

your roots in my dreamland

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/82804451) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/82804451>.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Heated Rivalry - All Media Types , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Book 2: Heated Rivalry (Game Changers) , Episode: s01e06 The Cottage (Heated Rivalry) , Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence , Angst and Fluff and Smut , Angst with a Happy Ending , Angst and Hurt/Comfort , Fluff and Smut , Fluff and Mush , Anxious Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Ilya Rozanov Rage Bait , POV Shane Hollander , Loverboy Ilya Rozanov , Loverboy Shane Hollander , Neurotic Shane Hollander , foot-in-mouth ilya rozanov , Shower Sex , One Shot
Language:	English
Series:	Part 4 of hollanov one-shots & shorties
Stats:	Published: 2026-04-09 Words: 5,399 Chapters: 1/1

your roots in my dreamland

by [hollidayparty](#)

Summary

“You know, I could marry Svetlana,” Ilya said, apropos of nothing.

Shane looked up from his phone, frowning.

“To get an American passport,” Ilya went on, casual as anything, like they were talking about travel plans or a trade rumor. Not Shane’s worst nightmare. “It would be like a business agreement. She would do it.”

“Okay,” Shane said slowly, already hearing the faint crack in his voice. “Sure. A business agreement. But...It’s not like you could just fake it. You’d have to live with her. She would get to come home to you.”

“Yes, but it would be like roommates,” Ilya said. “We could still be this-” he gestured loosely between them, like that explained everything. “She wouldn’t mind.”

“She’d be your wife, Ilya.”

The word was like a lash, even to his own ears.

What if the "I could marry Svetlana" scene and Ilya being LOST in the sauce sex scene had a baby? And that baby was angst + comfort + shower sex?

Notes

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

They were stretched out at opposite ends of Shane's couch, not touching anywhere obvious, but still... connected. Their legs ran the length of the cushions toward each other, meeting in the middle where the balls of their feet pressed together, toes brushing and shifting without thought. Every few minutes, Ilya would nudge a small, deliberate bump of his foot against Shane's.

Shane answered without even realizing he was doing it. His own foot was constantly tapping lightly against Ilya's in an absent, rhythmic pattern. The motion was automatic and steady, almost like a cricket's wings. He didn't look up when he did it, didn't break the loose focus he had on his phone or the tv, but the contact never really stopped.

The TV murmured in the background, some late baseball game neither of them were actually watching, the low cadence of commentary blending into the relaxed hush of the room. Soft night sounds of the woods drifted in through the open window. Insects and the occasional rustle of leaves. The distant hoot of an owl. The faint shush of the lake lapping against the dock.

They both scrolled on and off, attention drifting, neither of them really committing to anything on their screens. Every now and then one of them would shift, or nudge, or breathe a little deeper, and the other would adjust without thinking.

"You know, I could marry Svetlana," Ilya said, apropos of nothing.

Shane looked up from his phone, frowning at the sudden shift.

"To get an American passport," Ilya went on, casual as anything, like they were talking about travel plans or a trade rumor. Not Shane's worst nightmare. "It would be like a business agreement. She would do it."

A cold, sharp spike pierced through Shane's chest, quick and disorienting. For a second, a dozen responses crowded up at once. Ones like, *what the fuck?* and, *are you fucking serious right now?* But he forced them down, angling for something neutral.

Or trying to, anyway.

"Okay," Shane said slowly, already hearing the faint crack in his voice. "Sure. A business agreement. But... you *do* love her. In some way, at least. Right?"

Ilya shrugged, unbothered. "Yeah. Like a sister. But--"

"A sister you've been fucking on and off since you were teenagers?" Shane cut in.

His tone was flat, but there was an edge under it that hadn't been there a moment ago.

Ilya opened his mouth, then closed it again, his brows drawing together as something in Shane's reaction finally registered. The ease slipped from his expression, replaced by something more cautious.

Shane pushed on anyway, the words coming faster now, something messy and tight unspooling in his chest before he could stop it.

“It’s not like you could just fake it,” he said. “You’d have to live with her. She would get to come *home* to you.”

And his brain didn’t stop there. It filled in the details whether he wanted it to or not.

He imagined Ilya’s house in Boston with a hundred small, intimate changes. Svetlana’s things placed along the second sink in the master bathroom. Makeup and perfume laid out the same way Jackie’s were at her and Hayden’s place.

Shane could see Svetlana on that wide, low couch in the living room, sitting with her legs tucked under her, smiling when Ilya came through the door after practice.

And Ilya would cross the room, lean down and kiss her without thinking about it.

The images stole the air from Shane’s lungs. A tight, aching pressure spread through his chest.

Before he fully realized he was doing it, he pulled his feet back and broke the absentminded, constant contact between them. He folded his legs up onto the couch instead and wrapped one arm loosely around his knees in a vague instinctive attempt to contain whatever ugly thing had just come loose inside him.

Across from him, Ilya tilted his head, the confusion creeping in even as he instinctively tried to smooth it over. His eyes flicked down immediately to the empty stretch of couch where Shane’s feet had been touching his.

“Yes, but it would be like roommates,” he said. “We could still be this-” he gestured loosely between them, like that explained everything. “She wouldn’t mind.”

“She’d be your *wife*, Ilya.”

The word was like a lash, even to his own ears.

Ilya tried to patch over the moment with humor instead. He stretched out his long leg, slipping a little lower on the couch cushions as his big toe poked playfully at the arch of Shane’s foot. Then he shot him a guileful, crooked smile, like maybe he could charm the tension away.

“Okay,” he said, “so we could have threesomes you pretend you do not want. Or she could watch us.”

Shane let out a short, humorless scoff and looked away. His jaw tightened as he squeezed his eyes shut, like he could snuff out the snarling creature made of jealousy and hurt that was climbing up his throat.

Ilya’s smile faltered. He leaned forward a little at the waist.

“Shane... it wouldn’t mean... anything. Not, not like-” He trailed off, searching for the right words.

Shane shook his head slightly, not looking at him.

“Okay, but you want kids some day, right?” he said, quieter now, like he was thinking it through even as he spoke. “She’d... have them with you?”

Ilya opened his mouth. Closed it again. And the hesitation, brief as it was, said enough.

The realization hit Shane like a hard check into the boards

Ilya had a *choice*.

He was bi. He could marry a woman, have children the straightforward way, build a life that looked exactly what people expected of him. There was a path for him that didn’t require any explanations or compromises, that didn’t ask anything of him except to step into it.

And Svetlana was easy. Familiar. Attractive. Safe. The *obvious* choice.

Shane swallowed, his throat suddenly tight, because there was no equivalent path for him. Not really. Even if he tried - what had Rose called it that one time? A lavender marriage? - some arrangement, some carefully constructed version of “normal.” It would always be a performance. A workaround. Something hollow at the center.

He didn’t want that.

He wanted something *real*. A partner. Kids. A life that didn’t feel like it had to be negotiated in whispers or hidden behind careful, calculated choices or contracts. He wanted it to be simple. He wanted it to be easy.

But then there was hockey. God. It was the only place he had ever felt like he halfway belonged somewhere without question or conditions since he was four years old. Nevermind all the work and effort his parents had poured into supporting him and helping shape his career.

Loving Ilya, wanting Ilya, meant risking all of that. It meant choosing something that would never be simple, that would always come with risks and consequences. A life where they would have to be careful, strategic, aware of who was watching and who might not approve. A life where even the idea of a future, of kids, of stability, would be complicated and tricky and difficult from the start.

A life like that would never be simple or easy.

And Ilya didn’t *have* to choose that. Why would he? When he could so readily have the alternative.

The question was heavy in Shane’s chest, pressing in from all sides until it felt like there wasn’t any room to breathe.

Across from him, Ilya shifted forward, like he could sense the emotions warring within Shane even if he didn't fully understand them. His hand hovered above Shane's ankle, not touching yet. His voice was softer when he said Shane's name.

"Shane-"

Like he was about to fix it. Like he could explain it away or rationalize it more.

But Shane shook his head before he could. He couldn't listen to it. Not right now. Not when everything in his head was already too much.

"Can we please stop talking about this?"

His voice was flat and closed off.

Ilya looked at him for a long moment. *Really* looked at him, like he was trying to see past the surface of Shane's reaction, trying to understand what had just shifted. Then, after a moment, he nodded.

"...Okay."

Shane exhaled, the breath shaking despite how controlled he was trying to be.

"I'm gonna go shower."

He was already standing before Ilya could respond, already moving, because if he stayed, if he let the conversation keep going, he wasn't going to be able to hold it together much longer.

The water was too hot.

Shane was distantly aware of that fact because his skin felt tight and flushed, but he didn't reach for the handle. He braced his palms against the tile and let it beat down on the back of his neck and tried to breathe through the painful, rising pressure in his chest.

When he'd invited Ilya here, he hadn't expected a proposal. He hadn't expected declarations, or plans, or anything so concrete it could be pointed at and named. He knew better than that. This was Ilya. This was the truth of what they were; messy, unlabeled, careful in all the wrong places.

But *fuck*.

He couldn't stop imagining Ilya married to someone else. A ring on his hand that didn't belong to Shane. A life that revolved around a woman Shane had never meant to compete with. Even if it was "just on paper." Even if it was practical. Even if they kept doing this sneaking around and seeing each other whenever they could.

His brain kept picturing all of it anyway.

There would have to be a wedding, right? Something convincing enough to avoid suspicion. Enough people, enough pictures. Enough proof.

Ilya in a tux. Standing at the end of an aisle, smiling that easy, devastating smile at someone else. Svetlana, most likely. Or some other woman Shane had never met, beautiful and effortless in a way that fit into Ilya's life without any of the baggage Shane would bring.

Their hands would be linked. Vows and rings exchanged. A kiss. Applause.

The image hit him so hard his chest tightened sharply. He pressed his forehead harder against the tile, trying to right himself, but it didn't help. He couldn't even *breathe* around the pain.

Because the worst part wasn't just that Ilya *could* have that.

It was how badly Shane wanted it, too. Not the version with someone else.

This one.

Ilya in a suit, looking at him like that. Saying those things to him. Choosing him, openly, without hesitation.

The thought slipped in, uninvited and undeniable.

*I want it to be **him**.*

The realization knocked the air out of him all over again.

Shane swallowed hard, eyes squeezing tighter. He tried, briefly, to imagine anything else. *Anyone* else. Some other man in his bed, in his space, in his life.

He came up empty. The images were just... blank.

It was Ilya or... nothing.

And if he was honest with himself, that had probably *always* been the case.

Fuck.

The panic climbed higher, sharp and suffocating now, snaking in and around his ribs. Shane forced himself to exhale through it, counting it out, willing his shoulders not to curl in on themselves.

Then, in.

Out.

In-

The shower door slid open.

Shane didn't turn right away, even though he'd half hoped for this when he hadn't shut the bathroom door completely. That Ilya would come look for him, pull him out of his head and spiraling thoughts like he was so good at doing.

"Shane," Ilya said, and his voice was so soft, so careful, it almost made him start crying on the spot.

Shane angled his head a smidge. Not looking, just enough to let Ilya know he was listening.

There was the whisper of clothes being shucked off and tossed aside. Then there were shuffling footsteps as the space behind him filled with Ilya's body, the heat of him radiating at his back. Ilya was close enough that Shane could feel him without being touched.

"I'm sorry," Ilya said. "It was... a dumb idea."

Shane shrugged, small and helpless.

Behind him, Ilya exhaled, then leaned in just slightly, pressing a slow, tentative kiss to the back of Shane's shoulder. It was careful and almost a question.

"No," Ilya tried again. "It was. It- " He huffed a breath, frustrated with himself, another soft kiss following the first, lingering this time. "I am stupid. I was talking like I was alone. Like you were not... here."

That made Shane turn just a bit more. Enough that he could see Ilya's face through the steam, earnest and stripped bare of all the usual bravado.

Ilya pressed closer, not letting the space open back up, his mouth brushing Shane's shoulder again, then the curve where it met his neck.

"When I think about being married," he said quietly, "about having a life, a real one, outside of hockey..." Another kiss. "...there is only one person I picture coming home to. Falling asleep with every night. Waking up to every morning."

Shane's eyes searched his face cautiously, already braced for disappointment.

"It is not Svetlana," Ilya said.

He stepped even closer still, until Shane could feel him fully at his back, until there was nowhere for the words to go but straight into his heart. Ilya's lips pressed once more to Shane's shoulder.

"It is not any woman."

They hovered there, balanced on the edge of something sharp and dangerous. Water hissed against the tile. Shane's breath shook.

"Say it," Shane whispered, eyes fixed on Ilya's mouth.

Ilya swallowed, his hand coming up to rest at Shane's side.

“It’s you,” Ilya said. “I know it is insane. And probably impossible. Or at least, very far in the future. But it is what I see.”

Shane finally met his eyes. Tears burned, uninvited and humiliating.

“That’s not insane,” he said at last. “The rest, I mean... yeah, probably.”

The corner of Ilya’s mouth lifted as a little breath of a laugh escaped him. He pressed his thumb against Shane’s lower lip.

“Now *you* say it,” he murmured. “The thing you are thinking so loud.”

“Please don’t marry Svetlana,” Shane said at once, voice breaking slightly. “Or... anyone else. Even if it’s just for a passport. I know that’s not fair of me to ask. Not really. But... just don’t. Please.”

Ilya nodded immediately as his other hand settled at Shane’s waist.

“Okay,” he said, steady and sure. “I won’t.”

He leaned in again with his eyes on Shane’s and pressed one more slow, reassuring kiss to Shane’s shoulder, like he was sealing the promise there. The knot in Shane’s chest gave way. His shoulders dropped, tension spilling out of him in a rush. Ilya looked up and pressed his forehead to Shane’s temple before leaning back just enough to see him.

“Now say the rest of it,” he prompted.

Shane opened his mouth. Closed it. The words were there; crowded and urgent and pressing at the back of his teeth.

Marry me, then, asshole, his brain supplied, sudden and sharp. Since you wanna get married so fucking bad.

The sheer rightness of it startled him. The way it felt half like a joke, dry and exasperated but very *them*. And half like something terrifyingly earnest. Like something he might actually mean.

Which was worse. Because he did. He did mean it. Even though they hadn’t even named this thing yet. Hadn’t said the words people were supposed to say before they started asking for futures and promises.

“I can’t,” he whispered at last. He swallowed hard, eyes flicking away and back again. “Not yet.”

Ilya understood. His expression softened. Then he kissed him.

He didn’t rush it. He moved in close first, hand sliding up to the side of Shane’s neck, holding him there with steady pressure. The kiss itself was deep but unhurried, his mouth fitting to Shane’s like he meant to stay there, like he wasn’t trying to take anything so much as *give* something back.

Shane's breath hitched, and his hands came up instinctively, tangling into Ilya's damp hair, gripping just a little too tight.

Ilya made a low sound against his mouth and leaned into it, letting Shane yank him as close as possible even as he controlled the pace. His other hand slid around Shane's waist, turning them face to face and drawing him in until there was no space left between them.

There was an apology in the way his mouth moved against Shane's.

But also agreement. Recognition. Everything Shane hadn't been able to say was there in the way Ilya kept kissing him. Slow, deliberate, and unwavering.

Something that felt dangerously close to a promise, even if neither of them were ready to call it that just yet.

He eased the angle slightly, softened the pressure, like he was smoothing something delicate and fragile back into place instead of pushing it further. His thumb brushed once along the side of Shane's jaw.

Shane melted into it as his whole body gave in to the steadiness of it.

Ilya then broke the kiss just enough to trail his mouth along Shane's jaw, down the side of his neck. His lips brushed skin in presses that were warm and slow and savoring.

"Am I forgiven?" he murmured, his warm breath fanning against Shane's pulse.

Shane nodded, dazed, eyes half-lidded, forehead tipping forward to rest briefly against Ilya's shoulder.

Ilya chuckled softly.

"You sure? Because I can keep trying to make it up to you. All night, if I have to."

Shane let out an undignified little snort of laughter, surprising both of them. He pulled back just enough to get some air and schooled his face into something stern and offended.

"You're right," he said gravely. "Actually, I'm furious. Betrayed, even. You're pretty much dead to me now."

The corner of his mouth twitched. His eyes, bright and dancing, gave him away entirely.

Ilya's answering grin was delighted. He leaned in again and stole another kiss

"Oh no," he murmured against Shane's mouth. "This is very serious."

Shane let out a helpless laugh as his back hit the wall with a soft thud, steam curling around them. Ilya was everywhere; his hands, his mouth, the weight of him pressing against Shane's chest, his tongue tasting every inch of Shane's mouth like a man starved.

Kisses trailed down Shane's throat, like Ilya's lips were brushing promises just beneath his jaw.

"You know," Ilya murmured between them, his voice low, "I am surrounded by beautiful women all the time."

Shane made a surprised, indignant sound as even more reflexive thoughts bloomed all at once. Things like, *oh wow, I'm actually going to commit a murder tonight, and why do I want forever with him again, and you cannot be fucking serious right now.*

His head thunked back against the tile.

"Dude."

But Ilya only hummed, the curve of a smile brushing briefly against skin before he dragged his teeth lightly along the tendon of Shane's neck.

"Listen," he went on, unbothered. "So many beautiful women throwing themselves at me. Always. But the whole time, all I am thinking about is this hockey player. He's perfect. Has stupid, cute freckles. Weak backhand though."

That pulled a startled sound out of Shane, something caught between a laugh and something helplessly wrecked.

Ilya's mouth moved lower, slower now, his hands sliding up to cradle beneath the curve of Shane's skull, keeping him right where he wanted him.

"The whole time," he whispered, "I just wish they were him."

Shane let out a shaky breath, the sound betraying him despite himself.

"Sounds like an awful problem," he managed, voice thinner than he intended.

Ilya nodded solemnly, his nose brushing along Shane's throat.

"It's terrible."

Shane's eyes fluttered open, catching him in profile, close enough to trace every line of his face.

"Do you want the problem to go away?"

Ilya lifted his head enough to meet his eyes fully. The answer was already there before he said it.

"No," he said, simple and steady. "I do not *ever* want the problem to *ever* go away."

And then they were kissing again, feverish and a little messy, the kind of kiss that stole Shane's balance out from under him. His hands gripped tightly onto the back of Ilya's neck like letting go might mean losing this entirely.

Ilya kissed him like he meant every word of what he'd just said. Like he was giving something instead of taking it, like every careless word and every moment of doubt could be undone if he just kissed Shane deeply enough and for long enough.

And Shane let him.

Let it wash over him, hot and dizzying, let himself kiss back like maybe this wasn't just something temporary, like maybe there was something waiting for them just beyond these few weeks, just past the fogged-up glass and a decade of stolen moments.

For a few seconds, it felt possible. And Ilya kissed him like he believed it, too.

Water streamed down their bodies, slipping between them as Ilya pressed in close. His hands were firm on Shane's hips. His mouth never strayed far. He kissed down Shane's throat, then back up again, mouthing along his jaw like he couldn't decide where he needed to be most.

Then his hands slid lower. Gripped under Shane's thigh.

Shane startled slightly as Ilya lifted it, bracing it around his own waist with ease. The change in angle sent heat curling through him fast and immediate. He clutched at Ilya's shoulders to steady himself.

"Ilya-" he breathed, voice already frayed.

"You okay?" Ilya asked, low and wrecked, forehead pressed to Shane's. His hand skimmed along the length of Shane's thigh.

Shane nodded, eyes fluttering shut.

"Yeah. Just... fuck."

Ilya huffed a breath against his cheek.

"Yes," he agreed hoarsely. "*Fuck.*"

He shifted forward and pressed Shane back against the tile and rolled his hips just enough to make them both gasp. Shane's fingers tightened where they gripped Ilya's neck.

Everything was wet and slick and open, their bodies sliding together in the steam and spray, rhythm building with every stuttered breath and broken sound.

Shane let go of the last of the jealousy and shame and fear and gave in. Let Ilya kiss his throat, his mouth, his chest, every inch of him like worship. Let Ilya move against him like he meant every word he hadn't said yet. Like this wasn't just sex. Like he already belonged here.

Ilya rasped his name into his mouth. His grip under Shane's thigh tightened, strong and steady as he adjusted the angle between them, his other hand slipping low to guide them together. Shane braced one arm against the wall, the other tangled in Ilya's curls, holding on like the steam and heat had already half-melted his bones.

They were flushed all over, skin slick and hot with the pounding water. The drag of Ilya's cock along Shane's hipbone was maddening, the weight of him heavy and hard and *close*, and Shane couldn't help the sound that slipped out. It was half groan and half breathless curse.

Ilya freed one hand to reach past Shane's shoulder for the bottle of lube they'd stashed on the little shower caddy a few days ago. It took a surprisingly short time for Shane's body to open under Ilya's touch, the muscles pliant and easy in the wake of the near nonstop sex they'd been having.

"Okay?" Ilya murmured, lips brushing his jaw.

Shane nodded, already strung tight.

Ilya kissed him once then he shifted, slow and careful, one hand guiding himself into Shane as the other hand pinned his thigh higher and wider.

The stretch of it, the burn, the pressure, all of it made Shane suck in a breath as Ilya pushed in, inch by inch. He was careful, steady, eyes locked on Shane's face, watching every twitch of his mouth, every hitch of breath, every blink that fluttered.

Shane let his head fall back with a low groan, mouth falling open as Ilya seated fully inside him, hips pressed flush. The wall was cool against his back, but everything else was *hot*. His own pulse pounding between his legs. Ilya's breath shook against his collarbone.

"*Fuck*, Shane," Ilya murmured, voice husky and wrecked. "You feel *so* good."

Shane didn't trust himself to answer. Just clenched tighter around him and pulled him in by the back of the neck for a kiss that was all teeth and need.

They moved slowly together at first. Just the wet slide of skin, the grind of hips, the rhythm finding them naturally. Ilya kept one arm braced around Shane's lifted thigh, the other roaming greedily over his body, like he couldn't decide what inch of skin he wanted to worship more.

Shane could barely think. Every thrust sent bursts of fire rocketing through his nerve endings. The pleasure curled low and deep in his abdomen, sharper each time Ilya bottomed out and ground their hips together.

"You," Ilya said between kisses, voice raw but steady, "you're *mine*."

Shane shuddered. He couldn't look at him, couldn't *not*. His head tipped forward, eyes half-shut as he nodded.

"Yours," he echoed breathlessly.

Ilya groaned into the next kiss, deepening it with a kind of urgency that made Shane's knees feel suddenly weak and unstable.

Then Ilya pulled back just enough, forehead brushing his, as he spoke again.

“Yours.”

That made Shane’s eyes open fully. They moved over Ilya’s face, taking him in. The tiny furrow between his brows. The way his mouth was parted in pleasure. The way he looked like his own heart was flayed open and vulnerable.

Shane lifted his hands and cupped his face gently.

“*Mine*,” he answered.

Ilya made a low, almost feral sound in his throat and nodded sharply. He surged forward again and kissed Shane like he needed to *consume* him, like he couldn’t get close enough, like any space between them was a crime against the universe.

Shane held on, breath coming in frantic pants, and let himself be pulled into the intensity and certainty radiating between them.

And then Ilya changed the angle, lifted him just that extra bit tighter and drove in hard, Shane gasped and clung tighter, lost in it.

Nothing else mattered. Not paperwork marriages. Not what they hadn’t said yet. Not the future, uncertain and unspoken.

Just this. Just *them*. Here, now, with the water pouring down around them as they moved like they’d been made for this.

Something in Shane’s chest felt like it was trying to climb out of him. Like whatever part of him that lived in some hollow space between his lungs and his heart had woken up all at once and didn’t know how to stay contained anymore.

It pressed outward, urgent and aching, like it was trying to break through flesh and bone and sinew and muscle just to get closer to Ilya.

To wrap itself around the piece of Ilya that lived in his chest the same way.

Shane’s breath stopped as he looked at him and for a second it felt like Ilya could *see* this thing scrabbling out of Shane’s chest. Could feel it reaching for him. Could feel the piece of his *own* soul reaching for Shane’s, too.

Ilya stilled slightly and met his eyes. And then he nodded once, like he understood exactly what was happening.

Shane was overwhelmed.

The pleasure built and crested fast. Too fast, probably, but Shane didn’t care. Couldn’t care. Not with Ilya murmuring against his skin like he was saying prayers, not with his body coiled tight and hot and full of *everything*. Not when Ilya’s thrusts turned shallow and desperate, mouth catching just beneath his ear on each movement.

Shane came first, nearly silently, just a sharp inhale and a full-body shudder as heat spilled between them. His head tipped back against the shower wall as his chest heaved and muscles locked then collapsed all at once. His whole body rang with pleasure and relief and love.

Ilya followed a moment later, groaning into Shane's throat, hips jerking once, twice more before he buried himself deep and stilled. One long exhale shuddered through him, arms trembling just slightly with the effort of holding Shane up.

For a moment they just stayed like that, water cascading over them, catching their breath. Steam wafting and drifting around the edges of everything like a fluttering, gauzy curtain.

Then Ilya lifted his head, nosing along the line of Shane's jaw until he was nuzzling behind Shane's ear.

"So..." Ilya began. His voice was lazy and smug and so full of fondness it made Shane smile before he even heard the rest. "Am I forgiven *now*?"

Shane huffed a little, too breathless from the come-down to laugh outright.

"You're ridiculous."

Ilya pressed a kiss to the shell of his ear.

"That's not a no."

Shane laughed low and hoarse. He tilted his head and kissed Ilya, slow and sweet this time. Just lips lingering, mouths soft and open, like a thank you, like a promise.

When he finally pulled back, eyes still closed, he nodded.

"Yes," he whispered. "You're forgiven."

They dried off in companionable silence, exchanging sleepy smiles and playfully bumping shoulders in front of the sink as they brushed their teeth like they'd been doing this routine for years. Ilya stole a pump of Shane's fancy moisturizer. Shane didn't complain.

By the time they crawled into bed, the world outside felt thousands of miles away.

They settled shoulder to shoulder at first. Then, almost without thinking about it, they turned toward each other. Ilya's arm came around him, and Shane shifted closer, tucking himself against him so his head rested against Ilya's shoulder, just beneath his collarbone. Not quite on top of him, but close enough to feel the steady rise and fall of his breathing.

Shane sighed at the warmth and closeness and let himself sink into it.

"I want this," he murmured, his voice barely audible in the dark. "Every night."

Ilya didn't answer right away. He tightened his hold a fraction and pressed a long, lingering kiss to the top of Shane's damp hair.

“Me too,” he said quietly.

They lay like that in the easy silence for a while as their breathing gradually synced. After a bit, Ilya shifted, propping himself up just slightly.

“You know, my contract is up next season,” he said, casual on the surface, but there was something more deliberate underneath. “I have been thinking.”

Shane stirred, cracking open one eye to look up at him.

“Thinking what?”

“That maybe I could transfer.”

Shane turned a little more in his arms.

“Oh?”

“Maybe to a Canadian team,” Ilya said, softer now.

Shane’s heart skipped. “Really?”

Ilya shrugged lightly.

“It is not the best time to be an immigrant in America, unfortunately. Not with that ugly orange fuck in charge.”

“Even though you’re Russian? I thought he was, like... Putin’s bitch or something.”

Ilya snorted. “Probably. But Putin hates Russians like me.”

“Oh.” The reminder sent a cord of cold dread snaking through Shane’s stomach.

“So, I do not want to risk it,” Ilya went on. “Not if there is an alternative. Plus...” he added, almost tentatively, “maybe we could be closer.”

“You’d really transfer to a Canadian team?”

Ilya nodded. “If they’d have me.”

“They’d be idiots not to,” Shane said immediately.

Ilya smiled at that, leaning in to press a soft kiss between Shane’s eyebrows.

Then they settled again, folding back into each other under clean sheets and warm blankets. Shane lay there, struck all over again by how *good* this felt. How easy. How much he loved having Ilya here.

How much he loved *him*.

Ilya's breathing evened out after a while, his body going slack as sleep took him. Shane nudged a fraction closer, tucking himself into the hollow beneath Ilya's collarbone.

He knew it was impossible, but in that moment, he would have done anything to make it work. There had to be a way. There had to be a solution to their problem.

His eyes drifted closed, but his mind didn't follow. The gears were already turning. After a second, he opened them again.

And started to plan.

End Notes

it's *FUCK* DJT till the day I d-i-e

someone on twitter said something about falling asleep every night in the metaphysical cuck chair at the cottage and like.... yeah. that's it exactly.

thank you for all the love and well-wishes for me and baby girl!! she is a DREAM baby, she hardly cries and already sleeps in 4-6 hour stretches at night. really lucked out with this little chicken <3

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