's fingers tightened in Shane's hair. "Just tell me. Nothing is stupid."

Shane exhaled sharply. "I want you to chase me through the woods."

Ilya's fingers stilled in Shane's hair. "Like a race?" His voice was calm, but Shane could feel the way his chest tensed beneath his cheek.

Shane shook his head. "No." The word came out breathless, half swallowed against Ilya's collarbone.

The silence between them stretched, thick with understanding. Shane could feel the exact moment Ilya understood the gravity of his words, the way his breath hitched slightly against Shane's temple.

"You want to run," Ilya murmured, not a question but a confirmation, his fingers tightening ever so slightly in Shane's hair. "And you want me to chase you?"

Shane's cheeks burned hotter as he mumbled into Ilya's collarbone, "See? I told you it was stupid." His fingers twitched against Ilya's chest, but he made no move to pull away. If

anything, he pressed closer, the tension in his shoulders betraying how badly he wanted this even as embarrassment curled tight in his gut.

Ilya's exhale was warm against Shane's temple, his grip shifting to cradle Shane's jaw instead. "Not stupid," he corrected, thumb brushing the side of Shane's jaw in that maddeningly gentle way that always unraveled Shane's defenses. "But I need to understand if I'm going to give you what you want." His fingers tightened just enough to tilt Shane's face upward. "Why running? Why woods?"

Shane swallowed hard, his throat suddenly dry. He didn't pull away from Ilya's grip, but his fingers twitched against Ilya's chest. "It's not—" He broke off, licking his lips. "It's not about running away." His voice dropped to something barely above a whisper. "It's about you following." Shane exhaled shakily. "When you—" His fingers flexed against Ilya's shirt. "When you chase me, it's not just that you want me. It's that you *have* to have me." His cheeks burned hotter, but he didn't look away. "Like it's not a choice. Like you'd tear through anything to get to me."

Ilya's dark eyes searched Shane's face. "And this is what you need, yes?" His voice was rough, but not with skepticism, with something far more dangerous. Understanding.

Shane nodded, pulse fluttering where Ilya's thumb pressed against his jaw. "Yes. I think." The word came out breathless. "Because I know—" His fingers curled tighter into Ilya's shirt. "I *know* you'd never hurt me. But I need to feel—" He struggled for the right words, frustrated with himself. "Not just that you love me. That you'd... *hunt* for me." Shane's breath hitched. "That I'm worth chasing."

Ilya's fingers traced Shane's jawline, slow and deliberate, before sliding down to grip his chin. His dark eyes burned with an intensity that made Shane's breath catch. "You want me to hunt you?" His voice was low, roughened with something primal that sent heat curling down Shane's spine. "Like prey?"

Shane shuddered at the word *'prey.'* The unconscious reaction surprised even him, because no, he hadn't thought of it like that, hadn't let himself frame it in those terms. But now that Ilya had said it aloud, the truth of it curled hot and undeniable in his gut. "I—" Shane's throat worked, his pulse jumping under Ilya's fingertips where they still cradled his jaw. "I think so."

Ilya's fingers went still against Shane's jaw. The word *'prey'* echoed in his skull like a gunshot, sharp and wrong. His pulse kicked hard against his ribs, his mind instantly conjuring images. Shane tripping over roots, hitting his head on a low branch, running too fast and slipping. Ilya losing control. The fantasy curdled in his gut, twisted by the visceral need to *protect* that had been carved into his bones.

Ilya exhaled slowly through his nose, watching the way Shane's shoulders tensed beneath his hands. That eager, almost restless energy Shane got when an idea took hold of him. The same energy that made him such a formidable player on the ice. And Ilya couldn't stand the thought of dimming that light, not when Shane had trusted him enough to voice this.

Ilya's thumb brushed the hinge of Shane's jaw where his pulse fluttered wild and fast. The conflicted urge to protect warred with the deeper instinct to give Shane exactly what he'd asked for. What he *needed*. Ilya exhaled sharply through his nose, forcing his voice steady. "Okay."

Ilya watched Shane's face transform. The hesitation melting into something bright and eager, his eyes sharpening with focus like he did before a big game. Shane's fingers twitched against Ilya's chest, not pulling away but vibrating with restless energy. "Okay?" Shane echoed, breathless, like he hadn't expected agreement so easily. His smile was sudden and brilliant

Ilya's thumb brushed the corner of Shane's mouth, watching the way his lips parted slightly at the touch. "Boundaries first," he started, voice low but steady, the same tone he used when walking Shane through a new play on the ice. "Where do you want to run? How far?"

Ilya's thumb lingered at the corner of Shane's mouth, pressing gently when Shane started speaking too fast. "But slowly," he murmured, watching Shane's teeth dig into his lower lip as he reined in his excitement. The way Shane immediately regulated his breathing by his shoulders dropping, fingers unclenching from Ilya, sent warmth pooling low in Ilya's gut. The way Shane still obeyed his commands with such effortless trust it stole Ilya's breath.

Ilya didn't miss the way Shane's fingers tapped against his own knee, or how his breath hitched when he spoke, like the idea had been coiled tight in his chest for too long. "We could start at the trailhead by the dock," Shane said, words tumbling out as he feebly tried to slow

down. "There's that old path that cuts west toward the ridge." His eyes flickered with something wild and bright, the same look he got when he deked past a defenseman, all instinct and adrenaline.

Later that night, Shane fell asleep with his fingers still loosely curled around Ilya's body, his breathing deep and even against Ilya's collarbone. The moon shining across the sheets, illuminating the way Shane's eyelashes fanned against his cheeks, the slight part of his lips. Ilya didn't move, didn't dare disturb him, just ran his fingers through Shane's hair and watched the steady rise and fall of his chest.

Ilya stayed awake long after Shane's breathing evened out, staring at the ceiling with one arm curled protectively around Shane's waist. His mind raced through the logistics, like the terrain, the distance. He mapped the woods in his head like a playbook, calculating angles and obstacles. The mental image of Shane sprinting through the trees sent heat coiling low in his gut, but the thought of Shane tripping, falling, hurting himself. And that sat like a stone in Ilya's chest. Shane stirred slightly in his sleep, murmuring something unintelligible against Ilya's shoulder before settling again. Ilya exhaled slowly, tightening his grip around Shane's waist. The trust Shane had in him, the way he'd looked at him when he said those words earlier. It made Ilya's pulse stutter. He couldn't afford to fuck this up.

The morning light filtered through the kitchen windows as Shane scraped the last bite of scrambled eggs off his plate, his knee bouncing under the table. He couldn't stop glancing toward the woods through the window, his fingers tapping an erratic rhythm against his coffee mug. Ilya watched him over the rim of his own cup, the corner of his mouth twitching. "You still want to do this?" Ilya asked.

Shane's head snapped up. "Yes." The word came out too fast, too eager. He exhaled, forcing his shoulders to relax. "Yeah. If—if you're still okay with it."

Ilya set his mug down with deliberate calm, his gaze steady. "I need you to tell me the boundaries again."

Shane swallowed, nodding. "Stay on the ridge trail. No going past the big tree with the fallen branch. No running near the water." His fingers flexed against the table.

The way Shane kept glancing toward the woods, his throat working as he swallowed too often. Shane had thought about this. A lot. More than Ilya had realized.

Ilya set his mug down harder than intended. Shane's knee stopped bouncing instantly, his gaze snapping to Ilya's face like he'd been called to attention. The way Shane reacted to him. Not with fear, never fear, but that immediate focus, still sent warmth curling through Ilya's chest.

The afternoon light shone through the canopy in dappled patterns as Shane stood at the trailhead, his pulse hammering against his ribs. Ilya's fingers lingered at the base of his spine, warm even through his shirt. "Two minutes," Ilya murmured, lips brushing the shell of Shane's ear. "Then I come find you." The promise sent a shiver down Shane's spine, his fingers flexing at his sides.

Shane took off with a burst of energy, laughing, fast, the soles of his sneakers kicking up pine needles as he bolted down the trail. The wind rushed past his ears, drowning out everything but the hammering of his own pulse. For a moment, Ilya just watched him go, his fingers curling into fists at his sides. His first instinct wasn't pursuit. It was an assessment of the uneven terrain, the density of the trees, the sharp drop-off near the ridge where the trail curved.

Ilya counted the seconds in his head, the rhythm steady as a metronome until the two-minute mark hit like a gunshot. His muscles coiled, then released in one fluid motion, his body surging forward with predatory grace. The forest floor blurred beneath him, leaves crunching underfoot, but he kept his stride deliberately measured, his breathing controlled. Shane's laughter echoed somewhere ahead, bright and breathless.

Shane's pulse hammered against his ribs as he skidded around a bend in the trail, expecting the sharp crack of branches behind him, the full-force sprint of Ilya barreling after him like a storm. Instead, the forest remained eerily quiet from the distant crunch of careful footsteps. Shane slowed, chest heaving as he pressed his palm against a tree trunk to steady himself. That wasn't right. He knew Ilya's speed, knew the way he moved on the ice like a force of nature. This wasn't a pursuit. This was...patrolling. Shane's fingers dug into the rough bark of the pine tree as he paused, breath ragged. His stomach twisted. This wasn't how it was supposed to feel.

Shane's breath hitched as the realization crashed over him. Ilya wasn't chasing him. Ilya was restraining himself. The careful footsteps, the measured distance, the way the forest didn't erupt with the force of Ilya's hunting like Shane had imagined. Shane leaned heavily against the tree, the bark rough under his palms. His chest tightened with something tender and aching. Of course Ilya was holding back. Of course he was worried. The distant crunch of Ilya's footsteps had stopped entirely now. The silence between them stretched like a live wire, taut with everything unsaid. His throat tightened. This wasn't the exhilarating chase he'd imagined—this was Ilya walking on eggshells, and the realization made his stomach twist.

The pine scent filled Shane's nose, sharp and clean, but all he could focus on was the silence stretching behind him, no footsteps, no breathless pursuit, just Ilya holding back like he always did. Always for Shane. The realization twisted in his gut like a dull blade.

Shane's breathing slowed as he crouched behind a fallen log, moss soft beneath his palms. He didn't hide, not really. Just enough that Ilya would have to look, would have to *seek.* The late afternoon light peered through the trees above, painting golden stripes across his folded arms. His pulse still thrummed, but differently now, not the frantic hammering of escape, but the steady drumbeat of waiting. Of being found. The forest held its breath with him. No birdsong, no rustling leaves. Shane exhaled through his nose, letting his shoulders slump deliberately against the log. He angled himself toward the path, one knee bent, the other outstretched. A presentation. An offering.

Back along the path, Ilya's foot hovered mid-step, his sole hovering inches above the damp earth. His breathing was steady despite the sprint. He could see Shane's light shirt through the trees, the way his shoulders rose and fell with exertion against the rough bark of the pine. Twenty yards, maybe less. Close enough that Ilya could cover the distance easily if he unleashed the full force of his speed. His fingers twitched at his sides.

He didn't move.

The realization coiled tight in his gut, he wasn't chasing Shane. He was corralling him. Keeping him within sightlines, within safe parameters. The thought tasted sour. Shane hadn't asked for careful containment. He'd asked to be hunted. But Ilya didn't want to be like...him.

Ilya's breath caught as Shane's silhouette flickered between the trees ahead. The image Shane had planted in his mind dissolved like mist. Predator and prey. The fantasy had curled hot in

his gut moments ago, but now, watching Shane slow to a jog, his head turning slightly as if listening for pursuit. I felt hollow. Wrong.

The forest floor crunched softly under Ilya's boots as he slowed to a stop, his chest rising and falling with controlled breaths. Ahead, Shane's figure flickered between the trees, not fleeing, not hiding, just waiting. The late afternoon light caught the curve of his shoulder, the way his fingers flexed against the log he leaned on, deliberately open, deliberately seen.

The forest air hung thick with pine and damp earth, but all Ilya could taste was the bitter tang of his own hesitation. The realization punched through Ilya's ribs like a dull blade: Shane had trusted him with this. Had been excited for it. And Ilya was ruining it by holding back.

His fingers curled into fists at his sides, nails biting into his palms. Every instinct screamed at him to lunge forward, to close the distance between them in three strides, to pin Shane against that mossy log and...and what? Prove something? Shane wasn't some fucking puck to be chased down. Wasn't a play to be executed. The thought of Shane's skin scraping against bark, of his breath hitching in pain instead of pleasure, made Ilya's stomach twist.

The moment Ilya's shoes hit the mossy clearing where Shane waited, his shoulders dropped. Relief flooded his chest like a dam breaking, hot and sudden, washing away the coiled tension of the chase. Shane sat on the fallen log, elbows resting on his knees, fingers loosely linked. His chest rose and fell steadily, but his eyes tracked Ilya's approach with quiet understanding.

When he reached Shane, he didn't grab. Didn't pin. He couldn't. He just sank to his knees in the moss beside the log, one hand lifting to hover near Shane's cheek before settling on his shoulder instead. "Вот и всё." His voice was rougher than he intended, the Russian slipping out subconsciously.

Ilya exhaled sharply through his nose, fingers tightening on Shane's shoulder. "I found you," he murmured, the words rough-edged. Shane's throat worked as he looked up at him, not triumphant, not breathless with excitement like Ilya had imagined. Just sad.

"You didn't chase me," Shane whispered. It wasn't a question. His fingers curled into the moss beneath them, shoulders slumping. "I—I shouldn't have asked. I roped you into—"

Ilya's thumb brushed Shane's collarbone, too light, too hesitant. "Was fine," he muttered, eyes darting away to the moss beneath them. The lie tasted stale even as he said it. His fingers twitched against Shane's shoulder like he couldn't decide whether to pull him closer or not.

The moss muffled Shane's footsteps as he pushed himself up from the log, his fingers brushing dirt from his knees with sharp, jerky movements. He didn't look at Ilya—couldn't—just turned and started walking back toward the cottage, his shoulders rigid under his damp shirt.

"Shane." Ilya's voice was rough behind him, but Shane kept walking, the pine needles crunching louder under his deliberate strides.

"You lied," Shane said, the words scraping his throat raw. The trail blurred slightly as he blinked too fast. "You said you were okay with this. You *agreed*." His fingers curled into fists at his sides. The betrayal burned worse than the failed chase.

Shane shoved the cottage door open harder than necessary. The scent of lingering coffee hit him—home, comfort, safety—and the familiarity of it made his throat tighten further. He didn't turn when Ilya's heavier footsteps creaked up the steps behind him.

Shane walked straight past the kitchen and collapsed into the far corner of the couch, knees drawn up to his chest, fingers digging into the fabric of his sweat damp shirt. The cushions barely had time to settle before Ilya's shadow fell across him, blocking the late afternoon light from the windows. Shane didn't look up, just pressed his forehead harder against his knees, breathing through the tightness in his throat.

"You didn't want to do it," Shane said, the words muffled against his legs. "You hated it."

Ilya's exhale was sharp through his nose. The couch dipped as he sat beside Shane, close but not touching. "Not hated," he corrected, voice low. His fingers twitched toward Shane's shoulder before retreating to grip his own knee instead. "Was...complicated."

Shane lifted his head sharply, his fingers tightening around his own calves. "Then un-complicate it," he said, voice rising slightly before he forced it back down. His throat worked. "For me at least."

Shane could feel the weight of Ilya's gaze, the careful way he was choosing his words. Always choosing, always calculating, always holding back. It made Shane's skin itch. Worse than the dried sweat on his back.

His fingers dug deeper into his calves before he forced them to uncurl, pressing his palms flat against his thighs instead. "You know what really hurts?" Shane finally said, voice cracking on the last word. He didn't wait for Ilya's response. "It's not that you didn't want to do it. It's that you looked me in the eye and lied about being okay with it."

Ilya's fingers twitched against his own knee, his shoulders stiffening. "I didn't—"

"You did." Shane turned his head just enough to meet Ilya's gaze, his chest tightening at the flicker of guilt in those familiar eyes. "You always tell me to trust you with everything, to give you all of it. But you won't do the same for me."

Ilya's jaw worked before he exhaled sharply through his nose, his fingers finally abandoning their death grip on his knee to brush against Shane's wrist. "I was afraid," he admitted, the words rough-edged with vulnerability.

Shane stilled. He'd never heard Ilya say those words so plainly. He uncurled slowly, watching the way Ilya's thumb circled absently over his wrist. An unconscious grounding gesture Shane had seen him use only in their private moments.

Shane's fingers twitched under Ilya's thumb. "Afraid?" The word came out softer than he intended. He turned his wrist, catching Ilya's hand mid-motion. "Of what?"

Ilya shifted forward abruptly, his knee pressing into Shane's thigh, fingers tightening around his wrist—not restraining, just anchoring. "Afraid to hurt you," he clarified, voice low and steady despite the tension in his shoulders. His thumb resumed its slow circles over Shane's

pulse point, grounding them both. "Afraid to fail you." The admission came out rough, like dragging gravel from his throat.

Shane exhaled sharply, the fight draining from his shoulders. "You think I don't know your limits?" He turned his hand palm-up, threading their fingers together. "Ilya, I *know* you. You'd never—"

Ilya's thumb stilled against Shane's palm. "The fantasy—" His voice caught, uncharacteristically uneven. He exhaled sharply through his nose, his grip tightening almost imperceptibly before forcing himself to relax. "It hit something. Something I did not expect to feel." His gaze flicked up to meet Shane's, raw and unguarded. "When you said you wanted to be hunted...I just saw my father chasing my mother through our house. Her screaming. Him laughing."

The reality crashed into Shame like a rogue wave, freezing and merciless, and his brain immediately started sprinting toward self-recrimination—until Ilya's fingers tightened around his hand, snapping his thoughts back to the present.

Shane's fingers spasmed around Ilya's wrist, his breath catching at the raw confession hanging between them. His throat worked—words failing him for once—but before he could spiral into self-blame, Ilya squeezed his hand hard enough to ground him.

"I should have told you," Ilya said, voice low but deliberate, thumb pressing into Shane's pulse point with each syllable. "That is on me. Not on you." His grip tightened briefly, as if physically preventing Shane from shouldering the guilt. "This was not...your fault."

Shane still felt horrible for not understanding. The weight of it pressed against his ribs like a puck, making each breath shallow. He stared at their intertwined fingers and swallowed against the tightness in his throat. "I should've—" His voice cracked. He tried again, quieter. "I never meant to drag you back there."

Ilya's fingers tightened around Shane's, their joined hands resting on Shane's thigh. "Look at me," he murmured. A plea wrapped in gravel.

Shane's lashes lifted slowly, revealing damp eyes. Ilya's chest ached at the sight. Not at guilt, not pity, just raw understanding waiting to crystallize between them.

"When you ran," Ilya began, voice rougher than the pine bark outside, "all I could see was her." His jaw worked, eyes darting away to the coffee table before forcing himself back to Shane's face. "And then I was holding back not because I didn't want you. I was terrified of becoming like him." The confession cracked open between them, raw as a fresh wound.

Shane watched the way Ilya's throat worked, the uncharacteristic hesitation in his normally steady hands, and something tender unraveled in his chest. This wasn't rejection. This was Ilya, laid bare in a way Shane had never seen before.

Ilya's palm settled warm against the nape of Shane's neck, fingers pressing just enough to be felt through the damp fabric of his shirt. An anchor point. His thumb traced the edge of Shane's jawline, back and forth like a metronome, syncing with Shane's gradually steadying breaths.

"You didn't break any rules," Ilya murmured again, his voice low but carrying the weight of a command. His other hand remained tangled with Shane's, their palms pressed together. "I did. By lying. By not telling you."

Shane's fingers twitched against Ilya's wrist, the warmth suddenly too much, the contact too raw. His shoulders curled inward, making himself smaller against the couch cushions. "I didn't mean to—" His throat closed around the words.

Ilya's grip tightened before Shane could fully retreat, his palm anchoring against the back of Shane's neck. "I know." The word wasn't sharp, but it led to no argument. His thumb pressed into Shane's pulse point, grounding them both. "You do not get to disappear now." Shane swallowed hard, his eyelashes fluttering against the sudden burn behind his eyes. The instinct to fold inward with the sickening fear that he'd already broken something irreparable.

"You're shaking," Ilya murmured. His other hand slid up Shane's arm, slow and deliberate, until both palms framed Shane's face. "Look at me." The command was softer than usual, but Shane obeyed instantly, blinking up at him with damp lashes.

Shane's breath hitched when Ilya's thumbs brushed under his eyes, catching the moisture there. "I'm sorry," Shane whispered, the words cracking. He wanted to press closer, wanted to crawl into Ilya's lap and erase the distance between them, but the fear coiled tighter—what if he was already too much? What if Ilya needed space?

Shane's fingers trembled against Ilya's wrists where they still cradled his face. The silence stretched too long but enough for Shane's throat to tighten with words he couldn't say, for his pulse to stutter under Ilya's thumbs. Then, barely audible: "Do you still—" His breath hitched. "Am I still—" The sentence fractured, raw edges catching in his chest. Shane's exhale hitched, his fingers curling into the fabric of Ilya's shirt. "I need—" His throat worked, the words clotting behind his teeth. His lashes fluttered, damp and golden in the late afternoon light. "I need to know if I'm still..."

Ilya's thumbs stilled against Shane's cheeks. The silence stretched taut between them, charged with everything Shane couldn't—wouldn't—say. Then Ilya exhaled sharply through his nose, fingers tightening just enough to tilt Shane's face upward. "Думаешь, ты мне больше не нужна?" The Russian rumbled low in his chest, rough with disbelief. "I want you so much. Always."

Shane's fingers dug into Ilya's wrists where they still cradled his face, the silence stretching like thin ice beneath them. When he spoke, the words came out cracked and small—the kind of vulnerability that would have terrified him eight months ago. "Am I still..." His throat worked. "Good for you?"

"Listen," Ilya growled, the word vibrating through Shane's bones. "You think I would waste ten years on someone who wasn't good for me?" His fingers flexed against Shane's skin, the calluses catching slightly. "Shane, you are perfect. Don't ever think you're not."

Shane blinked rapidly, his breath stuttering when Ilya's thumb brushed his lower lip with such tenderness. His fingers uncurled slowly from their death grip on Ilya's wrists. "Can I—" His throat clicked around the words. "Hold you?"

Ilya exhaled sharply through his nose, shoulders dropping as if Shane had cut his strings. He didn't answer with words, just guided Shane's hands to his waist with deliberate pressure, then folded forward until his forehead rested against Shane's collarbone. Shane's breath hitched at the sudden weight, at the way Ilya's entire body seemed to slump into him, heavy with exhaustion and something too vulnerable to name.

Shane's fingers curled into the fabric of Ilya's shirt, grounding himself in the warmth and weight of him. The scent of the outdoors still clung to Ilya, mingling with the sharper tang of sweat, and Shane pressed his nose against it, breathing deep. "You scared me," he murmured, the words muffled against Ilya's shoulder.

The weight of Ilya's forehead against Shane's collarbone was grounding in a way words couldn't be. And simply the weight of Ilya was better than any weighted blanket. Shane pressed his lips to the crown of Ilya's head before murmuring against his sweat-damp hair, "Tell me what you need." His hands slid up, fingers splaying wide wide across the familiar planes of muscle beneath his shirt.

Ilya's breath warmed Shane's collarbone, uneven against his skin. "I never," he began, the words rough like gravel dragged from his throat, "wanted you to look at me the way my mother looked at my father." His fingers twitched against Shane's waistband, pressing into the dip of his hipbone. "Scared. Like I might—" The sentence fractured, his forehead pressing harder into Shane's shoulder.

Shane's hands stilled on Ilya's back, fingers spreading wider as if trying to cover more of him. "You never could," he whispered fiercely. His lips brushed the damp curls at Ilya's temple. "I know you. You'd break your own hands before you hurt me"

Ilya nodded, his grip tightening momentarily on Shane's hip. "When you asked to be hunted..." His voice roughened, fingers flexing against Shane's skin. "I saw his hands on her. The way she—" The sentence died abruptly, his forehead pressing harder against Shane's collarbone.

Shane's palm slid up to cradle the back of Ilya's neck, fingertips brushing the damp hair at his nape. "And when you hesitated today," Shane countered softly, "all I saw was you being careful with me." His thumb swept along Ilya's jawline, coaxing his face upward.

Ilya's exhale was sharp against Shane's throat. He didn't lift his head, but his fingers tightened where they gripped Shane's hips. "You deserve better than my ghosts," he muttered into Shane's collarbone. The words vibrated through Shane's skin, settling somewhere beneath his ribs.

Shane carded his fingers through Ilya's hair, scraping lightly against his scalp the way Ilya liked. "Your ghosts are part of you," he said quietly. His thumb brushed the shell of Ilya's ear. "And I want all of you or nothing at all. Even the pieces you think are broken."

Ilya finally lifted his head, his eyes dark with something Shane couldn't name. "You should not have to fix what he broke," he said roughly. His thumb traced the line of Shane's jaw, lingering on the pulse point beneath.

Shane caught Ilya's wrist, turning his hand to press a kiss to his palm. "I'm not fixing anything," he murmured against the calluses. "I'm just loving you." He guided Ilya's hand to his own chest, pressing it flat over his heartbeat. "And you're loving me back. That's all this is."

"I ruined this for you," Ilya said finally, the admission rough as splintered wood. "Your fantasy. I should have..." his jaw worked. Shane could feel the pulse beneath his fingertips, rapid but steady, like Ilya's breathing had slowed but his heart hadn't gotten the memo yet.

Shane's fingers traced the line of Ilya's collarbone through his shirt, grounding them both in the contact. The weight of Ilya's confession pressed between them like a third presence—unseen but undeniable.

"There are moments," Ilya began, voice low and fractured, "when you give me everything. When I have you right where I want you, and I think..." His thumb brushed Shane's collarbone in slow circles, grounding himself in the contact. "For one second, I understand how he could have enjoyed it."

Shane pulled Ilya in closer to his chest. "Keep going," he whispered, because Ilya needed this out more than Shane needed comfort right now. "I'm right here and I'm going anywhere."

Ilya's exhale shuddered through Shane's shirt where his face was still pressed against Shane's collarbone. "He always said he loved her," Ilya murmured, the words muffled against Shane's skin. "My father. Said it like it excused everything." His thumb traced idle circles against Shane's waistband, the calluses catching slightly on the fabric. "He never once thought he was the bad guy."

Shane waited, letting the silence stretch between them, letting Ilya find the words at his own pace.

Shane's fingers stilled against Ilya's back. The weight of Ilya's confession settled between them. He pressed his lips to Ilya's forehead, breathing in the scent of him. "You're not him," Shane murmured, the words warm against Ilya's scalp. "You never could be."

Ilya's grip on Shane's waist tightened, his knuckles pressing hard against Shane's hipbones through the fabric of his shorts. "I know," he growled, but it lacked conviction. "In my head, I know." His thumb traced the waistband again, restless. "But when you ran...from me..." The sentence fractured. His breath warmed Shane's collarbone, uneven.

Ilya's shoulders hitched once—twice—against Shane's chest, his breath warming the fabric of Shane's shirt in uneven bursts. Shane felt the tremors before he registered them, the way Ilya's entire body seemed to vibrate apart at the seams, fingers digging into Shane's arms like he was clinging to a cliff edge.

"Hey—" Shane's hands slid up and down Ilya's back. "I've got you." His fingers spread wide, covering as much of Ilya as he could reach. "Breathe with me." Ilya shook his head violently, pressing his forehead harder against Shane's sternum.

Shane's fingers curled around the back of Ilya's neck, pressing their foreheads together until their breathing synced. "You know what your father never did?" Shane whispered. "He never worried about becoming a monster." The truth of it settled between them like fresh snowfall, quiet and undeniable. "And you do."

Ilya exhaled sharply through his nose, his grip tightening momentarily on Shane's hips. "You don't know—"

"I know *you,* Ilya." Shane's thumb brushed the damp skin beneath Ilya's eye. "Every rule we have, every boundary—we built them to protect each other. Not to control each other." His voice dropped lower, firmer. "That is the difference."

Ilya's fingers flexed against Shane's shoulder, the tension in his shoulders easing fractionally. "When you ran," he murmured, "all I could think was what if I crossed a line? What if I hurt you and didn't stop?"

Shane shifted just enough to press his forehead against Ilya's, their noses brushing. "You think I'm powerless in this," he said softly, not as an accusation but as an observation. His fingers tightened around Ilya's wrists where they still gripped his waistband. "But I'm not. I *choose* this. Every damn day, I wake up and choose you—choose *us*." He exhaled, warm against Ilya's lips. "And if I ever didn't want it? If you ever crossed a line?" A hint of that stubborn defiance flickered in his voice. "I'm fast and strong too, Rozanov. You really think I couldn't get away if I really needed to?"

Ilya's grip loosened slightly, his thumbs brushing the dips of Shane's hips. "You shouldn't have to," he muttered, but the protest lacked its usual edge.

Shane snorted, nudging Ilya's knee with his own. "Yeah, well, life's full of 'shouldn'ts.' Doesn't mean we don't plan for them." He dragged his fingertips down Ilya's forearms, tracing the familiar ridges of muscle and scar tissue. "That's why we have safewords. That's why we check in. That's why you *always* ask, even when you know the answer." His voice dropped lower, threading through the space between them like an unshakable truth. "You've never once made me feel like I couldn't stop this. Not ever."

The tension between them eased like thawing ice in small, perceptible cracks. Shane felt the shift in Ilya's shoulders beneath his hands, the way his grip softened from desperation to something more familiar.

Shane exhaled sharply through his nose, shifting his grip on Ilya's wrists.. "You think I asked for that chase because I wanted danger?" His voice roughened unexpectedly, catching on the word like a skate blade biting ice. "I just wanted *you*. All of you. Not the careful version who triple checks every touch." Shane leaned forward, his lips brushing the shell of Ilya's ear, not quite a kiss, just the ghost of contact. "I wanted the man who almost broke their own teammate's nose for knocking me out on the ice." He felt Ilya's sharp inhale against his neck. "I *know* you'd never hurt me. That's the whole fucking point."

Ilya's breath hitched against Shane's collarbone, his fingers tightening momentarily before relaxing into a slow, deliberate stroke along Shane's ribs. Just when he didn't think he could love this man more, when he was certain his heart had reached its capacity, Shane went and

said something like that. The raw, stubborn faith in his voice, the way he wielded his trust like a weapon against Ilya's darkest fears.

Ilya rose up abruptly, his grip on Shane's wrists tightening momentarily before releasing. Shane blinked—and there they were, the wet sheen across Ilya's dark lashes, the raw vulnerability in his expression that he so rarely allowed anyone to see. It punched the breath from Shane's lungs. Before he could speak, Ilya surged forward, capturing Shane's lips with bruising intensity, pouring years of unspoken fears and devotion into the kiss. His fingers tangled in Shane's hair, angling his head back as if he couldn't get close enough, as if he needed to brand this moment into Shane's skin.

Shane melted into it instantly, his hands finding Ilya's hair to anchor himself. The taste of salt between their lips only made the kiss more desperate, more real. When Ilya finally pulled back, his breath ragged, his forehead pressed against Shane's, their noses brushing. "You," Ilya growled, the word rough with emotion, "are the only thing I have ever been sure of." His thumb brushed Shane's cheekbone, wiping away moisture Shane hadn't realized was there.

Ilya loved this man so much it terrified him sometimes. The way Shane could unravel him with just a look, the way his touch could steady Ilya's pulse when nothing else could. Right now, with Shane's fingers carding through his hair, their foreheads pressed together, and Shane's arms holding him...Ilya felt more regulated than he had in years.

Chapter 2: That Chase is Mine

Chapter Summary

Ilya's grip tightened, his breath hot against the shell of Shane's ear. "I don't want to hold back anymore," he murmured, the words rough with want, with something deeper. It was a confession that had been building beneath his ribs all day. Shane shuddered, curling back into him instinctively. His hand reached back blindly, fingers brushing the solid muscle of Ilya's thigh, a silent answer.

or

Ilya lets his primal side out for once

Chapter Notes

There is A LOT of kinky stuff in this one. So have fun! And maybe a good cockwarming story next?????
Translations at the end.

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

A few days later Shane and Ilya had spent the late morning and into the early evening at David and Yuna's cottage. For Shane, it was peaceful. For Ilya, it was anything but. Ilya woke with a tight, restless ache under his ribs, an intensity he couldn't name, only felt. It wasn't just desire, it's a need that unsettled him, a pull toward Shane that makes him hyperaware of every breath, every glance, every brush of closeness.

Twice, his Dom instincts slipped out before he could stop it. The first time, Shane got overwhelmed by a small incessant noise, and Ilya stepped in automatically, his voice low, steady, grounding. The second time, Shane starts spiraling over a simple card game, and Ilya's tone shifts again, gentle but firm, guiding him back to reality. Both moments feel natural, almost inevitable. Ilya didn't mean to reveal that part of himself in front of Shane's parents. He didn't mean to show how deeply he feels responsible for Shane's steadiness, how much he wants to hold him together.

Ilya expected David and Yuna to notice, and to misinterpret. To see control where there is care. To see intensity where there is tenderness. To see danger where there is devotion.

But they didn't.

David catches the first moment and simply nods, like he's recognizing something he already suspected. Yuna sees the second and her expression softens, not with concern but with understanding. They don't exchange worried glances. They don't stiffen. They don't question it. They just... accept it. Accept him. Accept the way he and Shane fit together. And that acceptance hits Ilya harder than he expects. It disarms him. It leaves him exposed in a way that's almost painful. Because part of him has been bracing all day, bracing for judgment, for misunderstanding, for the old fear that he is too much, too intense to be welcomed into someone else's family.

Instead, he finds himself seen clearly and not rejected.

By the time they left, the tension in Ilya hadn't disappeared, but it had shifted. The need for Shane is still there, but now it's layered with something more primal. But also relief. The realization that he doesn't have to hide the way he cares. For Ilya, that's the most disorienting part of the entire day: not the wanting, not the intensity, but the quiet, unexpected permission to be exactly who he is with the person he loves.

The car hummed beneath them, tires rolling smooth over gravel as Shane turned off the main road toward his cottage. Shane flexed his fingers on the wheel, knuckles popping faintly. "You okay over there?" he asked, quiet, like he wasn't sure he was supposed to mention it at all.

Shane kept his grip loose on the wheel, fingers flexing once more before he spoke. "You were different today," he said, voice low, careful. Not accusing. Just stating. Just noticing. The way he always noticed Ilya, even when Ilya didn't want him to.

"Да," Ilya admitted, voice rougher than he intended. The admission scraped out of him. He couldn't lie now.

Shane's thumb tapped like he was working up the courage to say more. The trees blurred past, thick and green. "I liked it," he said finally, voice so quiet it nearly disappeared under the hum of the engine. "You, like that. Today. Even if it was just my parents that saw."

Ilya exhaled like he's been waiting to hear that admission all day. "You liked it," he repeated, not a question but a confirmation, his fingers curling against the car door's handle. The words settled between them. Shane didn't glance over, but Ilya saw the way his throat moved when he swallowed.

"Yeah," Shane said, softer now, like he was testing the weight of it. "Felt... right. Like you weren't holding back."

The car door clicked shut behind Ilya, but he didn't move toward the cottage. Instead, he caught Shane's wrist just as Shane reached for the steps. His grip wasn't tight, it was grounding. Shane turned, eyebrows lifting slightly, but he didn't pull away. Just waited, the way he always did now, like Ilya's hands were a language he'd learned to read without translation.

"Wait here," Ilya murmured, his thumb brushing over the pulse point of Shane's wrist before releasing him. He held out his other hand, palm up. "Give me your phone."

Shane blinked but didn't hesitate, pulling it from his pocket and placing it in Ilya's hand without question. The trust in that simple motion sent a slow heat curling through Ilya's chest. He turned and strode up the cottage steps, leaving Shane standing in the gravel, the evening air warm against his skin.

Inside, Ilya set both phones on the entrance table. For a moment, Ilya pressed his palms flat against the cool countertop and breathed. The weight of the day settled against his ribs. A good weight.

Shane stood in the gravel drive, the sunlight warm against the back of his neck, and watched Ilya disappear into the cottage. The door clicked shut behind him, and Shane exhaled, rolling his shoulders against the quiet. It wasn't restlessness, just the low hum of anticipation, the kind that settled in his bones when Ilya moved like that.

The silence stretched. Shane tilted his head back, watching the way the afternoon light filtered through the trees. He flexed his fingers again, just to feel the stretch of skin over knuckles.

Ten years. Long enough that the trust didn't need to be spoken—it just was. How it wasn't fear, wasn't hesitation, just the opposite. The certainty of being wanted. The way it still caught him off guard sometimes.

Footsteps crunched on gravel and Shane turned. Ilya stood there, watching him with that familiar, impossible intensity. The late summer light caught the gold in his hair, and Shane lost his thoughts at his boyfriend's beauty.

Ilya's hands settled on Shane's shoulders and turned Shane slowly toward the tree line. The forest stretched out before them, deep and green, the late summer leaves rustling softly in the breeze. Shane didn't resist, letting himself be guided, the warmth of Ilya's palms seeping through his shirt.

Ilya's lips brushed the curve of Shane's neck, his breath warm against skin still sun-warmed from the afternoon. Shane exhaled, tipping his head just enough to give him better access, his pulse thudding under Ilya's mouth. "Я тебя люблю," Ilya murmured against his throat, fingers tightening briefly on Shane's waist.

Shane leaned back into Ilya's touch, the rough pads of his fingers tracing over Shane's hipbones. He didn't ask what Ilya wanted and he didn't need to. Ilya's breath hitched, just once, against the curve of Shane's shoulder. Knew the way Ilya's hands trembled when he was holding back, the way his voice went rough when he was fighting not to take.

Shane couldn't feel any of that right now. The warmth of Ilya's hands, the familiar weight of him, it all blurred into static at the edges of his awareness. His breath came too quick, his fingers twitching at his sides. "Ilya," he managed, voice tight.

Ilya's grip tightened, his breath hot against the shell of Shane's ear. "I don't want to hold back anymore," he murmured, the words rough with want, with something deeper. It was a confession that had been building beneath his ribs all day. Shane shuddered, curling back into him instinctively. His hand reached back blindly, fingers brushing the solid muscle of Ilya's thigh, a silent answer.

Shane turned in Ilya's arms, catching his wrist before he could pull away. The late sun slanted gold across Ilya's face, catching the faint crease between his brows. "What does that mean?" Shane asked, voice low but clear. "Not holding back."

Shane kept his gaze fixed on the trees, the shadows lengthening between the trunks as the sun dipped lower. He didn't turn, didn't pull away from the warmth of Ilya's chest against his back. The question hung between them, and Shane flexed his fingers against Ilya's wrist, grounding himself in the steady pulse beneath his fingertips. "Don't want to hold back," Shane repeated, quieter this time. "I need to know what that looks like for you. Right now."

Ilya's breath ghosted hot over the shell of Shane's ear. "I want you to run from me," he confessed, voice rough with something primal, layered beneath the careful control. Shane froze, the words settling into his skin like a brand.

Shane's breath stuttered in his chest and he felt heat flood his face, his neck, the tips of his ears burning. His pulse kicked hard against his ribs, an immediate, visceral reaction that left his fingers twitching against Ilya's legs. Fuck. *Fuck*. The thought alone sent a jolt of arousal straight through him, electric and undeniable.

"Yeah?" Shane managed, voice rough with it already, his grip tightening reflexively on Ilya's wrist. He didn't turn around, didn't dare move, afraid if he did, he'd lose the thread of this moment. The way Ilya's breath hitched against the back of his neck told him everything.

Ilya's fingers flexed against Shane's waist, the tension in them betraying how close he was to losing control. "Uh huh," he murmured, lips brushing the sensitive skin just below Shane's ear. "You want me to chase you?"

The sound slipped out before Shane could stop it. It was a soft, bitten-off moan that curled into the warm evening air between them. His cheeks burned immediately, but he didn't pull away, didn't try to take it back. Ilya's fingers twitched against his waist, and Shane felt the sharp inhale against his neck, the way Ilya's chest stuttered against his back.

Shane's pulse hammered against his ribs, the words slipping out before he could second guess them. "Do you...want me to make it easy for you?" The question hung between them,

breathless.

Ilya's fingers dug into Shane's hips, hard, pressing him back against the solid warmth of Ilya's chest. "No," he growled, the single syllable rough with need. "Don't you fucking dare."

Shane didn't know Ilya was this far gone. The raw hunger in his voice, the way his fingers trembled against Shane's skin, it wasn't just desire. It was something deeper, something Shane had only caught glimpses of before now. A need that bordered on desperation, like Ilya was starving for this, for the chase, for the surrender. And Shane? Shane wanted to give it to him. Wanted to let Ilya take until there was nothing left to give.

Shane swallowed hard, the air between them thick with the weight of unsaid things. "Same boundaries?" he asked, voice barely above a whisper, rough with the effort of keeping it steady.

The pressure on Shane's hips was just shy of painful. "Yes," Ilya said, the word sharp, final.

Shane could feel Ilya's heartbeat against his back, rapid and uneven. "Do you want me to—" Shane hesitated, searching for the right words, the ones that wouldn't break the fragile tension between them. "Fight back?"

"Yes," Ilya murmured against the curve of Shane's jaw, the word rough with hunger. His fingers flexed against Shane's hips, pressing in hard enough to leave marks. "Fight back. Let me earn it. Make me earn you."

Shane twisted in Ilya's arms, just enough to catch the wild, desperate look in Ilya's eyes—dark and glittering, pupils blown wide with want. Shane had seen Ilya hungry before, but never like this. Never so utterly undone by the mere idea of what was coming. The air between them was thick, electric, the kind of tension that could snap with a single wrong word—or the right one. "Okay," he murmured, the word barely more than breath, but Ilya heard it. Of course he did.

Ilya's grip loosened. "Run," he growled, the word vibrating through Shane's bones like a live wire.

The moment Ilya's grip loosened, Shane was gone.

He bolted without hesitation, his pulse roaring in his ears as his feet pounded the damp earth. *Oh, he means it.* The realization sent a thrill down his spine, sharp and electric. *Good.* He cut left abruptly, veering off the expected path, branches whipping against his arms as he plunged deeper into the trees. The sting was a reminder, *don't make it easy.* He pushed harder, lungs burning, muscles coiling with the effort. He could hear the distant crunch of Ilya's footsteps faltering for just a second as he registered the change in direction. Shane grinned, breathless. *Let's see what you've got this time.*

Shane didn't glance back. He could feel the exact moment Ilya began the hunt. The forest air rushed past his face, cool and thick with the scent of damp earth. His lungs burned, his thighs ached, but he didn't slow. Not when he could hear Ilya behind him, not when his pulse hammered so hard he thought his ribs might crack from the force of it.

Ilya didn't move at first. Not yet. He stood rooted in place, listening to the way Shane's footsteps pounded unevenly against the forest floor, the sharp snap of twigs under his weight, the rustle of leaves as he veered left, deeper into the trees. *Alright,* he thought, fingers flexing at his sides. *You wanted a hunt.* A slow smile tugged at the corner of his mouth. *Then I'll give you one.*

Shane's breathless laugh echoed faintly through the trees, distant but unmistakable. Ilya's pulse spiked. He could almost taste the anticipation on his tongue. Then, Ilya moved.

When Ilya finally moves, it's controlled. No rushing. No wasted energy. His eyes scan the ground automatically. Disturbed leaves. A bent branch. Footprints in the soft dirt. Shane left a trail whether he meant to or not. Ilya thinks: *Running fast... but not careful.* A slow, knowing smile curves his lips. *You want to be found, don't you?*

The forest swallowed Shane's footsteps quickly, but Ilya didn't hurry. He traced the path with deliberate steps, fingers brushing bark where Shane had skidded around a tree too sharply. The air smelled of pine and damp earth, thick with the weight of summer. A faint rustle to his left—deliberate, too loud. *Teasing me.* Ilya's pulse jumped, but he didn't turn. Not yet.

Shane's feet hit the soft earth with barely a sound as he pivoted behind a thick oak, pressing his back against the rough bark. His breath came fast, uneven, but he forced himself to quiet it just to listen. The forest hummed around him, alive with crickets and distant birdsong, but beneath it all, there was nothing. No footsteps. No rustling leaves. No telltale snap of a twig under Ilya's weight.

That was the thrill of it: the not knowing. The anticipation coiled in Shane's gut. If he wanted to disappear, he could. He'd spent summers here, knew every trail, every hidden dip in the land where the earth dipped unexpectedly. He could vanish into the trees and not be found unless he chose to be.

But that wasn't the point.

A grin tugged at Shane's lips as he pushed off the tree and darted deeper into the undergrowth. He doubled back once, circling around a thicket of bushes before cutting sharply across a fallen log, its moss covered surface slick under his palms as he jumped over. His thighs burned as he slid down a small slope, dirt kicking up beneath his shoes, but he didn't stop. He couldn't stop.

The moment Shane heard the rustle of branches behind him, too close, closer than before, his pulse kicked hard against his ribs. He grinned, breathless, and pushed himself faster, turning sharply right through a tangle of underbrush that scraped at his arms. The sting was sharp, grounding, a reminder: *Don't make it easy for him*. Branches snapped underfoot as he wove deeper into the trees, lungs burning with the effort. *Catch me properly*, he thought fiercely, the words a drumbeat in his skull. *Take me*.

"Я тебя найду." Ilya's voice curled through the trees, rough with amusement and something darker, hungrier. Not a question but an accusation. Shane's breath hitched. He didn't answer, didn't dare. He just ran harder, veering left this time, kicking up damp earth as he skidded around a boulder. The chase was its own language. Every gasp, every stumble, every muttered curse under their breath—it all meant something.

Shane's foot caught on a root and he stumbled, barely catching himself against a tree trunk. His palms scraped bark, but he didn't stop. Not when the sound of Ilya's footsteps grew louder, closer, a steady, relentless rhythm that sent heat coiling low in his gut. *Fuck*. He bit back a laugh. *He's gaining*.

The moment Shane pivoted left again—third time in ten minutes—Ilya smirked. "Ты такой предсказуемый," he murmured under his breath, watching Shane's distant form disappear between two logs. The realization curled warm in his chest: Shane wasn't running randomly anymore. He was tracing loose, familiar terrain, using the same log as a pivot point every so often. Fast, yes. Clever, always. But predictable in this one perfect way.

Ilya moved quickly now, his footfalls silent against the forest floor as he circled ahead of Shane's path. He knew these woods, not as well as Shane did. But he had memorized the shortcuts, the hidden dips, the way the land curved just enough to obscure sightlines. He stopped suddenly, pressing his back against a thick oak, his breathing deliberately slow. The bark dug into his shoulders, rough and grounding. *Come on*, he thought, lips curving in anticipation. *Run right into me.*

Shane burst through a line of trees at full speed. His breathing was ragged now, adrenaline pounding through him loud enough to drown out the forest sounds. *Where is he? Did I lose—*

A powerful arm suddenly hooked around Shane's waist from the side. He barely had time to gasp before he was yanked off his feet mid-stride. Momentum carried them both sideways, Shane's feet leaving the ground completely as Ilya's grip locked around him like iron. Ilya's weight pressing against him as his breath got knocked out of him.

Shane reacted instantly—twisting, kicking, the heel of his palm slamming backward toward Ilya's ribs—not panicked, not afraid, but absolutely not going quietly. *There you are.* The thought seared through him as his elbow connected with solid muscle. Ilya grunted but didn't loosen his grip, just hauled Shane harder against his chest, his breath hot and ragged against Shane's skin.

Ilya locked his grip tighter around Shane's torso, his forearm pressing hard against Shane's ribs as his other hand clamped over Shane's mouth. "Shut your mouth," he muttered against Shane's ear, voice rough with exertion and something darker. Shane's pulse hammered against Ilya's palm, his breath hot and uneven through his nose. He bucked backward instinctively, muscles tensing, heels digging into the damp earth as he tried to twist free.

Ilya's forearm pressed harder against Shane's ribs, the pressure just shy of painful. "Let me go," Shane gasped the moment Ilya's hand slipped from his mouth, twisting to knee backward

—but Ilya anticipated it, sidestepping with a growl that vibrated through Shane's back.

Shane twisted sharply in Ilya's arms, the muscles in his back flexing as he drove his elbow backward into Ilya's stomach enough to make Ilya grunt. The sound went straight to Shane's gut, hot and electric. Ilya's forearm tightened, and Shane gasped before biting down on a laugh. "Fuck—you," he panted, kicking back again.

Ilya caught his ankle easily, yanking Shane off-balance just enough to send them both stumbling into the broad trunk of an oak. The bark scraped against Shane's shoulder blades as Ilya crowded him back, pinning him there with the full weight of his body. Shane's breath hitched from the sheer intensity of Ilya's gaze, dark and glittering with something feral.

"Fuck," Ilya murmured, almost to himself, as Shane twisted under him, muscles straining. The resistance sent something electric rushing through Ilya's veins. His grip tightened slightly, just to feel Shane's pulse jump under his palms. A laugh bubbled up in Ilya's throat, rough and surprised. "This is fun," he admitted, voice low against Shane's ear. The realization startled him: the chase, the struggle, the way Shane fought even as he trusted Ilya to catch him every time.

Ilya's hands were everywhere all at once. Rough palms skimming up Shane's ribs, fingers digging into the soft flesh of his thighs, thumbs pressing hard into the hollows of his hips. Shane gasped, arching into the touch. "Fuck—Ilya—" The name came out ragged, half-laugh, half-plea, as Ilya's mouth found the pulse point beneath his jaw, teeth grazing skin just shy of breaking it.

"I want—" Ilya growled against Shane's throat, hands sliding down to grip the backs of his thighs, hauling him up against a tree. Bark scraped against Shane's spine, but the sting barely registered. Not with Ilya's hips pressing him there, not with the way Ilya's breath hitched when Shane wrapped his legs around his waist. "Everything. Right now."

Shane's breath came in sharp, uneven bursts as Ilya pinned him against the tree, their bodies pressed together from chest to thigh. He could feel the wild hammering of Ilya's heart against his own, the heat of his skin through damp fabric, the way his fingers flexed against Shane's thighs. Shane arched into it, tilting his head back against the rough bark to expose his throat, and Ilya's lips followed without hesitation, teeth grazing the tender skin just beneath his jaw.

"You ran," Ilya murmured against his pulse, voice rough with exertion and something darker, deeper. His thumbs dug into the soft flesh of Shane's inner thighs, pressing hard enough to leave bruises. "You ran right to me."

Shane shuddered, fingers twisting in the fabric of Ilya's shirt. "Yeah," he admitted, breathless. "I did." The admission curled between them, thick with meaning. He hadn't run to escape. He'd run to be caught. To be taken. To feel the weight of Ilya's hands on him, the bite of his grip, the heat of his breath against Shane's skin, proof that Ilya wanted him enough to chase him down, to claim him.

"All that running," Ilya murmured against the sweat-damp skin of Shane's throat, his breath hot and uneven, "and you still came straight to me." His thumbs pressed deeper into Shane's thighs, a silent punctuation to the words.

The forest held its breath around them. Shane's chest rose and fell rapidly in Ilya's arm, his skin slick with sweat where their bodies pressed together. The adrenaline hadn't faded yet, Shane could feel it humming under his skin, mirrored in the way Ilya's fingers flexed against his thighs, not quite ready to loosen.

Ilya didn't set Shane back down. Instead, he adjusted his grip effortlessly with one arm hooked under Shane's thighs, the other wrapped firmly around his waist. It was as if Shane's weight meant nothing. The muscles in his shoulders flexed with the movement. Shane's pulse still hammered against Ilya's chest where their skin touched, rapid and uneven, the aftermath of exertion thrumming through them both. *You ran hard*, Ilya thought, thumb tracing absent circles against the damp fabric of Shane's shirt. Not just hard—recklessly, beautifully, giving Ilya everything he'd asked for and more. The knowledge settled warm in his chest, heavier than Shane's weight in his arms.

Ilya's footsteps were unhurried as he carried Shane back through the trees, the only sound the soft crunch of leaves underfoot and the slowing rhythm of their breathing. Shane shifted slightly in his arms, but Ilya didn't loosen his grip—if anything, his hold tightened, fingers pressing possessively into Shane's skin as if to say *mine, still mine*. The forest air was cooler now, the scent of earth settling around them like a blanket.

Shane didn't ask to be put down. He knew better, knew Ilya better. Their dynamic wasn't about asking. It was about trust so deep it lived in the spaces between them, in the unspoken decisions like this one: Ilya's arms around him, the possessive grip that said *mine to carry*,

mine to hold. Shane let his head fall down on Ilya's shoulder, the tension in his body unwinding by degrees. The forest blurred around them, shadows stretching long as the sun dipped lower.

Shane shifted slightly in Ilya's arms, adjusting to the rhythm of his footsteps as they moved through the trees. His arm looped loosely around Ilya's shoulders and he exhaled against the damp fabric of Ilya's shirt. "You okay?" he murmured, lips brushing the curve of Ilya's collarbone. The question was quiet, unnecessary, but Shane asked it anyway, because that was the thing they did now: checked in, always. Even when they already knew the answer.

As they neared the tree line, the cottage's warm glow just visible through the trees, Ilya's fingers flexed unconsciously against Shane's thighs. The sharp gasp Shane had let out when he'd been caught mid-stride. The way his muscles had coiled tight before he'd fought back, elbow flying toward Ilya's ribs with perfect, practiced precision. The moment when Shane had finally gone pliant against him, chest heaving, pulse wild under Ilya's palms.

Yeah, Ilya thought, tightening his grip just enough to feel Shane shift in response. *I'm doing that again.*

Ilya huffed a quiet laugh, breath warm against the damp curve of Shane's neck. "You asked for a hunt," he murmured, fingers tracing idle patterns over Shane's ribs where his shirt had ridden up. The words were teasing, but the hand splayed possessively across Shane's hip told a different story—*mine, even when you run.*

Shane shivered, pressing back into the solid heat of Ilya's chest where they lay tangled on the cottage's lumpy couch. "Didn't realize you'd cheat," he shot back, but there was no bite to it, just breathless amusement as he caught Ilya's wrist, thumb brushing the racing pulse there.

"Cheat?" Ilya's teeth grazed Shane's earlobe, sharp enough to make him jerk. "I do not cheat." His palm slid lower making Shane's breath hitch. "I watch and I learn."

Ilya should have been exhausted, his muscles must have been aching from the chase, his lungs still burning. But there was something buzzing beneath his skin, something restless and alive. It took him a moment to place it: Ilya. Not just the strength in his arms or the steadiness of his grip, but the way he carried Shane now, like he was something precious, something worth holding onto.

Shane shifted slightly in his arms, just enough to press his nose against the damp curve of Ilya's neck. "Thank you for not holding back," he murmured against his skin, half-amused, half-breathless.

Ilya reached the cottage door and Shane reached down to open the door. The hinges creaked softly, releasing the scent of lemon polish and sun-warmed wood into the evening air.

Shane shifted slightly in Ilya's arms. "You enjoyed that way too much, Rozanov," Shane murmured, lips brushing Ilya's neck where his pulse still hammered.

Ilya walked straight through the cottage toward the bedroom, his grip unyielding, his footsteps purposeful. "Oh," Shane muttered, lips brushing Ilya's. "That's the plan."

The moment they crossed the threshold of the bedroom, Shane had half a second to register the change before he was airborne, the world tilting sharply as Ilya literally tossed him onto the mattress. The impact jolted through him, the bedsprings squeaking in protest as his body bounced once before settling. Shane's breath left him, but he was already pushing up onto his elbows, grinning despite the way his pulse kicked hard against his ribs.

Shane let out a surprised laugh, the sound rough with leftover adrenaline as he pushed himself up. "Okay—" His breath hitched when Ilya crowded over him, one knee sinking into the mattress beside Shane's hip. "Definitely enjoyed it." The words came out softer than he'd intended.

Shane flopped back against the mattress, grinning up at Ilya with his pulse still thrumming visibly at the base of his throat. "What?" he teased still, fingers walking up Ilya's forearm where it caged him in. "You finally caught me and now you're acting all nervous?" His head tilted slightly. "Come on," the words curled softly between them. "Claim your prize."

Shane's grin faded slightly when Ilya didn't immediately respond to his teasing. Instead, Ilya braced a hand on either side of Shane's head, forearms flexing as he hovered there, studying Shane's face with an intensity that made Shane's breath catch. "You," Ilya said finally, voice rough, "are not a prize to be claimed." His thumb brushed Shane's cheekbone, the touch incongruously tender against the wildness still lingering in his eyes.

Shane's pulse stuttered. He reached up, fingers curling around Ilya's wrist. "Then what am I?" The question slipped out before he could stop it.

Ilya exhaled sharply through his nose, his gaze dropping to where Shane's fingers circled his wrist. "Mine," he said simply, but the word landed differently this time. "You run, I chase. You fight, I hold on. But you—" His thumb traced the rapid flutter of Shane's pulse. "Are mine."

Ilya kissed Shane's lips hard. With the full weight of years of restraint behind it. His teeth scraped Shane's bottom lip, sharp enough to make him gasp, and Ilya swallowed the sound greedily. "You," he growled against Shane's mouth, hands already tugging at Shane's shirt, "are not going anywhere." The fabric tore a little at the collar as Ilya yanked it open, tossing it aside without a second glance. His palms skated down Shane's ribs.

Shane arched into the touch, breath hitching. "Fuck—Ilya—"

Ilya's hands were relentless, his touch equal parts claiming and gentle. His fingers traced the dip of Shane's collarbone, the taut line of his abdomen, the skin at the crease of his thigh—everywhere, everywhere, as if he couldn't bear not to touch. "You are fucking perfect," Ilya growled, his voice rough, dark with want.

Shane's breath stuttered as Ilya's lips followed the path of his hands, teeth grazing skin just hard enough to make Shane jerk. "Jesus—"

Ilya didn't just undress Shane—he *unmade* him.

Fabric tearing at the seams as he stripped Shane down with single-minded efficiency. Shane gasped when Ilya's teeth caught the waistband of his underwear, yanking them down with a sharp jerk that left Shane's hips arching off the mattress. "Fuck—oh my god!"

"Better," Ilya growled against the jut of Shane's hipbone, dragging his tongue over the flushed skin there. His hands spanned Shane's thighs, pushing them apart roughly, thumbs

digging into the soft flesh just to hear Shane's breath hitch.

Shane's fingers twisted in the sheets as Ilya's mouth moved lower—hot, open-mouthed kisses trailing down his inner thigh, teeth scraping where the skin was most sensitive. "Jesus Christ —"

"Still talking too much," Ilya murmured against his skin, breath ghosting over Shane's cock. Shane barely had time to register the words before Ilya swallowed him down without warning, throat working around him in one smooth motion.

Shane's back arched violently off the mattress, a ragged curse tearing from his lips. "Fuck—*fuck*—" His hips jerked instinctively, but Ilya's grip tightened on his thighs, holding him down effortlessly as he took Shane deeper, nose pressed against the wiry hairs at the base.

The wet heat of Ilya's mouth was devastating. Shane's fingers twisted in Ilya's hair until his knuckles ached, his hips lifting instinctively only to be pinned back down by Ilya's relentless grip. Ilya hollowed his cheeks and sucked hard, the pressure unbearable and perfect all at once.

Shane gasped, head thrown back, spine arching. "Ilya, I'm gonna—"

Ilya pulled off with a wet, obscene sound, his lips swollen and glistening. "Oh no," he growled, pressing Shane's hips back into the mattress with bruising force. His thumb swiped over the flushed head of Shane's cock, smearing precome down the shaft in a slow, deliberate stroke that made Shane whimper. "No you're not."

Ilya's fingers traced lazy circles around Shane's balls, his touch light one second and possessive the next. His thumb pressed just enough to make Shane's breath catch in his throat. "You like that?" Ilya murmured, watching Shane's face intently as his fingers tightened slightly. Shane nodded, biting his lip hard enough to feel it. "Use your words," Ilya reminded him, his voice low and rough, curling around Shane like smoke. "You can't be this far gone already."

"Fuck—yes," Shane gasped, arching into the touch. "I like it."

Ilya hummed approvingly, his thumb rolling Shane's balls in his palm with maddening slowness. "Good." His other hand trailed up Shane's thigh, fingertips brushing the sensitive skin just below his hipbone. "You have no idea what you do to me," Ilya admitted, voice rough with something darker than lust. "This cock—" His fingers wrapped around Shane's shaft, squeezing just enough to make Shane's toes curl. "*—mine.*"

Shane groaned, trying to move out of Ilya's grasp. But Ilya just continued holding him down. "Ilya—"

Ilya's fingers tightened around Shane's cock in a slow, deliberate stroke, his thumb smearing precum all over the head. "Just look at you," he murmured, voice rough with awe, as if Shane were something holy laid bare before him. "Perfect fucking cock. Thick and leaking." His tongue dragged a hot stripe up the underside, savoring the way Shane's hips jerked helplessly beneath him.

Shane gasped out.

"Every inch of you," Ilya continued, dragging his teeth lightly along the sensitive skin where Shane's thigh met his hip, "was made for me." His breath ghosted over Shane's straining erection, hot and uneven. "You run so beautiful for me," he murmured, lips brushing the flushed head, "fight so pretty." His tongue flicked out, catching the bead of precome at the tip. "And you taste so good."

Ilya's lips trailed upward, nuzzling against the base of Shane's cock, inhaling the musk of sweat and salt and *him* like it was the only air he needed. His tongue dragged a slow, filthy path up Shane's shaft, savoring the way Shane's stomach muscles jumped under his lips, the way his thighs trembled when Ilya's breath ghosted over his balls. "Fuck," Ilya murmured against Shane's skin, voice rough with reverence. "You're perfect." His teeth scraped lightly over the sensitive flesh of Shane's inner thigh, just to feel him jerk. "Every part of you. Made just for me."

Every drag of Ilya's tongue, every scrape of teeth, every possessive press of his palms against Shane's trembling thighs. It all burned through him like wildfire, leaving him gasping and writhing beneath the sheer weight of Ilya's worship.

Shane's moans tapered off into a breathless whimper as Ilya pulled away, leaving him sprawled naked across the rumpled sheets, flushed, trembling, needy. The sudden loss of heat made Shane blink dazedly, his cock twitching against his stomach where precum pooled in the dip of his abs. "Wha—?" His voice cracked when he saw Ilya standing at the foot of the bed, stripping with methodical precision. The way Ilya's fingers worked at his shorts sent a fresh wave of heat through Shane's gut.

Ilya didn't just strip, he performed for Shane. Every movement deliberate, every inch of skin revealed like a goddamn ritual. His fingers hooked into the waistband of his shorts, dragging them down slowly just to watch Shane's throat work as he swallowed hard. The fabric clung to his thighs for a heartbeat before Ilya kicked them aside, standing there fully naked, cock heavy between his legs, gaze locked on Shane's like a predator sizing up his prey. Ilya's hand curled lazily around his own cock, pulling his foreskin back, stroking himself with slow twists of his wrist just to watch Shane's lips part, his pupils dilating further with every movement.

Shane's fingers twitched, curling lazily in Ilya's direction as he arched his back just enough to make the muscles in his abdomen flex. "Ilya," he drawled, voice dripping with bratty impatience, "if you're done admiring yourself, I'm right here."

Shane's hips jerked off the mattress, his cock twitching against his stomach. "Ilya—*fuck*—just touch me already," he whined, voice cracking with need. The deliberate way Ilya stroked himself, slow and unhurried, was torture. Shane's fingers twisted in the sheets, his thighs trembling. "Stop being an asshole."

Ilya just smirked back, dragging his thumb slowly over the flushed head of his cock, precum smearing in a deliberate, filthy arc. "Aww," he murmured, voice dripping with dark amusement, "but I thought you liked my asshole?" The words landed like a match to gasoline, and Shane's whole body jerked as if electrocuted, his cock twitching visibly against his stomach, which, fuck, did *not* help Shane's case.

Shane threw his head back, tendons standing out in his neck as he snarled, "Fucking hell, Rozanov—if you don't—" His hips jerked uselessly, cock flushed and leaking against his stomach. The words dissolved into a frustrated groan when Ilya just stood there, stroking himself with that infuriating half-smirk, watching Shane unravel like it was his favorite goddamn sport. "Touch me or so help me—"

"Or what?" Ilya purred, thumb dragging lazily over his own slit. His voice was all dark velvet, the kind that curled under Shane's skin and lit him up from the inside. "You will do what?"

Shane's fingers twitched toward his own cock, his breath hitching as he dragged his palm up the length of himself in one slow, deliberate stroke, just to watch Ilya's pupils blow wider. "Fuck you," Shane gasped, arching into his own touch. "I don't—ah—need you to—" His hips jerked when his thumb swiped over the head.

Ilya's smirk deepened as Shane's fingers found his own cock. "We both know you don't want that," Ilya murmured, stepping closer until his knees hit the bed. His hand never stopped stroking himself, slow and taunting. "You want this—" His thumb swiped over his own slit, smearing precome down his shaft. "—not your own pathetic little touches." Shane's breath hitched, his thighs trembling where they were splayed open. "You want my mouth," Ilya continued, voice dropping to a rough whisper as he crawled onto the mattress, "my hands, my cock, all of me. You know how I can ruin you. Better than you ever could alone."

Shane shook his head vehemently, lips pressed into a stubborn line even as his hips twitched toward Ilya's hovering weight. "No," he gasped, fingers digging into the sheets—but his body betrayed him, thighs falling wider, cock leaking against his stomach, every muscle tensed in anticipation.

Ilya's laugh was dark, amused, as he leaned over Shane again. He caught Shane's chin between thumb and forefinger, forcing his gaze up. "Is lie," he murmured, thumb brushing Shane's bottom lip. "Your body begs better than your pretty mouth." His free hand slid down Shane's chest, fingertips tracing the dip between his ribs, the quiver of his abdomen, before wrapping around Shane's cock in one smooth motion. Shane's hips stuttering into the touch. "See?" Ilya purred, twisting his wrist just so. "You say no, but your cock drips for me. Your breath—" He leaned down, lips grazing Shane's ear, "—it shakes when I touch you."

Shane shuddered, head tipping back. "Fuck you," he breathed, but the words lacked heat, dissolving into a whine when Ilya's grip tightened slightly, thumb swiping over the red head of his cock in a slow, filthy circle.

"Later," Ilya growled in Shane's ear, fingers tightening around the sides of his throat just enough to make Shane's breath hitch. The word landed like a promise, like a threat, like something inevitable Shane could already feel in the pulse of his own blood. "When you are

begging for it." His thumb pressed against Shane's Adam's apple, feeling the swallow he couldn't suppress. "When you're so fucking desperate you'll take anything I give you."

The sight of Shane's breath catching, his throat working desperately under Ilya's palm, sent a jolt of pure electricity down Ilya's spine. His grip tightened instinctively, just enough to watch Shane's pupils dilate further, his lips parting on a silent gasp. *Fuck*. The realization hit him like a crosscheck: Shane trusted him this much. To choke him, to claim him, to take the very air from his lungs and still know Ilya would give it back. The knowledge burned hotter than any touch.

Shane's fingers curled around Ilya's wrist just to hold on, to anchor him. His pulse thrummed wild and steady against Ilya's palm, a rhythm only they knew. And his eyes—fuck, his eyes—wide and dark and brimming with something so raw it punched the air from Ilya's lungs. Love, yes, but more than that. Trust so absolute it carved Ilya open to his core.

Ilya released Shane's throat slowly, fingertips lingering just long enough to feel the flutter of Shane's pulse kick higher before stepping back again. The loss of contact made Shane gasp, his chest rising sharply as oxygen flooded back in. His fingers twitched toward his own throat before dropping limply to the sheets. Ilya watched the way Shane's lips parted on a ragged inhale, the way his eyelashes fluttered, the way his cock jerked, untouched again.

Shane whined low in his throat, fingers twisting in the sheets as Ilya stepped back again, leaving him exposed and trembling. "N-no" The word cracked, raw with need.

"Come here." The command landed resolute. "Turn over." A pause, weighted with the unspoken understanding that thrummed between them after months of this dance. "Ass up."

Shane shuddered at the command. He moved before the words fully settled, scooting to the edge, rolling onto his stomach with practiced obedience, arching his hips up without being told twice. The sheets clung to his damp skin as he settled into position. "Like this?" he murmured, voice already fraying at the edges, but the curve of his spine was pure sin, a challenge in the way he pressed his ass back toward Ilya's space.

Ilya loved this sight. Shane bent over, spine arched, muscles trembling, skin flushed. The perfect curve of his ass, the way his thighs spread instinctively as if already anticipating

Ilya's touch. Ilya dragged a single fingertip down the dip of Shane's spine, savoring the way Shane shuddered. "So good for me," Ilya murmured, voice rough with worship.

The sharp crack of Ilya's palm against Shane's ass echoed through the bedroom, the sting blooming hot and immediate. Shane gasped, fingers twisting into the sheets as his hips jerked forward instinctively—only for Ilya's other hand to splay across the small of his back, holding him firmly in place. "Stay," Ilya growled, his voice rough with possession, fingers kneading the reddening skin.

Ilya's fingers traced lazy circles around the flushed skin of Shane's ass, alternating between gentle caresses and sharp, stinging slaps that made Shane gasp into the sheets. "So fucking pretty," Ilya murmured, his voice rough with reverence as he spread Shane's cheeks wide, thumbs pressing into the soft flesh just to hear Shane whimper. His palm landed again with a sharp crack, the sound punctuated by Shane's half moan. "Made for me to make pretty."

Ilya's thumbs pressed into the soft swell of Shane's ass, spreading him open. The first brush of his tongue against Shane's hole was a teasing, wet stripe that made Shane jerk forward. "Fuck—Ilya—" His fingers tried reaching back, thighs trembling as Ilya's tongue circled him lazily, savoring the way Shane's muscles fluttered under his mouth. "Jesus Christ—"

Ilya didn't have to bend down much, so he dug right in. His tongue flat and hot against Shane's clenching hole, fucking into him with slow, filthy strokes that had Shane's knees buckling instantly. The sound Shane made was barely human. "Oh fuck—Ilya—" His thighs trembled violently when Ilya's thumbs spread him wider, the wet drag of his tongue turning sharper, more insistent.

Ilya buried his face deeper, tongue working Shane open with filthy, relentless precision. Shane's thighs trembled violently, his fingers clawing at the sheets as Ilya's lips sealed around his rim, sucking hard enough to wrench a broken sob from Shane's throat. "Oh god—I-lya, please—!" The plea dissolved into a gasp when Ilya's tongue speared deep inside, hot and insistent, fucking into him with slow, deliberate strokes that had Shane's spine arching helplessly.

"Ты на вкус как рай." Ilya growled against Shane's skin, the Russian rough as he pulled back just enough to watch Shane's hole flutter around nothing. His thumbs spread Shane wider, exposing him obscenely. "My god," he murmured, dragging his tongue up Shane's

taint just to feel him jerk. "So eager." His teeth scraped the sensitive skin, sharp enough to make Shane whimper. "You take my tongue so well, шлюха."

Shane's fingers clawed at the sheets as Ilya's tongue worked him open with wet, filthy strokes that left him trembling and gasping. He tried to twist away, but Ilya's grip tightened instantly, one broad hand splaying possessively across the small of his back, pinning him in place. "N-no—fuck—" Shane's protest dissolved into a shattered moan when Ilya's tongue speared deeper, the sound muffled against the mattress.

Ilya's tongue dragged away from Shane's fluttering hole with a filthy, wet sound, his lips glistening as he pressed open-mouthed kisses down the back of Shane's trembling thighs. Shane gasped into the sheets when Ilya's teeth bit the sensitive skin behind his knee. "Fucking hell..."

"Always so inpatient," Ilya growled against Shane's skin, his breath hot as he shifted back up. His fingers dug into the backs of Shane's thighs, spreading him wider, forcing Shane's hips up higher. The rough scrape of Ilya's stubble against the delicate skin of Shane's balls made Shane whimper, his cock twitching where it hung heavy between his legs. Ilya nuzzled against Shane's sac with a possessive hum. "But I take what I want. When I want." Ilya took each of Shane's balls into his warm mouth, one at a time. "And you will take what I give you."

Ilya pulled back with a wet sound, leaving Shane trembling and exposed as he reached for the nightstand. The drawer squeaked open, the sound obscenely loud in the charged silence between them. Shane whined at the loss of contact, pressing his hips back toward where Ilya was—only for Ilya to land a sharp smack against his ass, the sting blooming hot. "Stay," Ilya growled, fingers trailing possessively down Shane's spine. "Be my good boy."

The lube bottle clicked open and Ilya's fingers dripped with it. "You know," he murmured, lips brushing the back of Shane's legs, "these windows are wide open." His free hand trailed down Shane's spine, fingertips skating over each knob with deliberate slowness. "And everyone outside is watching you right now." A pause, just to feel Shane shiver beneath him. "Spread open. Begging."

Shane's breath hitched, fingers clawing deeper into the sheets as Ilya's words sank in. His cock throbbed violently against his stomach, precum dripping onto the rumpled fabric beneath him. "Fuck—" The word cracked, ragged with need. He arched his back higher,

spreading his thighs wider, pressing his ass back toward Ilya's space with shameless desperation. "Let them watch," Shane gasped, voice wrecked. "Let them see how fucking yours I am."

Ilya's fingers pressed in without warning, one thick digit sliding deep into Shane's tight hole as his other hand slid over Shane's back muscles, pinning him to the mattress. "Look at you," he murmured, twisting his wrist to stretch Shane wider. The pad of his finger brushed over that spot inside that made Shane's thighs jerk violently. "So greedy." A second finger joined the first, the stretch sharper now, Shane's hole spasming around the intrusion. "Oh, they love this," Ilya growled, scissoring his fingers just to hear Shane gasp. "Love seeing how good you are for me."

Shane's groan punched out of him when Ilya's fingers twisted deeper, scissoring him open with the second finger inside him now. The stretch burned deliciously, only for Ilya to press down on that spot inside him that turned his vision white. "Fuck—fuck, right there—" Shane's voice cracked as his hips jerked back onto Ilya's hand, his thighs trembling where they were spread wide.

Ilya curled the third finger in deep twisting his wrist just to watch Shane's roll. "Mmhhh," Ilya growled, voice rough with reverence, his free hand splayed possessively across the small of Shane's back. "Taking my fingers so fucking perfect." He scissored them wider, dragging a broken moan from Shane's throat. The moment Ilya's fingers withdrew, Shane whined—high, desperate—arching his hips higher into the empty air. "Please," he gasped, thighs trembling with the effort of holding himself open. "Please, I need—"

Ilya's fingers slid out with a filthy, wet sound, leaving Shane wide open, his hole twitching, desperate for more. Before Shane could protest, Ilya dragged him by the hips, flipping him onto his back with a growl that vibrated through Shane's bones.

Shane barely managed to dig his heels into the mattress—just trying to scoot up, to *breathe*—when Ilya's hands clamped around his ankles like restraints. A growl, low and animalistic, ripped from Ilya's throat as he hauled Shane back down, pinning him beneath his weight before Shane could even gasp. "No," Ilya snarled, fingers biting into Shane's thighs as he climbed over him, caging him in. "You're not going anywhere." His knee shoved Shane's legs wider, the heat of his body searing against Shane's skin. "You take what I give you."

Shane's breath hitched, his cock twitching against his stomach where more precum pooled out. "I wasn't—" The protest dissolved into a moan when Ilya's palm smacked his thigh, the sting blooming hot.

"Lie," Ilya growled, his free hand dragging possessively up Shane's chest, fingertips mapping the dip between his ribs. "I know you better than that." His thumb brushed Shane's nipple, rough and deliberate, just to watch his stomach muscles jump.

Ilya's palm clamped over Shane's mouth before he could even finish his sentence, the sudden pressure silencing him. Shane's eyes widened, not in protest, but in electric anticipation, as Ilya's hips rolled forward, the thick head of his cock pressing inside against Shane's already-stretched hole. "No more talking," Ilya growled, his voice rough as gravel, and dropping his arms beside Shane's head to hold him in place. "Only taking."

The first thrust punched the air from Shane's lungs, his scream muffled beneath Ilya's palm. The stretch burned—fuck, it burned—but Shane arched into it anyway, heels digging into the mattress as Ilya bottomed out with a ragged groan. "God, yes—take it," Ilya snarled, hips snapping forward again before Shane could adjust, his cock splitting Shane open with brutal precision. Every snap of his hips knocked Shane further up the bed.

Shane's nails raked down Ilya's forearms, his thighs trembling where they were pinned wide. The hand over his mouth shifted, fingers sliding into his hair instead, fisting tight enough to make his scalp sting. "You look so good," Ilya growled, his voice wrecked, hips pistoning relentlessly. "Fucking ruined for me." His thumb brushed Shane's bottom lip, smearing spit across his chin.

"Fuck—Ilya—!" Shane's back arched off the mattress, the words punched out of him with every thrust. Ilya's pace was relentless—hard, deep strokes that had Shane seeing stars. "You feel—ah—so good—"

Ilya's hips pistoned into Shane with a rhythm that bordered on feral, each thrust punctuated by filthy words that dripped from his lips like honeyed poison. "My tight perfect boy," he snarled, fingers tightening in Shane's hair, wrenching his head back to expose the column of his throat. "*Mine*." His teeth grazed Shane's pulse point, sharp enough to sting but not break skin—a promise, a threat. "All of you." His free hand dragged down Shane's chest, nails scraping over his ribs just to feel him jerk. "This skin—" His palm slapped against Shane's stomach, the sound sharp in the charged air. "—*mine*. This cock—" His fingers wrapped

around Shane's leaking shaft, squeezing just enough to make Shane's toes curl. "*—mine*. You don't even fucking breathe without me."

Shane's hips bucked violently, a choked sob tearing from his throat as Ilya's cock dragged over that spot inside him that turned his vision white. "Ilya—*fuck*—!" His fingers scrabbled against the sheets, legs now finding comfort around Ilya's waist.

Ilya's hips snapped forward, his breath ragged against Shane's ear as he murmured filth between kisses. "You want everyone to hear you?" His teeth scraped Shane's earlobe, sharp enough to sting. "Want the whole goddamn lake to know how you sound when I fuck you?" He punctuated the question with a brutal thrust that punched a broken noise from Shane's throat. "Beg for it."

Shane's lips parted around a gasp as the words tumbled out raw and unfiltered. "Fuck, yes—*want* them to hear—" His fingers clawed at Ilya's shoulders. "Want them to know—ah—know I'm *yours* when you fuck me like this—"

Ilya's growl vibrated against Shane's throat as he surged forward, slamming their mouths together in a kiss that was all teeth and tongue, claiming Shane's breath like it belonged to him. "Ты мой," he snarled against Shane's lips.

"Yours," Shane gasped, arching into the next brutal thrust, his body strung tight between pleasure and pain. "*Always* yours—"

Ilya's fingers tightened in Shane's hair, pulling just hard enough to make his scalp sting. "You feel that?" Ilya growled, his lips skimming Shane's ear. "How deep I am in you?" Another thrust, punishingly slow, dragging every inch of his cock against Shane's oversensitive walls. "Your body opening up for me." His teeth scraped Shane's pulse point, sharp enough to make him gasp.

Ilya's hips snapped forward again, his cock dragging against that spot inside Shane that made his vision blur at the edges. "You're close," Ilya growled, the words more accusation than observation, his fingers tightening in Shane's hair. "I can feel it."

Shane's cock throbbed untouched, but Ilya refused to give it even a glancing brush of his fingers. Instead, he leaned in, his breath hot against Shane's ear, "Dripping like a fucking whore and still taking me so deep." His teeth scraped Shane's earlobe, sharp enough to sting. "You love this, don't you? Being my perfect little slut, stretched open and desperate."

Shane's hips jerked, a wounded noise tearing from his throat. "I—*fuck*—Ilya, please—" His fingers twisted in the sheets, thighs trembling where they were spread wide.

"Beg, let everyone hear," Ilya snarled against Shane's throat, his hips pistoning with relentless precision, each thrust punching the air from Shane's lungs. His fingers dug into Shane's thighs, spreading him wider, forcing him to take every brutal inch. "Beg me to let you cum, my pretty slut—" The endearment dripped with filthy affection, teeth scraping Shane's collarbone. "Or do you need to be ruined more first?"

Shane's body arched like a live wire, his cock jumped, thighs trembling where they were locked around Ilya's waist. "I'm...y-your pret-ty...slu..." His voice cracked out. "I'm your—"

Shane didn't know how close he was to cumming until it all but erupted out of him.

One second, he was gasping against the sheets, thighs trembling where they were locked around Ilya's waist. The next, his vision blacked out entirely, his body seizing like a live wire as pleasure tore through him with vicious intensity. "Ily—*ah—fuck!*" The words shattered into a broken moan, his cock pulsing untouched between them, stripes of cum painting his stomach in erratic bursts.

Shane couldn't move. Couldn't even breathe. His body locked in violent ecstasy as his hole clenched rhythmically around Ilya's cock, trying to milk him empty. Every nerve was alight, but Ilya didn't stop. Didn't slow. His hips only moved forward with ruthless precision, dragging Shane's oversensitive body back into the fire with every brutal thrust. "Fuck—" Shane's voice cried.

Ilya's fingers dug into Shane's hips, pulling him up harder onto his cock. "That's it," he growled, voice ragged, watching Shane's stomach twitch with each new stripe of cum. "Squeeze me just like that." His hips snapped forward sharply, burying himself deep as Shane's walls fluttered around him. "I'm not done with you yet."

Shane's breath came in ragged, uneven gasps, his body going limp beneath Ilya's relentless pace. Every thrust jolted through him like lightning, his oversensitive nerves sparking with a pleasure so intense it bordered on pain. He could barely form words anymore, just shattered moans and whimpers that Ilya swallowed with bruising kisses. His fingers tangled weakly in the sheets, his legs splayed open wide, trembling where they hooked around Ilya's waist.

He was utterly wrecked, and he never wanted it to stop.

Ilya's hips never slowed, never faltered, even as Shane's body shuddered through the aftershocks of his orgasm and well after. He watched, transfixed, as Shane's cock twitched back to life against his stomach, still slick with his cum, the sight so obscenely perfect it punched a groan from Ilya's throat. "Fuck," he snarled, dragging his nails down Shane's ribs just to feel him squirm. "So pathetic." The word dripped with adoration. "Still getting hard for me after I ruined you."

Shane's fingers reached for Ilya's shoulders to pull him closer. His breath came in ragged bursts, his body still trembling from his first orgasm, but the fire in his belly was already licking back to life under Ilya's relentless pace. "It's... too much—" he gasped, voice cracking when Ilya's cock dragged against his prostate again.

Ilya's laugh was dark, breathless, as he pressed his forehead against Shane's, hips faltering slightly now. "Too much?" His fingers tangled in Shane's sweat-damp hair, wrenching his head back to expose the trembling column of his throat. "That's not for you to decide." His teeth scraped Shane's pulse point, sharp enough to make him gasp. "I take what I want." A brutal thrust punctuated the words, punching a shattered moan from Shane's lips.

Ilya's hips began to stutter, his rhythm fracturing into something desperate and uneven as he buried himself to the hilt with a guttural snarl. His arms wrapped underneath Shane's legs and hauled them up onto his shoulders, forcing him to take every pulsing inch. "Fuck—*Shane*—" The words tore from him as heat flooded Shane's body in thick, possessive bursts. "Feel that?" His thumb pressed against Shane's trembling lower lip, smearing spit and sweat as his cock twitched deep inside. "Filling you up." His breath hitched when Shane's hole clenched instinctively around him, milking him through the aftershocks. "My perfect boy."

Shane's entire body arched off the mattress as Ilya's release pulsed hot and deep inside him, the sensation so overwhelming it wrenched a second orgasm from him with brutal efficiency. His cock jerked violently against his stomach, painting fresh streaks of cum over the mess already there, his vision whiting out completely as his hole fluttered wildly around Ilya's cock. "Ily—*ah*—!" His voice cracked, raw and shattered, fingers twisting helplessly in the sheets.

The moment Ilya stilled inside him, Shane didn't understand why. Not until he felt the wet track of a tear sliding down his temple into his hair. His own body was still pulsing with oversensitivity, thighs twitching where they were hooked over Ilya's shoulders, but the weight of Ilya pinning him down made him feel like nothing back could ever happen.

Ilya didn't pull out. He stayed buried deep, his forehead pressed to Shane's, breath ragged against his lips. "Good tears?" he murmured, thumb brushing the wet track on Shane's temple.

Shane nodded, swallowing hard. His pulse still raced under Ilya's palm where it cradled his jaw, his body boneless beneath the weight of him. He didn't have words, not yet, but Ilya knew. He always knew.

Ilya's thumb lingered against Shane's damp cheekbone, his breath hitching when Shane turned his face just slightly, just enough to press a silent kiss into his palm. The gesture was so tender it made Ilya's chest ache. He'd spent years mastering control, sharpening dominance into something unbreakable, but this was something that unraveled him completely. Shane's eyes were still wet, lashes clumped together, but the look he gave Ilya wasn't submission. It was quiet, wordless worship.

Shane's lips parted around a shaky exhale, his throat working as he tried—and failed—to find words. He didn't need them. The way his fingers traced the sharp angle of Ilya's jaw, the way his breath hitched when Ilya's thumb brushed his damp lashes—it was all there. The quiet *I love you*, the unspoken *you wrecked me so perfectly*, the raw *I trust you* that vibrated between them like a second pulse.

Ilya exhaled slowly, his breath warm against Shane's lips as he traced the damp curve of his cheekbone. "I'm right here, sweetheart," he murmured.

Ilya didn't move. Not to pull out, not to shift his weight, just stayed there, forehead pressed to Shane's, his breath evening out in slow, deliberate measures like he was counting them for both of them. Shane's fingers, still tangled in the sheets, loosened one by one until his palm turned up against the mattress, an open invitation. Ilya laced their fingers together without looking, his thumb sweeping over Shane's knuckles in a rhythm that matched his breathing.

Shane's breath hitched unevenly, his fingers flexing against Ilya's palm where their hands were still tangled together. His body trembled, but not just from the aftershocks, but from something deeper, something on the brink of surrender. Ilya watched the struggle play out in the rapid flutter of Shane's pulse, the way his pupils dilated and contracted like he was fighting to stay grounded.

Ilya's thumb stilled against Shane's cheekbone, his breath catching when he realized the tension in Shane's body wasn't resistance—it was a silent plea. Shane's fingers flexed against his again, not pulling away, but trembling with the effort of holding himself back. Ilya exhaled with the realization of what this was.

Shane wasn't fighting the surrender. He was waiting for it to be given to him.

Ilya's breath stuttered when Shane's fingers tightened around his—not pulling, just holding, grounding them both in the quiet wreckage of what they'd done. The room smelled like sweat and sex, the sheets tangled beneath them, but Ilya barely noticed. All he could see was the way Shane's chest rose and fell too fast, the way his lashes stuck together in damp clusters, the way his lips parted around silent, shaky breaths like he was still trying to remember how to breathe.

Ilya didn't move, just stayed there, his forehead pressed to Shane's, their breath mingling in the charged space between them. The silence stretched, until Ilya broke out in a small gentle smile. "Is okay," he murmured, his voice softened at the edges now. "You can let go now, моя любовь."

Shane didn't just let go. He *dissolved*.

Thread by thread, muscle by muscle, until there was nothing left but the warm, syrupy weight of Ilya's voice wrapping around him. Distantly, he was aware of his own fingers going slack in Ilya's grasp, of his breath hitching in tiny, uneven bursts, but none of it mattered. Not when

Ilya's thumb was tracing the curve of his cheekbone. The world narrowed to that single point of contact, to the rough pad of Ilya's fingertip grounding him even as everything else floated away. The sheets beneath him might as well have been clouds, Ilya's weight the only thing keeping him from floating away entirely.

Shane was untethered and safe.

Ilya stayed buried deep inside Shane, his hips shifting just slightly to ease the stretch as Shane's body trembled loose beneath him. His fingers traced Shane's ribs, counting each breath. "So good for me," he murmured, lips brushing Shane's damp temple. "So perfect." The words were quiet, meant more for the air between them than for Shane's ears.

But he said them anyway. Because they were true.

Slowly, carefully, Ilya pulled out, hissing through his teeth when Shane's hole fluttered weakly around him on instinct. Shane whimpered, thighs twitching where they still hooked loosely over Ilya's shoulders, his body oversensitive and pliant. Ilya didn't rush. He let his cock slide free with a filthy sound, his thumb catching some of the mess leaking from Shane's stretched hole. "I never get tired of seeing that."

Shane's fingers twitched against the sheets, his breath coming in shallow, uneven hitches as the emptiness between his thighs registered somewhere deep in his subconscious. He felt the loss of Ilya's body. The cool air against his oversensitive skin, the slow trickle of cum down the curve of his ass, the absence of weight pressing him into the mattress. His hips arched involuntarily, a soft whimper escaping his parted lips, but his limbs felt boneless, his thoughts syrupy and distant.

Ilya's palm smoothed down Shane's trembling thigh, fingers tracing the fading red marks from where he'd gripped him too tightly. "Shhh," he murmured, pressing a kiss to the inside of Shane's knee. His lips lingered against the damp skin, his breath warm. "I'm right here." His fingers ghosted over Shane's hipbone, feather-light.

Shane's throat worked soundlessly. He could feel Ilya's touch like sunlight through water. Every point of contact sent ripples through his floating consciousness. His fingers flexed weakly against the sheets, searching.

Ilya caught Shane's hand mid-motion, threading their fingers together with deliberate precision. He brought Shane's knuckles to his lips, kissing each one slowly. "You're okay," he murmured against his skin. His thumb traced the delicate bones of Shane's wrist, counting the flutter of his pulse. "You're still safe. I won't let anything happen to you."

A whimper escaped his lips but Ilya understood. He always did. *I love you.* "Я тебя люблю," Ilya whispered back, "let me take care of you."

Shane didn't know how long he'd been like this, not until the mattress dipped beside Shane as Ilya returned. *Returned? When did he leave?* The scent of warm water and lavender soap threading through the heavy musk of sex still clinging to the air. Shane stirred slightly at the shift in weight, his lashes fluttering open just enough to see Ilya's blurred outline kneeling beside him, his movements deliberate and unhurried.

The washcloth moved in slow, deliberate circles over Shane's stomach, the heat seeping into his skin as Ilya wiped away the streaks of cum with meticulous care. Shane shivered, not from the temperature, but from the contrast. Ilya's fingers lingered where bruises would bloom tomorrow, marking the places he'd gripped too hard, loved too fiercely. Shane shivered when the cloth dipped between his thighs, cleaning the sticky mess there with a gentleness that made his throat tighten.

The washcloth dragged over Shane's spent cock, the heat of the water soaking into his oversensitive skin. Ilya's touch was nothing short of devotional, his fingers tracing every twitch and flutter of Shane's body. Shane's breath hitched when the cloth swiped over the head, his hips jerking involuntarily. "Sensitive?" Ilya murmured, pausing to press a kiss to the inside of Shane's thigh. His beard scraped gently over damp skin. "I know, I know. Almost done now."

Ilya's fingers paused at the swell of Shane's ass, the washcloth cooling against his skin. He could feel the way Shane's body tensed as he gently nudged his thighs wider. "Easy, is okay," Ilya murmured, his thumb smoothing over the curve of Shane's hipbone. "Just cleaning you up." His voice was low, roughened from use but softened at the edges now, the sharp dominance of earlier replaced by something quieter. "I know you don't like the mess."

Shane exhaled shakily, his fingers twisting weakly in the sheets as Ilya finished cleaning. Ilya took his time cleaning the slick from Shane's thighs, the sticky remnants of cum from his ass.

Ilya brushed the warm cloth over where Shane was stretched open. Shane whimpered, thighs trembling at the pressure. "I won't hurt you," Ilya soothed, pressing a long kiss to the small of Shane's back. "There. All clean."

A new washcloth hit the sheets with a thud. Ilya worked in slow, methodical circles, his fingers pressing just hard enough to lift the cum stain without disturbing Shane curled beside him. Shane watched through half-lidded eyes, his body loose and heavy, fingers twitching against the clean patch of sheet where Ilya had relocated him to.

The hamper lid clattered shut as Ilya tossed the soiled washcloths inside before he strode into the kitchen. He lingered there for a second longer than necessary, rolling his shoulders, feeling the tension bleed out of them. The fridge hummed when he opened it, its light painting his bare chest as he grabbed two water bottles and protein bars Shane always kept stocked no matter what.

His teeth sank into a cold slice of leftover pizza—homemade of course—and scarfed that down in three bites before nudging the fridge shut with his hip.

The bed dipped under Ilya's weight again as he slid in beside Shane, the water bottles and protein bars dropped softly onto the nightstand. Shane hadn't moved. Ilya's fingers hovered over the curve of Shane's shoulder, then pressed down in a slow, deliberate circle.

Shane exhaled softly, his body twitching under the touch, not away, but into it, like Ilya's hands were the only thing keeping him anchored to the earth. "You're still here," Ilya murmured, more to himself than Shane, kneading the tension from Shane's arms. The muscles there were locked tight, coiled from the aftershocks of what they'd done. "So strong for me. Taking everything I gave you." Shane's fingers curled weakly against the sheets, flexing when Ilya's thumbs dug into the knots along his spine. The praise settled deep in his chest, warmer than the afterglow, heavier than the exhaustion weighing his limbs down.

Ilya's hands worked in unhurried circles, tracing the places where his fingers had left marks, where his teeth had scraped too hard. "So beautiful." Shane made a soft, wordless noise,

turning his face just enough to press his cheek into the pillow, eyes half-lidded as he watched Ilya through the haze.

Ilya's fingertips traced the damp curve of Shane's cheekbone one last time before he shifted, settling onto his side beside him. His palm cradled Shane's jaw, thumb brushing slow arcs over the apple of his cheek, and for a long moment, he just looked. Shane's lashes fluttered, his exhale uneven, but he didn't speak. He didn't need to.

Ilya's thumb lingered, his voice a low rumble in the quiet. "You were perfect today," he murmured, the words rough with sincerity. "The way you fought me. Then let me take you apart." His fingers traced the line of Shane's jaw, possessive even now. "You trusted me with everything."

Shane exhaled shakily, his fingers flexing against Ilya's wrist—not pulling away, just anchoring himself to the weight of Ilya's words.

Ilya didn't wait for a response. He never did in moments like these. Instead, he shifted closer, his breath warm against Shane's temple as he spoke into the space between them. "I do like when you test me." The confession was quiet, almost reluctant. "When you push. Because you know I'll push back harder." He kissed down Shane's face. "But today..." His voice hesitated. "Today, you let me."

Shane's fingers tightened imperceptibly around Ilya's wrist. *I did*, he thought. *I wanted you to*.

Ilya's thumb traced Shane's pulse point, slow and deliberate. "You didn't just surrender," he murmured. "You gave it to me. Like—" His breath hitched. "Like you knew I needed it." His lips pressed to the damp curve of Shane's cheekbone. "And you were right."

Shane's exhale shuddered out of him. He hadn't realized, or hadn't thought about it like that. But Ilya's voice, rough with something too close to vulnerability, made it impossible not to feel the weight of it now.

Ilya's fingers flexed against Shane's jaw. "I like when you fight me, yes," he admitted, the words gruff. "But today..." His throat worked. "Today, I needed you to let me take it. And you knew." His thumb brushed Shane's lower lip. "You always know."

Shane's chest tightened. He turned his face into Ilya's palm, pressing a silent kiss there. *Of course I knew.*

Ilya just let Shane linger against his skin for a long moment before continuing. "I like when you push because you trust me to catch you," he murmured. "But sometimes..." His voice wavered, just slightly. "Sometimes I need you to let me fall into you, too."

Shane curled his fingers around Ilya's wrist, squeezing gently. *I'm here for you.*

Ilya exhaled shakily. "Today, I didn't just need to own you," he admitted, rough with honesty. "I needed you to let me own you." His thumb brushed Shane's lower lip again. "Because sometimes I forget that I can."

They both now realized just how much Ilya needed this surrender just as deeply as Shane craved giving it.

Shane tried to clear his throat, but the sound came out brittle. The silence stretched, thick with the weight of everything they'd just given each other, until Ilya's thumb brushed the hollow of Shane's throat. "Are you here?" The question wasn't sharp, it wasn't demanding.

Shane blinked back slowly. He swallowed, and this time his voice worked. "Yeah." It was raspy, wrecked from screaming. He flexed his fingers against Ilya's wrist where they were still tangled together. "Just... yeah."

Ilya's fingers curled around the water bottle, condensation beading against his palm as he twisted the cap off with a quiet click. The sound pulled Shane's attention, his lashes fluttering as he watched Ilya's thumb swipe absently over the rim before pressing the bottle into his hand. "Drink," Ilya murmured, his voice roughened at the edges but impossibly gentle. His fingers lingered against Shane's wrist, steadying the tremor there as Shane lifted the bottle to his lips as he rose up.

The water was cold, shockingly so against the raw heat of Shane's throat, and he choked slightly, coughing as it spilled down his chin. Ilya's palm cupped the back of his neck instantly, his thumb brushing the damp hollow beneath Shane's ear. "Slow," he chided softly, catching the stray droplets with the pad of his thumb before they could drip onto Shane's chest.

Shane swallowed obediently, the chill of the water grounding him further as it slid down his throat. His fingers tightened around the bottle when Ilya made to pull away, a wordless plea in the press of his fingertips. Ilya's mouth curved—just slightly—as he settled back against the headboard, close enough that Shane could feel the warmth of his thigh against his hip. "Greedy," he murmured, but there was no bite to it, just quiet amusement as he reached for the protein bar next.

The wrapper crinkled loudly in the quiet room, and Shane winced at the sound, his fingers twitching against the sheets. Ilya paused, his gaze flicking down to Shane's face before he deliberately slowed his movements, tearing the wrapper open with exaggerated care. "Here," he said, breaking off a small piece and pressing it to Shane's lips. "Eat."

Shane opened his mouth without hesitation, his lips brushing Ilya's fingertips as he took the offered bite. The sweetness of the protein bar was almost cloying after the intensity of what they'd done, but he chewed mechanically, his body recognizing the need for fuel even as his mind was still coming back to reality. Ilya watched him swallow before offering another piece, his fingers lingering against Shane's lower lip this time. "Good?"

Shane just moaned as he ate, the sound vibrating low in his throat as the protein bar dissolved into something almost pleasurable on his tongue. The noise startled him—had he really just moaned over food?—but Ilya's smirk told him he absolutely had. Ilya broke off another piece with deliberate slowness, his fingers lingering near Shane's lips.

Shane licked the last crumbs from his lips, fingers twitching against the sheets as the final bite settled in his stomach. His exhale was steadier now, his body no longer floating but tethered—solid. He blinked at the ceiling for a beat, then turned his head toward Ilya, whose thumb was still absently tracing the curve of his hipbone. "What the fuck was that," Shane rasped, voice wrecked but clearer, "oh my *god*."

Ilya's smirk was lazy, satisfied, but his fingers didn't stop their slow, grounding strokes along Shane's skin. "You tell me," he murmured, voice rough with exhaustion but warm. "You were the one who asked for this." Ilya whispered.

Shane huffed a laugh, though it came out more like a wheeze. "Fuck, I did, didn't I? I..." He gestured vaguely at the wreckage of the bed, his own trembling thighs. "I didn't think you needed it that bad."

Ilya's breath stuttered before he schooled his expression into something carefully neutral. But Shane saw it. He always did. "Ilya," Shane said softly, reaching for his wrist. "Talk to me."

Ilya breathed out sharply through his nose, his thumb pressing into the pulse point at Shane's wrist. "You were perfect," he murmured, avoiding the question. "The way you took everything I gave you. The way you—" His throat worked. "The way you trusted me enough to let me take it."

Shane rolled onto his side with a wince, his muscles protesting the movement. He caught Ilya's chin between his fingers, forcing him to meet his gaze. "That's not what I asked." His voice was gentle but firm, the same tone Ilya used on him when he was being stubborn. "Why did you need it that badly today?"

Ilya's jaw tensed under Shane's fingers, his gaze flickering away for a fraction of a second—just long enough for Shane to see the vulnerability he was trying to hide. The silence stretched between them, thick with unspoken weight, until Ilya exhaled sharply through his nose and turned his face just enough to press his lips against Shane's palm.

Ilya's lips lingered against Shane's palm, his breath warm and uneven. For a long moment, he didn't speak, just breathed Shane in, grounding himself in the scent of sweat and skin and something unmistakably theirs. When he finally pulled back, his expression was softer than Shane had ever seen it.

"It is not easy for me," Ilya admitted, the words rough like they'd been dragged out of him. "To let this part of me exist." His thumb traced Shane's knuckles absently, his gaze fixed on their tangled fingers. "I did not know it could feel like this."

Shane knew what Ilya wasn't saying too. The fear that admitting this need made him weak. Shane curled his fingers tighter around Ilya's, pressing their joined hands against his own chest. "Hey," he murmured, waiting until Ilya's eyes flicked up to meet his. "You're not letting it exist. It does exist. It's part of you." He squeezed Ilya's hand, his voice dropping to something softer. "And I fucking love it."

Shane's fingers curled around Ilya's wrist, thumb pressing into his pulse point, a silent request for honesty. "What does it feel like for you?" he asked, voice still rough but steadier now. "Before. And now." The question hung between them, heavy with the weight of everything they'd just shared.

"Before," he started, voice low, "it was something to hold onto when everything else was...chaos" His jaw tensed.

Shane exhaled softly, fingers tracing the tension in Ilya's forearm. "And now?"

Ilya's breath caught, his fingers tightening reflexively around Shane's wrist before he forced himself to exhale slowly. The afternoon light filtered through the cottage windows, painting gold across the sweat-damp planes of Shane's chest, and for a moment, Ilya just watched the way it illuminated the fading marks his teeth had left.

"Now," Ilya finally murmured, voice scraping low like gravel under water, "it feels like coming home." His fingers flexed against Shane's pulse. "Like I can breathe now."

The evening sun had shifted across the bed, painting Ilya's shoulders in amber stripes when Shane finally found his voice again. "Home," he repeated. His fingers slid up Ilya's forearm, tracing the tension there until it unspooled under his touch. "That's what you said last summer. One our way back from my parents."

Ilya's fingers traced idle patterns over Shane's wrist, his touch feather-light but grounding all the same. He didn't rush to fill the quiet. The weight of Shane's gaze told him everything.

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Shane had woken to the weight of Ilya's thigh slung possessively over his hips, the sunlight bleeding through the windows in stripes across their tangled legs. He blinked against the brightness, disoriented. When had they gotten under the covers? When had they slept? The last thing he remembered was Ilya's thumb over his lower lip, and their soft confessions still hanging between them.

Shane stretched against the bed sheets, arching his spine in a slow motion before rolling onto his side, only to find Ilya already propped up on one elbow, watching him with a gaze that burned hotter than the dawn. "Stop staring, you creep," Shane murmured jokingly into his pillow, his voice still thick with sleep. The sheets smelled like them, of last night, and he buried his face deeper into the warmth.

Ilya's fingers traced Shane's bare shoulder, the touch feather-light but charged with intention. Shane didn't open his eyes, but the corner of his mouth twitched.

"Good morning," Ilya mumbled aloud.

Shane shifted against the pillows, letting his leg hook lazily over Ilya's ankle as he blinked awake. The weight of Ilya's stare hadn't changed, but there was something different in it now, a restless heat that Shane recognized instantly. He stretched deliberately, pressing closer.

Ilya exhaled sharply through his nose, fingers tightening briefly against Shane's hip. His thumb swiped absently over the dip of Shane's waist, lingering where he knew Shane liked it best. "You are doing this on purpose," Shane murmured, voice rough with sleep and something darker.

Shane smirked into the pillow, letting his fingers trail down Ilya's bare chest in slow, teasing circles. "Yeah," Ilya admitted lazily, "and you're letting me." The words came out softer than he meant them to. It was still strange sometimes, how easily the truth slipped out now. How little he had to guard it.

Ilya's fingers stilled against Shane's skin, his breath catching just slightly, the kind of hitch Shane had learned to read months ago. Shane turned his head, blinking up at him, the teasing edge in his expression softening. "What?" he asked, voice low.

Ilya didn't answer immediately. Instead, he let his gaze drift slowly down Shane's body. The freckles scattered across his shoulders like constellations only Ilya knew how to navigate, the smooth dip of his waist where Ilya's hand still rested, the way Shane's sleep-warm skin yielded slightly under his fingertips. There was something possessive in that look, but not the sharp-edged kind from their early days. This was quieter, deeper, like the slow current of a river carving its path.

Ilya exhaled through his nose, thumb brushing absently over Shane's hipbone. "Nothing bad," he said, and it was true. The thoughts weren't bad...just tangled. He'd woken up wanting, but not in the urgent, impatient way he usually did. This was different. He wanted to look. To memorize the way Shane's eyelashes cast shadows on his cheeks in the morning light, the exact shade of pink his mouth turned when he'd just woken up.

Ilya's fingers traced lower, skimming over the curve of Shane's hip with deliberate slowness. "Let me look at you," he murmured, the request barely more than a breath against Shane's temple. It wasn't a command, but the quiet intensity in his voice made Shane shiver.

Shane shifted onto his back, stretching his arms above his head in lazy surrender. "You've seen me a thousand times," he teased, but his breath hitched when Ilya's palm slid possessively down his stomach.

Ilya's fingers traced the faint marks from last night, the places where Shane's skin still flushed pink under his touch. "Turn over for me."

Shane rolled onto his stomach without hesitation, pillowing his cheek on folded arms. The sheets rustled as Ilya moved behind him, his exhale warm against the nape of Shane's neck. "Still okay?" Ilya asked, fingers hovering just above the small of Shane's back.

"Yeah." Shane arched slightly into the touch, his shoulders relaxing when Ilya's palms smoothed down his spine. "You know I like when you—" He broke off with a soft sound as Ilya spread him open, thumbs tracing the curve of his ass.

"You're perfect here," Ilya murmured, pressing a kiss to the dimples above Shane's tailbone. His fingers slid lower, parting Shane deliberately. "Still so soft from me last night."

Shane huffed a laugh, though it caught when Ilya's fingertip circled his rim. "You're ridiculous."

"Maybe. But you're mine." Ilya leaned down, nipping lightly at the swell of Shane's ass before soothing it with his tongue. He took his time, mapping every inch with lips and teeth, relearning the way Shane trembled when Ilya blew softly against wet skin.

Shane exhaled slowly, letting his body melt into the mattress as Ilya's mouth traced patterns across his skin. There was something sacred in the way Ilya touched him. Like every brush of lips, every scrape of teeth was a devotion. Shane had spent years hiding, tensing at the thought of being seen, but now? Now he craved it. The weight of Ilya's gaze, the possessive drag of his hands, the way Shane could feel his own body responding before he'd even processed the touch. It was freedom.

Ilya's thumbs pressed gently into the softness of Shane's thighs, spreading him wider as he leaned in closer. "You're still a little loose," he murmured, the pad of his finger tracing the delicate ring of muscle with a tenderness that made Shane shiver. "Does it hurt?" The question was quiet, almost clinical in its precision—Ilya had gotten frighteningly good at reading the minute shifts in Shane's breathing, the barely-there flinches that even Shane himself sometimes missed.

Shane flexed instinctively, his hips shifting against the sheets. "No, it's—" He swallowed, fingers tightening in the pillowcase. "It's good. Just...sensitive." The admission came out rough, but he didn't try to hide it. Eight months ago, he might have bitten his tongue; now, he let Ilya see the way his lashes fluttered when that fingertip dipped just inside, teasing without pushing.

Ilya's lips curled against Shane's skin, the heat of his breath sending goosebumps racing down Shane's thighs. "Let me kiss it better," he murmured, the words half muffled against the curve of Shane's ass. There was no teasing in his voice, just that low, graveled sincerity that still caught Shane off guard sometimes.

Shane snorted, but the sound dissolved into a gasp when Ilya's tongue swiped flat and slow over his rim. "Jesus, Ilya—" His hips twitched forward, but Ilya's hands tightened on the backs of his thighs, holding him steady.

Ilya's tongue worked slow and methodical, tracing the delicate mussels of Shane's rim with a precision that made Shane's toes curl into the sheets. "Just checking," Ilya murmured against his skin, the words vibrating through Shane's body like a live wire. His thumbs pressed gently into the backs of Shane's thighs, holding him open as he laved over the tender flesh. "You took me so good last night. Want to make sure you're not hurt."

"You're—" Shane's breath hitched when Ilya's tongue dipped shallowly inside, just enough to make Shane's hips jerk. "You're such a liar. You just—ah—like tasting me."

Ilya did, but that wasn't the reason for hole inspections and they both knew it. This was just their little game, the slow unfolding of trust wrapped in dirty talk, the way Shane could press his face into the pillow and let Ilya take care of him without ever feeling like he had to perform.

Ilya chuckled against Shane's skin, the vibration sending another shiver through him. "Maybe," he admitted, pulling back just enough to let his breath ghost over Shane's damp skin. "But you know it's more than that." His thumb brushed lightly over Shane's rim, feeling the way it twitched under his touch. "You like this," he murmured, not a question, just a fact laid bare between them. "You like when I make sure you're okay."

Ilya pulled back with one last, lingering kiss pressed to the curve of Shane's ass before shifting up the bed, his hands sliding possessively along Shane's thighs as he went. Shane shivered at the loss of warmth but didn't protest—just arched into the new touch when Ilya's fingers brushed the underside of his cock, already half-hard against his stomach.

"Still sensitive here, too?" Ilya murmured, his thumb tracing the flushed head with deliberate lightness, barely there but enough to make Shane's hips twitch. He didn't wait for an answer before cupping Shane's balls, rolling them gently in his palm, his touch firm enough to tease but careful enough to test. Shane exhaled sharply through his nose, fingers tightening in the sheets. "Yes?" Ilya prompted, watching the way Shane's lashes fluttered.

"Y-yeah," Shane admitted, his voice rough. He swallowed, forcing his grip on the sheets to loosen. "Not—not bad, just... god, you know how it is." He huffed a laugh, tilting his head to glance back at Ilya over his shoulder. "You wreck me, and then the next morning

everything's..." He broke off with a groan when Ilya's fingers tightened just slightly, his thumb brushing the sensitive skin behind Shane's balls. "Fuck. Like that."

Shane shuddered when Ilya's fingers pressed just below his balls, the touch clinical but very intimate. "A little full here," Ilya murmured, his thumb brushing the delicate skin there with practiced care. His voice was low, rough with sleep but clear with intent. This wasn't about getting off; it was about the quiet understanding of Shane's body, the way Ilya could read him better than any playbook.

Shane's fingers unclenched from the sheets slowly, his breathing steadying as he turned his head to meet Ilya's gaze. "You can wait," he murmured, the words softer than the morning light filtering through the curtains. "I don't need to cum right now." He said it like a revelation, like something he'd only just fully understood himself. "You know," he murmured, voice muffled against the pillow, "most people would just ask how I am."

"I do ask," Ilya countered, his thumb pressing gently into the knot of muscle at the small of Shane's back. "You just don't always tell me the truth." His fingers slid lower, tracing the curve of Shane's hip with deliberate lightness. "So I check. And you like this better anyway."

Shane huffed a laugh but didn't deny it. There was something about the way Ilya's hands mapped his body that settled something restless in his chest. It wasn't just about sex all the time; it was the way Ilya could press two fingers to the inside of Shane's wrist and know his pulse was too fast before Shane did. The way he could run a palm down Shane's ribs and feel the hitch in his breath before Shane caught it himself.

But sometimes it was about sex. It was intentional. Like now. It was the way Ilya could slip a finger into Shane's asshole under the guise of checking how tight he was whenever he wanted. It was the way Ilya could take Shane's cock in his hand to see how fast he got hard. It was the way Ilya would offer to drain Shane's balls whenever he felt they were too full.

Shane sighed into the sheets as Ilya's fingers withdrew, the absence leaving him achingly aware of the warmth still lingering between his thighs. He rolled onto his side, propping himself up on one elbow to meet Ilya's gaze. "Most people would think this is just some fucked up foreplay." The corner of his mouth twitched, but his eyes were serious.

Ilya didn't smile. He reached out, brushing a stray lock of hair from Shane's forehead with a tenderness that made Shane's breath catch. "Most people do not see you how I see you," he said simply, his thumb tracing the shell of Shane's ear.

Shane swallowed, his fingers flexing against the sheets. That was the thing, Ilya saw him, in ways Shane hadn't known were possible. Not just his body, but something that was soul deep. The inspections weren't just exclusively about checking for soreness or swelling. They were but they were also a language, one Ilya had learned fluently.

Ilya's finger slipped in with practiced ease, the faintest drag of his fingertip against Shane's rim before the muscle yielded, still open from last night, still warm and pliant under his touch. Shane exhaled sharply through his nose, his hips shifting minutely against the sheets, but his breathing stayed even. No tension in his shoulders, no flinch in his thighs. Just the quiet, trusting surrender that still made Ilya's chest ache sometimes.

Ilya's finger crooked inside Shane, pressing just enough to make Shane's breath hitch. "Still so sensitive" Ilya murmured, his thumb brushing the dip of Shane's spine as he worked his finger deeper, slow and deliberate. "But good. You feel good."

Shane stretched lazily as Ilya's finger withdrew, his body humming with the ghost of the touch. He watched through half-lidded eyes as Ilya swung his legs over the side of the bed, the muscles in his back flexing under golden light.

"Maybe if you're good today, you will get rewarded later," Ilya remarked without turning around, his voice warm with amusement. Shane could hear the smirk in it.

Shane rolled onto his back, stretching his arms above his head with deliberate laziness, watching Ilya's shoulders tense just slightly at the movement. "What if I want to be bad today?" he asked, letting his voice dip into that teasing lilt he knew drove Ilya wild, not with anger, but with that slow, simmering possessiveness that curled hot in Shane's stomach.

Ilya just smirked, letting Shane think he was in control here. Shane stretched deliberately, arching his back against the sheets, watching the way Ilya's fingers flexed against his own thigh, just once, barely noticeable unless you knew where to look. And Shane knew.

Ilya turned halfway, catching the deliberate arch of Shane's back in his periphery, the way the sheets pooled at his waist like an invitation. "If you're bad today," he said, voice rough with sleep but edged with something darker, "you do not cum until our last day here."

Shane groaned, flopping onto his stomach with a dramatic huff. "Fuck you," he muttered into the pillow, but the words lacked heat, just the kind of bratty protest that made Ilya's fingers twitch with the urge to pin him down. "That's more than a week away," Shane added, tilting his head just enough to glare over his shoulder.

Ilya's palm landed on Shane's ass with a sharp smack that echoed through the quiet bedroom. "Up," he commanded, the single syllable carrying the same weight as a full sentence between them. Shane groaned into the pillow but didn't move, his fingers clutching the sheets in a lazy rebellion.

Another smack, harder this time. The kind that left Shane's skin tingling without truly stinging. "Now," Ilya added, his voice dropping into that dangerous register that sent heat pooling low in Shane's stomach.

Shane twisted onto his back again, squinting up at Ilya. "You're insufferable."

Ilya smirked, leaning down to press a kiss to Shane's forehead, the gesture incredibly tender against the lingering sting on Shane's backside. "You love it." He straightened back up, crossing to the closet with that effortless grace that still made Shane's breath catch sometimes.

The shower was running when Shane finally dragged himself out of bed, the steam curling out of the bathroom door like an invitation. He paused in the doorway, leaning against the frame as he watched Ilya tilt his head under the spray, water sluicing down the planes of his back. There was something mesmerizing about the way his muscles moved, like watching a storm roll in over the lake, all contained power and inevitability.

Shane stepped into the shower behind Ilya, pressing his chest against the damp heat of Ilya's back before sliding his arms around his waist. Ilya just tilted his head back against Shane's shoulder with a quiet exhale. The water hit Shane's collarbones, warm enough to make his skin flush. And warm enough that Shane knew he was truly at home with Ilya.

Chapter End Notes

You guys made it, now please go hydrate after this one.

Translations:

Да - Yes

Я тебя люблю - I love you

Я тебя найду - I will find you

Ты такой предсказуемый - You are so predictable

Ты на вкус как рай - You taste like heaven

Шлюха - slut

Ты мой - You are mine

моя любовь - my love

End Notes

And how are we feeling about this one. Any ideas and hopes for chapter 2????

Translations:

Да - Yes

Я тебя люблю - I love you

Вот и всё. - There you are.

Думаешь, ты мне больше не нужна? - You think I do not want you anymore?

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