# The Cottage

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# The Cottage

by PeaceLilies

Summary

Shane and Ilya's season is over and they're at the cottage ahead of Shane's birthday, living their best married life

Notes

I just wanted to write some established Hollanov
I missed the canonical boys and I'm also feeling sort of detached
The fandom has started to become a bit overwhelming for me and I feel like I've lost the boys' voices
I hope you enjoy this fic anyway and a happy birthday to my favorite anxious jock 💖

See the end of the work for more notes

# Chapter 1

*May - The Cottage*

Shane lay in bed, smiling contentedly to himself, sliding his fingers back and forth over Ilya's forearm, where he'd slung it over Shane's belly, the rest of him snuggled up against Shane's side.

Ilya had his head on Shane's chest, his breath quietly ghosting over Shane's skin as he breathed.

Their season had ended early this year, which was disappointing, but being away from the chaos of playoffs was nice.

They'd won back-to-back Cups the last three seasons and it felt like everyone was due for a rest. Too many injuries, exhaustion, the team a bit ragged, and the extra time off was sorely needed.

He and Ilya were both pleasantly spent, happy to just bask together in the mid-morning hours, enjoying the peace and quiet of the cottage.

Shane turned his head to kiss into Ilya's curls, fanning his hand out on Ilya's forearm, and gently petting his curls.

Ilya hummed and Shane could feel his lashes brush his pec as he blinked. He held Ilya a little closer, a little tighter, chuckling softly as Ilya made a happy noise, tossing his leg over Shane's hips.

Shane was relaxed, happy to indulge in being this close with his husband, having sloughed off the stress of the season, and allowing himself to bask in this slower, soothing intimacy.

Their warm little bubble popped abruptly as a soft whining started in the corner of the room.

Shane sighed.

"Your dog wants to go outside," he murmured.

*"My* dog?"

"Yeah, *your* dog."

Ilya shifted his head to look at Shane and Shane looked back.

"Oh so when she wants to go out in the morning she's *my* dog?"

"Exactly."

Ilya made a face at Shane and Anya's whines got louder as she made her way over to the bed.

"Yes, yes. I'm coming," Ilya huffed, turning his head to look at the end of their bed, where Shane could see Anya's ears and part of her face as she rested her head against the bed. She wasn't tall enough to rest her chin on top.

Ilya turned back to Shane, kissing his chest, and pushed himself up onto his hands to loom over Shane. Shane chuckled and smiled up at him, before Ilya leaned down to press a few quick kisses to his mouth.

"Hey," Shane laughed but Ilya was already rolling out of bed.

He turned onto his side, watching his husband slide back into his briefs, and greeted Anya with pets and kisses, talking to her softly.

"Let me put on clothes," Ilya said to the dog, finding a pair of shorts, and a shirt, pulling them on, while Anya hopped around excitedly by his feet.

Shane watched the whole display with fondness, appreciating the ritual of Ilya and Anya's morning together, regardless of if they were in Ottawa or the cottage.

"We'll be back," Ilya said as he opened the bedroom door, Anya racing out of the room, barking down the hall because Ilya wasn't moving fast enough.

Shane laughed as Ilya rolled his eyes, following after the dog.

"Have fun!" Shane called, chuckling, and rolled onto his back. He looked at the ceiling of their bedroom, following the familiar wood grain patterns in the panels, closing his eyes after a moment.

His body was tired.

It had been a long, rough season, and both he and Ilya hadn't come out unscathed, but he was looking forward to the extra month of rest and quiet before their hockey camps in August.

After a few more moments of basking and slow stretching, Shane got out of bed, too. He got dressed and went to the kitchen, starting in on coffee. He peeked out the kitchen window, watching Ilya and Anya in the backyard, listening to Ilya's distant voice and Anya's excited barks.

He grabbed mugs from the cabinet and set them on the counter, pulling out the milk for Ilya, and waited for the coffee to finish percolating, catching movement out of the corner of his eye.

His mom had helped him set up a few hummingbird feeders and Shane smiled as he watched two hummingbirds hover in front of the plastic flowers to get at the sugar water inside the feeder.

God he loved it here.

Ilya loved to tease him about his affinity for the outdoors but Shane had always been this way. As much as hockey had consumed his life, this was where he felt most himself.

Free from scrutiny and pressure, he felt centered, peaceful. At home. Ilya being here had only added to that and it was because of him that he'd kind of put two and two together.

He loved hockey, he always would, and playing for the Centaurs had made him fall in love with the sport again, but he'd fully internalized the importance of having things outside of hockey.

And for him, that was the cottage, being by the lake, in nature.

The coffee machine beeped, calling Shane back to reality, and he poured coffee into the mugs. He heard the sound of feet and paws on the deck as Ilya and Anya came back inside.

The familiar noise was a comfort and made him smile.

Anya came up to greet Shane, tail wagging, tongue lolling out of her mouth.

"Hello," he greeted, petting her soft head, and gently pulling her soft ear, rubbing it with his thumb and index finger. "Did you have a nice romp outside with Papa?"

Anya licked at his hand, smiling her doggy smile up at him. "I'll take that as a yes."

Ilya chuckled from the other side of the island, making Anya's breakfast. He came around to where her food bowls were stationed and she turned away from Shane, eagerly trotting over to Ilya.

"Sit," he told her, holding up a finger. Anya sat. Ilya set her food bowl down. "Wait."

Anya waited very patiently and Shane was impressed. They'd been keeping up with some basic training for her and she was doing really well. She could sit, stay, shake, roll over, and play dead. It was pretty impressive.

"Okay."

Anya lunged forward, happily chomping away at her food, making her dads laugh.

Ilya took her water bowl to clean it and change the water, joining Shane by the sink.

Shane kissed his shoulder and Ilya smiled.

"Coffee's ready for you."

"Thank you."

Shane kissed his cheek and took his own mug, walking to the sliding glass doors that looked out onto the deck and the rest of the property, toward the lake.

It was a beautiful day, bright and sunny. He chuckled as some chipmunks ran back and forth across the lawn now that Anya was back inside.

Shane wanted to do a little cleaning around the yard and start bringing out the patio furniture and things now that they would be here for a few months.

Ilya preferred to hire people to do that kind of stuff. Thinking about it made Shane smirk to himself, sipping his coffee, free hand in the pocket of his hoodie as he considered how much of a city boy Ilya was.

Shane liked being handy. He liked doing things himself and had learned a lot about general house maintenance from his dad, things he'd picked up over the years, and some of his own research he'd done upon encountering a few little problems here or there at the house in Ottawa.

Ilya seemed to enjoy Shane's competence, so he wasn't complaining that Ilya preferred to talk about "calling a professional for that," but Ilya had his own strengths.

He was an incredible host, he could work a room effortlessly, even amongst people he didn't know. He was an excellent haggler and had saved Shane probably thousands of dollars when it came to their cars (since Shane had no idea how to properly refuse a salesperson telling him to sign on for all the 'bells and whistles').

Their strengths were complementary and they both appreciated them about one another.

Shane was interrupted from his thoughts by Russian swearing and what sounded like something falling to the floor. Anya barked and Shane turned his head.

"You okay?!" he called.

A moment later, Ilya came out of the downstairs bathroom looking disgruntled. Shane knew that look and he couldn't help the smile on his face. This made Ilya's brows draw together even tighter, his hands shoved grumpily into his pockets.

"What happened?" Shane asked. "Was there a bug?"

Ilya stopped by the couch. "Yes."

"Spider?"

"No. One of the ones with all the legs."

"A house centipede?"

Ilya shrugged enormously.

Shane chuckled, setting down his mug on a coaster on the coffee table, and walked up to his husband.

"You want me to take care of it?"

Ilya rolled his eyes. "You are the bug guy."

Shane grinned, patting Ilya's chest, and went to the kitchen for a cup.

"You know, I think it's really cute that bugs freak you out."

"No."

"Yes. I like that I can rescue you."

Ilya didn't respond, which just amused Shane more. Ilya really, *really* didn't like bugs. It was one of the few things that grossed him out and Shane was tickled by this.

He wasn't sure that anyone knew this about Ilya. It was a fact that he had just for himself and it made him feel special. It was a way that he could take care of Ilya and something that was only shared between *them.*

And Shane didn't mind dealing with bugs. He'd spent all of his childhood summers at the cottage and he'd dealt with all kinds of critters, from racoons in the crawl space to bees that had decided to make a hive in his parents' gutter. A house centipede was a piece of cake.

Armed with a solo cup and a piece of paper, Shane went into the bathroom.

"Where was it?" Shane called and Ilya appeared at the doorway. He was standing back, looking about ready to flee at the slightest hint that the centipede might escape in his direction.

"The sink," Ilya replied.

Shane nodded and sure enough, in the sink, was a pretty decent sized house centipede.

"Oh yeah. Okay. That would freak me out, too." Shane nodded. "C'mere, buddy."

Using the cup and the paper, Shane managed to herd the centipede into the cup. He covered the cup with the paper, laughing as Ilya backed up several feet to give Shane as much space as possible.

"Can you grab the door for me?" Shane asked.

Ilya opened one of the sliding doors and Shane stepped outside. He went down to the grass and released the centipede.

He went back inside, where Ilya had Anya cradled in his arms.

"Done. Easy," Shane said. "Want me to do one more sweep of the bathroom for you?"

"If you want," Ilya replied, shrugging, which meant yes. He placed Anya down and Shane went to do one more sweep of the bathroom, finding it clear of bugs.

"All clear."

Shane stood in front of Ilya, hands behind his back, head tilted up as he smiled at his husband. Ilya sighed but a small smile teased his mouth.

"Thank you, beloved," Ilya murmured in Russian, leaning down to press a warm kiss to Shane's mouth, making his toes curl.

"Anytime."

They made breakfast together and ate outside on the deck. Shane told Ilya about his plans for the day and Ilya offered his help and that he might take Anya swimming. She loved the lake.

It was nice to not have a schedule, to be able to do what they wanted, whenever they wanted.

There was a routine of sorts; waking up, making coffee, taking care of the dog, keeping up with some level of maintenance training. But it was nice to not feel rushed.

The farmer's market was open and there was supposed to be nice weather over the next few days so they made tentative plans for a hike. They could take Anya, too, and she would enjoy the exercise.

"Tire her out," Ilya said about their plans, as Anya brought him the ball he'd thrown. He took it from her and threw it again, both of them watching her barrel down the stairs to go get the toy.

"What a goober," Shane chuckled.

"Ah, but we love her anyway."

"We sure do."

They cleaned up breakfast and Ilya wrangled Anya inside. They loaded the dishwasher and went upstairs to change.

Shane put on a pair of running shorts, an old t-shirt, and socks, grabbing one of his snapbacks, and putting it on backwards. Ilya was in a bathing suit.

Ilya could make a potato sack look good but he truly looked unbelievable in a bathing suit. It wasn't even anything special. The swim trunks were black with a silver strip on either side of the shorts.

But they hung low on Ilya's hips even without being wet and the shorts themselves stretched over Ilya's impressive thighs.

*Legs for days.*

Shane's eyes followed that familiar trail of hair under Ilya's belly button. He had seen Ilya naked more times than he could count and he never got tired of it.

"Don't you have work to do?" Ilya teased, tapping the tip of Shane's nose, very aware that Shane was ogling him.

"Shut up," he huffed back, cheeks warm, but he leaned up on his toes to kiss Ilya's mouth, quick and sweet.

"You sure you wanna swim?"

Ilya nodded. "Yes. Is warm enough."

"If you're sure."

"I'm fine," Ilya chuckled and kissed Shane's forehead. "Be careful moving things."

"I will. And make sure to put on sunscreen."

"Yes, yes," Ilya replied, somewhat flippantly.

Shane shook his head, watching Ilya go, eyes immediately going to his perfect ass as he left the room, whistling for the dog.

Shane chuckled to himself, unable to keep from smiling.

He finished getting ready and went outside, standing on the deck as he watched Anya launch herself off the dock, Ilya bobbing in the water, laughing as Anya splashed him.

She was tireless and he was glad that Ilya was having fun.

He watched Anya jump in two more times before finally making his way to the shed they had, unlocking it, and pulling out furniture like their Adirondack chairs and some of the other patio furniture, putting them around on the lawn, the same configuration he had every year.

Adirondack chairs facing the lake, regular chairs and the love seat by the fire pit, extra seat cushions.

Shane went through and cleaned everything free of dirt and dust. He knew he could hire someone to do this all for him but he liked being able to do it himself.

Especially here.

He stood back to survey his work so far, pleased, and watched as Ilya and Anya came back up from the lake.

Ilya had a towel around his neck, Anya running up the grassy slope of the yard to Shane, tongue lolling out of her mouth.

"You're not tired yet, silly girl?" Shane asked, kneeling down to rub Anya's face.

She was wet and kind of stinky but still pretty cute.

"She will sleep after her bath," Ilya said, coming to stand just behind Anya.

Shane glanced up, taking Ilya. He looked unfairly good when he was wet. Shane's mouth went dry.

"Are you almost finished?" Ilya asked.

"Almost."

Ilya smiled that sexy crooked smile and nodded. "Okay. Come find me when you're done."

Shane swallowed, knowing that Ilya was scheming something sexy.

"Sure."

Ilya just kept smiling at him, kissing his cheek, before turning to head back to the house, Anya following. Shane watched them go, then looked back at the lawn and patio furniture.

He sighed. No. He had to finish. He was almost done anyway. And he did like an impatient Ilya…

Shane finished taking out all the furniture and adjusting everything to his liking, wiping sweat from his forehead with his shirt.

Pleased with his work, he closed up the shed, and went back to the house. He washed his hands free of dust and dirt, finding a freshly bathed, slightly damp Anya in her bed, fast asleep in the living room.

He smiled and went upstairs to find his husband, already buzzing with anticipation.

Shane stepped into their bedroom, the shower on in their bathroom. He took off his hat and stripped off his sweaty clothes, dumping them in their hamper.

Shane pushed their bathroom door completely open, stepping onto the tile, pausing for a moment to just admire Ilya's silhouette on the other side of the foggy glass of the shower. He could see glimpses of golden skin and wet curls.

"Did you start without me?" Shane asked as he walked to the shower.

"You were taking too long."

Shane stepped inside, watching his husband stroke a lazy hand slowly over his cock.

Shane lifted his eyes to look at Ilya, moving into Ilya's space, leaning up a bit as Ilya leaned down to meet him. Shane brushed their noses.

"I'm here now," he murmured.

Ilya hummed, pulling Shane closer, and Shane went easily, holding Ilya's face in his hands, kissing him hungrily. He loved this. He loved kissing Ilya, touching him.

He loved being at the center of Ilya's desire, at being wanted by him, and wanting Ilya just as much.

Ilya's hands curved around Shane's ass, the touch worshipful, and Shane slid his hands over Ilya's upper back.

He went to his knees as soon as they broke apart, running adoring hands over Ilya's thighs as Shane wrapped his mouth eagerly around Ilya's dick.

One of Ilya's hands slid into his hair, the other pressed to the shower wall behind Shane.

"Yes," he purred. "So good for me."

Shane sighed, letting his eyes flutter closed, focusing. He'd lost count of how many times he'd done this and that it never got old.

He loved having Ilya's cock inside him however he could get it and he loved what this did for Ilya.

He loved his tender praise, the little sighs and moans he made. Ilya was often very restrained, very in control, so making him lose it was one of Shane's favorite things.

He just liked knowing that he was making Ilya feel good because that was part of what did it for Shane.

He relaxed his mouth, taking Ilya all the way down, swallowing around him. He reached one hand up to squeeze a muscular pec, the other wrapped around his own cock.

"Fuck, Shane. Are you…?"

Shane hummed, raising his eyes to look at Ilya. His curls were brushed back from his face, water droplets dripping from his nose, down his chest, his plush lips parted, cheeks flushed, eyes dark.

His face was full of desire and Shane redoubled his efforts, closing his eyes as he used his tongue and teeth, putting all of his skills to use. He stroked himself only just enough, before Ilya's fingers fisted into his hair, tugging at him.

"Stop," Ilya said and Shane did, pulling off of him. Ilya reached for him, pulling him to his feet. He crashed their mouths together, before pressing Shane up against the shower wall.

His fingers slid through Shane's, holding him in place as he pressed their cheeks together, his cock sliding between Shane's ass cheeks.

"My beloved," he cooed, in Russian. "You are so perfect."

Shane rippled against him, gasping softly, biting his bottom lip, cheeks going warm at the pet name and compliment. Shane loved when Ilya called him *beloved*. He didn't use it very often, but every time he did, it made Shane feel special and completely adored.

"You gonna fuck me?" Shane asked as Ilya kissed his cheek, down his neck, trailing kisses over his shoulder. The scratch of Ilya's stubble, accompanied by the soft press of his lips made Shane shiver.

"Yes," Ilya rumbled, back in English, nipping Shane's earlobe.

*"Please,"* Shane breathed and Ilya bit the spot where his neck met his shoulder, sucking a mark into it, making Shane gasp and moan.

Ilya leaned away only for a second, popping the cap on the bottle of lube (Ilya had lubed stashed everywhere in both houses). Shane pushed back as a slick finger rubbed in soothing little circles around his rim, Ilya peppering kisses across his upper back.

Ilya sank his finger into Shane, making Shane pant, the sensation familiar and pleasant, though not nearly enough. Ilya wasn't rushing but he wasn't taking his time either, which Shane appreciated.

He added a second finger, then a third, curling, twisting, gently stretching apart. Shane loved Ilya's fingers, long and dexterous. He finger fucked Shane, occasional nudging up against his prostate, making him whimper, murmuring sweet nothings to him.

Shane turned his head, closing his eyes as Ilya pressed a firm kiss to his cheekbone. "C'mon. Want you in me."

Ilya removed his fingers and Shane heard the pop of the cap again, then Ilya was pressed back up against him, the blunt head of his cock against Shane's entrance.

He slid his fingers between Shane's against the shower well as he pressed into him, both of them groaning at the intrusion.

Shane fucking loved having Ilya inside him. He loved being filled, sharing the same space with the person he loved more than anyone, feeling whole and complete in a strange way that perhaps no one else would understand.

Except Ilya.

"Fuck, Shane. You feel so good."

"Love having you inside me."

All that mattered was being here, now, holding onto Ilya's hands as they fucked, Shane's cries echoing in the room.

He loved being as loud as he wanted, no one around to hear them.

He begged for more and harder, turning his head to kiss Ilya sloppily over his shoulder, pleasure rushing through him, his orgasm building.

"So greedy, my little slut. Wanting more." Ilya held Shane by the hair and one arm, fucking into him hard and fast, leaving Shane helpless and suspended.

"Yes. Fuck. God. Ilya. Don't stop, don't stop."

"Are you going to come for me, hm?"

"Yeah. Yes. Oh fuck, fuck, fuck—!"

Shane was almost surprised by his release, the intensity of him hurtling him over the edge, narrowing his vision.

It wasn't until he was coming down a bit that he realized that Ilya had his arms wrapped around Shane's chest, supporting him. Shane could feel Ilya's heart hammering against his back, his warm breaths coming in ragged puffs against Shane's shoulder.

"Wow. Holy shit."

Ilya just laughed.

Shane closed his eyes, resting his hands on Ilya's arms, basking in the comfort and safety he always felt any time they were together. Ilya had always made Shane feel safe and that feeling had never changed, even after all these years.

If anything, it had gotten deeper, softer, more tender.

"Okay?" Ilya murmured, kissing the side of Shane's head.

Shane nodded. "Yeah. I'm good."

Ilya carefully pulled out of him and Shane turned in his arms, both of them standing under the warm spray of water.

"We should *actually* shower," Shane murmured, though he felt all sleepy and floaty.

"A few minutes."

Shane smiled, pressing his nose to Ilya's cheek. "Okay."

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The rest of the day was pretty quiet. They ended up going to the farmer's market, which all three of them always enjoyed.

Shane loved all the fresh produce, Ilya loved all the little independently owned business stalls, usually buying honey or a candle or something else from the vendors, and Anya got showered with all the pets and treats her little heart could possibly desire.

They ate lunch there, enjoying the warm weather, before bringing their haul back home.

Shane was particularly excited about the tomatoes and cherries he'd bought and Ilya had gotten an awesome loaf of brioche and a blueberry galette, along with a nice rosé that had been recommended by one of the local vineyards that had a stall set up.

Anya was snoozing away as they planned dinner and started cooking.

Ilya opened the wine and poured them glasses.

Shane loved cooking with Ilya. He loved that cooking had become their thing, something they could do together and that they had fun with. They were good at it, too.

They worked around one another like a well-oiled machine, chopping and mixing and keeping an eye on things, while just chatting and laughing.

Shane bumped his hip playfully against Ilya and Ilya bumped him back.

In moments like these, Shane felt so light and airy. His mind was empty of any worries or anxieties. He was just happy to be in Ilya's company, to enjoy his witty humor, the comfortable familiarity of his presence, basking in his brightness.

Shane had known his parents loved him but there had always seemed to be a level of expectation from them, mostly unintentional.

But with Ilya, Shane felt his love unconditionally.

Shane didn't have to be different. Ilya loved him because he was simply himself.

And it was Shane's mission in life to make sure that Ilya felt the same way. That Ilya understood that Shane's love was unconditional. He loved Ilya exactly as he was; from that too cool, tough exterior, to that ooey-gooey mushy interior.

Ilya never needed to make himself small or bend himself backwards for Shane. Just having Ilya, loving and being loved by him, was all Shane wanted.

"What?" Ilya chuckled.

Shane just smiled, wrapping an arm around his waist, and kissed him. "I love you so much."

Ilya smiled, wide, and bright as the sun, his eyes all crinkled. Shane loved that smile, true and amiable.

"I love you, too. Very much."

Once dinner was done they plated their food and sat outside, finishing the bottle of wine.

It was a perfect evening and Shane leaned into Ilya, his legs curled up on the bench seat, Ilya's arm around his shoulders.

"Will be nice here," Ilya murmured. "When we retire."

"Mm," Shane replied, kissing Ilya's neck. "We can expand a little, add some more space."

"And have a condo in the city…"

Shane huffed a laugh. "And have a condo in the city. Yes."

They'd talked about moving here when they retired, keeping a place in the city, but downsizing a bit.

As long as there was enough space for kids…

Ilya hummed, kissing into Shane's hair.

Shane looked out at the lake, enjoying the soft noise of the water lapping at the shore.

And then he saw something.

"What was that?"

He sat up, glancing at Ilya, who looked confused. Shane looked back out towards the water, and saw something flopping in the grass.

Shane put his wine glass down, sitting up.

"Shane…"

"I'm just gonna go see what that is. Is it a fish?"

Shane was up and across the deck before Ilya could protest, heading down onto the lawn, walking across it.

How the hell had a fish gotten out of the lake and onto the property?

He was a few feet away when he was able to make out what the thing was and it was definitely *not* a fish. It was still now but turned its head to look at Shane.

"Oh shit," he said.

"What?" Ilya asked, footsteps shuffling in the grass, coming down to meet Shane.

Shane looked back at his husband and then back at the thing on the lawn.

"It's a loon!"

"A what?"

"A loon!"

Ilya came to stand by Shane. "Whoa."

It was a beautiful bird, sort of nestled in the grass, looking at them with it's red eyes.

Shane had seen loons before, in the distance, but it was disconcerting to see one up close.

"Is… big," Ilya noted and Shane nodded.

"Yeah. It is. I think it's hurt."

Shane made to take a step closer and Ilya's hand shot out, wrapping around his upper arm.

"Maybe we should call someone…"

Shane knew, objectively, that was probably a good idea, but he also didn't know what had happened to the poor thing, and if they were facing a clock.

"Shit. Um. Okay. We have bins and stuff," Shane said, turning around to go back to the shed.

"Shane."

"We can just put it in a bin with some towels and stuff and call animal control."

"I think maybe we just call animal control," Ilya replied. "You are not, uh, Snow White."

Shane snorted. Ilya had watched *Snow White* with the Pike kids and teased Shane about his animal knowledge and affinity for the outdoors.

*You and all your woodland creatures.*

"Ilya, go get some towels."

"I do not think this is a good idea, Hollander."

"It'll be fine!"

Usually, the circumstances were reversed. Ilya was the risk-taker in their relationship but *sometimes* Shane just felt really sure about something, risky or not.

"Okay…" Ilya didn't seem convinced but he went inside and came back with some ratty towels and rags.

Shane had an old bin that had once been used to house pool toys. It had a cover and everything, so it was perfect. He'd dug out some sturdy gardening gloves, too.

"Okay. Let's go."

They walked back down to the loon, finding it still there.

"Google says to leave the loon alone and to call animal control," Ilya noted.

Shane pulled on the gloves and grabbed a towel. "It's fine."

He approached the loon, which watched him curiously out of one eye. Shane hadn't realized how *sharp* its beak was.

He could feel Ilya hovering anxiously in the background.

"Hey buddy. It's okay. I'm here to help," Shane said, hoping that would maybe offer some calm to the poor thing, while he tried to figure out how to get the towel over the bird without freaking it out and injuring it further.

Shane took another step and the loon turned it's head, looking him right in the eye. "Oh fuck. Please don't attack me. I come in peace."

Ilya stifled a snort.

"Shut up, Rozanov. You're not even helping."

Shane tried shuffling closer, nearly slipping on the grass in his slides.

"Shane," Ilya grumbled from behind him.

"I'm fine, I'm fine." He should have worn better shoes for this. And he probably shouldn't have done this after finishing that bottle of wine…

Well.

Too late now.

"Okay… how about…"

He grabbed the bin he'd picked up. "How about you go in the bin, huh?"

He placed it down close to the loon, which just looked at the bin. It fluttered it's wings.

"Oh fuck!" Shane gasped, practically jumping backward but the loon didn't move and one of its wings was definitely injured.

"Man… what happened to you, pal? You poor thing…"

Shane observed the bird, the bin, towel still in hand, considering his options.

"Okay… how about this?"

Shane shifted the bin closer, but the loon didn't move.

He tried a few more iterations but nothing really happened.

"We should call someone," Ilya said from where he was standing a few feet away, arms crossed over his chest.

Shane knew that he wasn't loving this but that he was standing by in case he had to swoop in and rescue Shane from a disgruntled bird. The thought made Shane smile.

"You know what. We're just gonna full send this," he said. He put the bin up right, having the cover nearby. He put some towels into the bin, then took up the one he'd been holding.

He went behind the loon, which craned its neck to better see him.

"Alright, buddy. Here we go. Please don't freak out too much, okay?" Shane said, before tossing the towel over the loon and grabbing it with both hands.

The loon struggled, but didn't make any noise, and Shane got it quickly into the bin, towel and all, before putting the cover on it.

"Whew. Okay. Fuck. We got it!"

Shane beamed, looking up at Ilya, who had already walked to the part of the yard that had the best service, on the phone with what was most certainly animal control.

Shane laughed, full of adrenaline and pride.

Maybe this hadn't been the smartest move on his part but hey, he'd hopefully helped save a life.

Shane lifted the bin carefully, bringing it up further toward the house.

"They are sending some people from a sanctuary," Ilya explained once he was off the phone. "Will maybe be thirty minutes. The person on the phone recognized me."

"I'm not surprised," Shane chuckled.

Ilya took a deep breath and let it out slow. "That was very brave and very stupid, Hollander."

Shane shrugged. "I know."

"But also very sexy."

"Oh yeah?"

Ilya looked at him, a warm yet exasperated expression on his face. "Don't push it."

Shane smiled widely at him.

They waited about twenty-five minutes before the people from the sanctuary showed up, which was faster than expected.

The people who showed up were a little starstruck to meet Shane and Ilya, which amused them both, asking if it was okay if they filmed the pick up, and tagged Shane and Ilya in the video. Both of them agreed.

Shane spoke about when he'd noticed the loon, what he'd done, and now handing the bird off to the sanctuary, who took the loon without any real issues.

"Is there a way to follow up and see how it's doing and things?" Shane asked after the bird had been loaded into the sanctuary's truck.

"You can follow us online and things. Or give us a call."

Shane followed the sanctuary on social media and thanked them again for coming and helping out.

They went back to the house, cleaning up their dinner, and the empty wine bottle, then went inside, where Anya was in a bit of a frenzy.

Ilya took care of her while Shane washed up after handling the bird.

By the time the time they'd finished with Anya and the dishes, Ilya had flopped onto the couch and Shane plopped himself on top of him.

"I think that is enough excitement for the summer," Ilya murmured, fingers sliding through Shane's hair. "We have hit the quota."

Shane laughed, tucking his face against Ilya's neck. "Yeah. Fair enough."

# Chapter 2

*Three Days Later*

Ilya loved mornings with Shane.

He truly loved all the time they spent together but mornings in particular, especially when Shane allowed himself to sleep in.

Shane had loosened up a bit in the time that they had been married but he was still a regimented person. He liked structure and routine, especially during the hockey season, but he let Ilya keep him in bed an extra ten minutes, just to cuddle.

Being at the cottage was different.

It was summer. They had no real plans. Nowhere to rush to. No media to worry about or practices scheduled or games to be played.

It was just them, on their own time.

And today was Shane's birthday.

Ilya had woken up before Shane and watched him sleep. He brushed very soft fingers over Shane's freckles, carding his hair behind his ear, and catalogued all the familiar, deeply loved features of his face.

His dark brows, long lashes, pink lips, adorable, perfectly sloped nose, and those signature, stunning freckles across his nose and cheeks.

Ilya wanted to know Shane completely and once he knew everything, he'd consider himself to be the luckiest person on Earth.

There was still so much they were discovering and learning together, and Ilya was grateful for that, for having a partner he could adventure through life with.

He was grateful for Shane's love, for how their paths had converged. It seemed crazy that a boy from Moscow might meet and fall in love with a boy from Ottawa. But they had.

And that boy deserved a sexy wake up call on his birthday. So Ilya manuevered himself under the covers, between Shane's legs, shifting them over his shoulders, running teasing fingers over Shane's quads as he pressed slow, soft kisses to the insides of Shane's impressive thighs.

It was warm and would quickly get uncomfortable under the sheets but Ilya wasn't too worried about that. He just wanted Shane to have a nice start to his morning.

Shane started to stir immediately, stretching and shifting above Ilya, making a soft, adorably confused sound.

"Ilya?"

Ilya hummed and looked up at Shane as he lifted the covers to peer down sleepily at him.

"Good morning," he hummed, pressing one more kiss to Shane's thigh, before shifting a little to lick teasingly at the head of Shane's cock.

"Jesus…"

Ilya chuckled, sucking lightly under the head, and watched Shane flop back onto the pillows, dropping the sheets to cover Ilya again.

"Hey," Ilya protested, smiling.

Shane ripped the covers off.

"Thank you," he hummed and went back to what he was doing, making Shane laugh breathlessly. Ilya loved that sound.

One of Shane's hands slid into his curls, the other curling around Ilya's fingers where it rested on his quad as Ilya took him into his mouth.

Ilya focused his attention, swallowing around Shane, using his tongue and teeth. He let Shane slip from his mouth very slowly, sucking just on the head again, before going lower down to suck on Shane's balls, and rub a finger against his perineum.

"Oh my god, baby. Fuck…"

Ilya smiled to himself, pulling out all the stops. He knew what Shane liked and he was going to give him all of it. They might not make it to fucking this morning, but they had all day.

Well, almost all day.

Shane's parents were coming for burgers and cake. But there would be plenty of time before and after their arrival. Ilya wasn't worried.

He pushed Shane's legs up to his chest to get at his hole, fluttering his tongue in the way Shane liked, then switching to longer, firmer licks, taking his time, being deliberate.

He took Shane apart piece by piece until he was a whining, panting mess, making the neediest little noises, begging Ilya for more, to make him come. His cock was leaking all over his stomach, one hand fisted in Ilya's hair, the other in their sheets.

"Please, please, please. *Ilya…"*

Ilya hummed happily, taking Shane back into his mouth, holding his thighs, bobbing his head, only for Shane to come almost immediately, swearing.

Ilya exhaled out of his nose, pulling very slowly off of Shane, and swallowed. He wiped his thumb across his mouth, kissing the insides of Shane's thighs some more, waiting for Shane

to come down a bit.

"Holy shit," Shane sighed, arms above his head. He turned his head to look down at Ilya. "What a way to wake up."

Ilya grinned at him and Shane smiled back, reaching for him.

Ilya got out from under Shane's legs, carefully sliding them from his shoulders. He leaned over his husband, Shane cupping his face in his warm palms, kissing him, before he reached between them to wrap a hand around Ilya's dick.

Ilya sighed, kissing Shane hungrily as he jerked him off. It didn't take much and Ilya came hard all over Shane's hand and belly.

"Love you," Shane murmured and Ilya kissed his cheek and his neck.

"Love you, too."

Ilya flopped beside him and Shane starfished out a bit against the mattress, turning his head to look at Ilya.

He looked well-fucked and sleepy, a little smile on his face, eyes half-lidded, cheeks flushed.

Ilya turned on his side to kiss all over Shane's gorgeous face, unable to help himself, wanting to love on him as much as possible.

"I'll be back."

He got out of bed and went to the bathroom, cleaning himself up, and then brought a cloth back to wipe Shane down.

Once he was done, they cuddled up together, legs tangled, making it hard to decipher where one of them ended and the other began.

"Happy birthday, sweetheart," Ilya murmured against Shane's forehead. "I love you. I am very happy you were born."

Shane laughed, nuzzling Ilya's jaw, and kissing his neck. "Thanks. I love you, too."

Their peace lasted for a little while longer, before Anya decided that it was time to get taken out.

"You want to stay in bed?" Ilya asked. "I'll come back."

"No. I'll come, too."

"You are sure?"

"Yeah," Shane replied, snuggling closer. "I want to keep touching you."

Ilya smiled, his heart wobbling in his chest at the words.

"I'd like that."

They reluctantly pulled apart, got dressed, and gave Anya some attention before heading downstairs together, hand in hand.

They went outside and most just watched Anya romp around on the dewy lawn, doing her business.

Ilya cleaned up after her, leaving Shane on the deck to observe, like a prince surveying his kingdom.

He looked handsome in the morning light, casual and comfortable, his hair pulled up, his feet bare.

Ilya climbed the stairs, taking one of Shane's hands, kissing the back of it. Shane was smiling at him, pink cheeked and sweetly shy.

They went back inside with the dog. Ilya washed his hands and Shane started coffee while Ilya fed Anya, then went to see what he could make for breakfast.

"What do you want to eat?" Ilya asked, looking over his shoulder at his husband.

"Whatever's easiest."

"Shane. Is your birthday."

Shane looked at him knowingly and sighed. "Uh…" He chuckled. "You know what? I want French toast."

Ilya chuckled. "Okay. I can do that."

He grabbed the brioche they'd bought at the farmer's market, eggs, milk, and cinnamon, and started in on the French toast, putting on some music.

Shane brought him coffee and camped out behind Ilya, arms wrapped around him, head resting against his back.

Ilya wasn't complaining. It was sweet and if Shane wanted to keep touching him, then that was more than fine with him.

Their kitchen smelled like butter and cinnamon and sugar and toasted bread. Once the French toast was done, Ilya washed some blueberries and made some scrambled eggs.

They ate inside and Ilya watched Shane's happy face as he took a bite of his breakfast.

"Good?"

"Delicious. Thanks for cooking for me."

"Of course."

After breakfast, they spent some time playing with Anya, before planning a hike that Shane had been wanting to do.

His parents were coming over later for dinner, so they had plenty of time to spare, and while Ilya wasn't very outdoorsy, the trails in the area were beautiful. It would be good for Anya, too. She loved adventures and tiring her out was always a good thing.

She was an adorable dog but she had a lot of energy.

They cleaned up breakfast, got changed, and started loading up backpacks for the hike.

Ilya watched Shane in his hiking outfit; a plain, blue t-shirt, gray hiking shorts, hiking socks, and boots. He had his sunglasses hooked to the front of his t-shirt and a snapback on the counter while he finished putting on sunscreen.

Ilya wouldn't say the outfit was fashionable, which it wasn't supposed to be. It was very much functional but Shane looked good in it. Athletic and prepared. It was extremely sexy.

"Bug repellent next," he said, interrupting Ilya's fantasizing.

"Yes, yes."

He was wearing a similar outfit, opting for a tank top instead, and he'd made sure that he put sunscreen on his shoulders under Shane's supervision. Shane had made sure he was all covered, helping Ilya get the hard to reach places.

His own snapback sat next to Shane's on the counter and he made sure to grab his own sunglasses.

Shane went through both their bags, making sure they had enough water and snacks for themselves and Anya, before they headed out.

"Ready?" Shane asked, turning to Ilya.

Ilya nodded, reaching out to rub in some sunscreen on Shane's cheek that he'd missed. Shane smiled, his cheeks turning pink.

"Now we are."

Shane laughed, putting his cap on backwards. "Let's go."

Shane drove his Jeep to the trail. The parking lot had a few cars already parked but too an overwhelming number.

They grabbed their bags, got Anya out of the car, and were on their way.

It was a nice day, with a bit of a breeze, some clouds, but mostly sunny. It was warm, not overly hot, but Ilya kept an eye on Anya.

They got her coat really trimmed up for the summer but she was still a long haired dog and he didn't want her to get overheated.

The hike was shady though and not very advanced, so he wasn't too worried.

"I think Troy and Harris want to come to the cottage," Ilya said when they had stopped for a water break.

"Oh yeah?" Shane replied, sipping from his water bottle.

"Yes. Maybe in June."

"Okay, sure. Just let me know the dates."

Over the last few seasons, Shane and Ilya had been spending more time with Troy and Harris.

It had been nice to be around another queer couple, though they made an effort to see Eric, Kyle, Scott, and Kip when they were in New York, and Ryan and Fabian when they were in Toronto.

But Troy and Harris didn't live very far from them and they were with Troy quite often during the season.

Their first season on the Centaurs together had been quite the rollercoaster. It had been an absolute dream to play together and be together, to not have to travel any more, to not have to worry about stretches of time apart.

Ilya had eaten up every second of that first season, that first year of being married.

But it had come with a lot of difficulty, too. Some growing pains in their relationship as they adjusted to married life, the explosion of homophobia that had seemed to take over the hockey side of the internet, and Shane's own bitterness about how he had been treated in hockey.

Shane had been slow to warm to Troy. He hadn't spent as much time with him as Ilya had and he knew Troy's connection to Dallas Kent and his own behavior in the early years of his hockey career.

Shane was still reeling from how he'd been treated by his former team. He had been a model hockey player, the very best of them all, and he'd apparently committed the mortal sin of loving a man and had been cast out.

Shane had felt like everything he'd been afraid of had come true; he could never be perfect enough or good enough. Someone, somewhere would find fault with him and who he was intrinsically.

Not white enough, not straight enough…

Where Troy had seemingly gotten his fairy tale ending. Coming out publically and with a great boyfriend and everything.

It had been a lot to digest and process but Shane had come around, like Ilya knew he would.

Troy and Shane had a lot in common besides just their dark hair and being shorter than Ilya. They were both Canadian boys who had been raised in hockey as single children with a lot of promise and expectation. They put a lot of pressure on themselves. They were also both incredibly bitchy, which amused Ilya to no end.

They were friends now, which made Ilya happy. He liked Shane being friends with his friends. He liked that they could have people come visit them at the cottage (at their discretion, of course).

Ilya was looking forward to a weekend with Troy and Harris. It would be very relaxed, Anya would have Chiron to play with, and they could all just hang out and enjoy the start of summer together.

"I need to remember to text Troy about his mom's buffalo chicken dip recipe. The one made with Greek yogurt? It was so fucking good…"

Ilya chuckled as he cleaned up Anya's portable water bowl when she was done drinking and made sure to hydrate himself, before kissing Shane's cheek.

Shane raised a brow at him and Ilya shrugged, making Shane chuckle.

"I am sure he will make it when they visit."

"Sure. But I still want to have it so *I* can make it."

They continued their hike, walking hand-in-hand when the trail was wide enough to allow. Ilya keeping Anya close, as she got all excited every time a chipmunk ran across their path or a bunny rustled some leaves off in the woods.

Once they'd reached the end of the hike, they stopped to hydrate some more and snack before they headed back down.

They found a bench to sit on, looking out over the trees, toward the mountains.

"It's so beautiful," Shane sighed.

"Yes."

Ilya snapped a picture of the view, then turned his phone to snap a picture of Shane.

"Hey!" Shane laughed and Ilya snapped that picture, too. He grinned. He loved taking pictures of Shane. He loved being able to keep them, to share them publicly.

"Ilya…"

"What?"

Ilya froze at the sound of Shane's voice, a warning.

"Just don't move."

He sat stock still, every muscle bunched, afraid to even twitch, which meant there was a bug of some kind on him or around him. And then he heard it, a faint buzzing.

He swore in Russian.

Shane reached out, pushing whatever it was away with his hand, then brushed his hands off casually as if nothing had happened.

"You're good."

Ilya shivered and frowned. "I hate nature."

Shane laughed. "You're such a baby."

Ilya stuck his tongue out at him and Shane scrunched up his nose. They both laughed and Shane rested his chin on Ilya's shoulder.

"But you're *my* baby," he whispered. "It was a little bee. She was just curious about you but she's gone."

"My hero," Ilya cooed and he did mean it. He fucking hated bugs. They were so disgusting and he was impressed that Shane dealt with them so easily.

Shane bowed his head at him teasingly. "Happy to be of service."

Ilya waggled his brows and Shane's cheeks went red.

"Shut up," he huffed, shoving at Ilya, and that only made him laugh more.

Once they were rested enough they made their way back down the trail, idly chatting about tonight, their fingers threaded.

"Want me to drive?" Ilya asked as they were walking back to the car.

"I got it," Shane replied, kissing the back of Ilya's hand, before letting him go. The gesture made Ilya all warm inside.

The drive back was easy and quiet. Anya fell asleep in the backseat and Ilya had to wake her up when they were back at the house.

She immediately went to her bed and passed out again.

Ilya and Shane watched her for a bit, arms wrapped around one another as they stood in the living room.

"Do you think that she thinks we're creepy?" Shane asked. "Watching her sleep and stuff."

"I think she likes the attention."

Shane chuckled, turning his head, pressing his face against Ilya's shoulder.

"You stink."

"Mm, so do you," Ilya chuckled, tickling Shane's side, making him flinch away.

"We both need to shower."

"Yes, we do." Ilya continued to try and tickle Shane, his husband doing his best to get away from him, but Ilya grabbed his wrist.

Shane was surprisingly ticklish, especially along his sides, and Ilya loved taking advantage of this fact.

"No, no, stop," Shane gasped, smiling.

"I don't think so."

They grappled, Anya snoring soundly in her bed, and Shane managed to slip away. Ilya chased after him, catching him, and practically tossing him on their bed.

Shane bounced, laughing, and Ilya pounced on him.

He pushed Shane's shirt up to his neck, blowing a raspberry onto his stomach, making Shane laugh, loud and boyish.

He tugged at Ilya's hair and Ilya kissed his way up Shane's torso to his mouth, laying on top of him, pinning his wrists.

Shane smiled up at him, his face all crinkled up in the way it did when he was really happy. It was the sweetest expression, so joyful and free. And Ilya loved that he made Shane look like that, that he made him happy.

Shane bit his lip as he looked up at Ilya, that adorable, happy face shifting into something more coquettish.

"I put a plug in," he said, which snapped Ilya right back to reality.

"Oh did you?"

Shane nodded, rippling against Ilya, and Ilya ground down against him, heat washing through him, pooling in his belly.

"Does the birthday boy want to get fucked?"

Shane nodded. "Yes."

"I think that can be arranged."

Ilya kissed Shane's mouth again, nipping his bottom lip, before he leaned away to yank off his tank top.

They both started undressing eagerly, a tangle of clothing and limbs, laughing.

Ilya pulled Shane's shorts off, tossing them aside, and paused.

"A jock strap?" he asked, smiling as he watched Shane roll onto his hands and knees, ass up.

"Fuck, Shane."

Ilya reached out, snapping one of the straps, making Shane jolt, and whimper. He ran his teeth over his bottom lip, squeezing that perfect bubble butt in both hands, parting Shane's cheeks to reveal the vibrant blue butt plug he had in.

"Was this your plan all along?" Ilya asked, pressing lightly on the plug, making Shane gasp. "Have yourself all ready for me?"

"Yeah," Shane breathed. "Wanted to be as efficient as possible. Didn't want to waste any time."

Ilya pulled at the plug, just a bit, then pushed it back in. Shane shivered.

"You want my dick that badly?"

Shane looked over his shoulder. "I want *you."*

Ilya smiled at the words, appreciating them. He leaned in, biting Shane's right ass cheek making him yelp. He licked over the bite, twisting the plug, making Shane moan, and arch.

*Mine*.

"I want to give you everything you need," Ilya said, in Russian. "I want to please you."

"Just you," Shane sighed, also in Russian. "Only you."

The words went straight to Ilya's cock. He'd been tempted to fuck Shane with the plug a bit but he was starting to rethink that.

He leaned over to grab the lube from their bedside table, having it within reach, turning the plug slowly, making Shane moan, and wiggle his hips. He gasped as the plug bumped against his prostate.

"Hiking with this in is very slutty," Ilya mused.

Shane huffed a laugh. "I kind of liked it."

"Unsurprising."

"Fuck off. You love it when I'm eager."

"Mm." It was true.

Ilya teased Shane for only a few more moments before pulling the toy out of Shane, making him pant. He tossed it aside, picking up the lube to slick himself.

"You want to keep this on?" he asked Shane, tugging at the jock strap.

"Yeah," Shane replied.

Ilya leaned over him, pressing a few kisses to his spine, before shifting back, his dick against Shane's rim.

"Come on," Shane urged and Ilya rested his hands on Shane's hips as he pressed in. They both groaned. Ilya fucking loved being inside Shane, loved filling him up, giving him what he wanted.

He was so hot and tight. Even after all this time Ilya still wasn't over it.

He waited a moment for Shane to adjust before he tapped his flank.

"Come here."

Shane looked over his shoulder, blinking, before he sat up on his knees, Shane's back to Ilya's chest.

"Okayyyyy," Shane breathed and Ilya wrapped his arms around his chest.

"Okay?"

Shane nodded, resting his hands on Ilya's arms. Ilya pulled out a bit, then pushed back in, Shane letting out a shuddery breath.

"Fuck…"

"Good?" Ilya dropped an open mouthed kiss to Shane's shoulder.

"Yeah. Shit. Keep going…"

Ilya found a steady rhythm, kissing Shane messily over his shoulder. He ran a hand down Shane's torso, pressing both hands to his pecs, teasing his nipples until they were hard and sensitive and Shane was whining and panting.

Shane's head fell back on Ilya's shoulder, mouth open, eyes closed, cheeks flushed, making the most delicious noises.

"Can you come like this?" Ilya asked.

"Uh huh. Fuck. Don't stop."

Ilya didn't intend to. He sped up, holding Shane close as he fucked into him as fast and hard as he was able in this position. Shane dropped a hand to his cock and Ilya watched greedily

as he jerked himself off, the head poking out of the waistband of the jock strap, wet and glistening.

Shane's moans were high and needy and Ilya knew he was close.

"Let me see," he purred and Shane's body tensed, shuddering and spasming around Ilya as he came hard.

"Yes. Good boy," Ilya hummed, his face pressed to the side of Shane's as he fucked him through his orgasm.

He emptied himself into Shane a moment later, holding him tight.

"Jesus Christ," Shane breathed, his body slack, breathing heavy.

Ilya just nodded his agreement, kissing whatever parts of Shane he could reach, both of them still as they came down.

Ilya pressed a long kiss to Shane's cheek, then carefully pulled out of him. Shane flopped onto his back, looking blissed out and beautiful.

Ilya lay next to him, an arm slung across his chest. One of Shane's hands came up to rest on his forearm, thumb brushing over his skin.

"That was great."

Ilya chuckled. "Happy to hear that."

Shane chuckled, too, turning his head. Ilya shifted closer to kiss him.

"Love you," Shane sighed.

"I love you, too."

They spent a few more indulgent moments in bed before finally getting up to shower and get ready before Shane's parents arrived.

They spent an inordinate amount of time just holding each other in the shower. Ilya always liked having Shane this close but he could tell that Shane wanted that closeness and Ilya would never deny him that.

He held Shane's face in his hands, peppering gentle kisses all over until Shane was giggling. Ilya held him some more, rocking them back and forth. He loved Shane so much and he felt so lucky to have him.

After their overindulgent shower, they changed, and started getting ready for Shane's parents to arrive.

Anya was still sleeping and Shane texted with his parents.

"They're on their way," he said as Ilya grabbed plates and utensils, setting them on the counter.

Shane hadn't really been on his phone all day and leaned against the counter, texting people back who had reached out to wish him a happy birthday.

The cottage that Shane had spent all his childhood summers at was only ten minutes away from his own so Yuna and David arrived fairly quickly.

Anya was excited to see her grandparents, who had arrived with beer, burgers, and Shane's favorite fudgy chocolate cake, as well as as some special treats for her.

"Hi honey," Yuna hummed as she kissed Shane's cheek. "Happy birthday."

She turned her eyes to Ilya, smiling brightly, cake in hand.

"I can take that," Ilya said, holding out his own hands, taking the cake from his mother-in-law.

"Thank you, sweetheart," she said and gave Ilya a hug and a kiss, too.

David was right behind her, giving Ilya a hug, while Shane told his parents about how they'd spent the day.

They left the cake inside and took everything else outside, David starting up the grill. Ilya opened a bottle of wine and sat with Yuna, who had Anya laying her head on her lap, while Shane and David chatted by the grill.

Ilya always enjoyed spending time with his in-laws. He liked watching the way the Hollanders interacted with one another and he liked being included in the easy love they all had for one another and had extended to him, too.

"Did Shane tell you about the loon?"

Yuna raised a curious brow as she sipped her wine.

"No. What loon? What happened?"

Shane had turned, glaring at Ilya with his angry kitten face and Ilya grinned back at him.

Yuna looked at her son. "What loon, Shane?"

Shane sighed. "Uh… Ilya and I found a loon…"

Ilya watched Shane explain the situation with the loon to his mom who was understandably alarmed.

They ended up showing her the video from the sanctuary, surprised that it hadn't crossed her FYP since she saw almost everything that they were tagged in.

It was an amusing conversation, at least to Ilya, though Shane seemed a little annoyed, so Ilya had to make it up to him.

Shane went inside to get another bottle of wine and Ilya followed him.

Shane turned, bottle of wine in hand.

"Really?" he sighed.

Ilya came up to him, wrapping him up in his arms.

"A little yes."

"It's my birthday."

"Mm, yes, and it would not be your birthday if your mom didn't give you a hard time."

"Because you provoked her."

Ilya leaned back and look at his husband. "I'm sorry. Was just a little funny but…"

Shane smiled a little. "I mean, it was kind of…"

They both chuckled and Ilya held Shane's face in his hands.

"I have to give you birthday kisses."

"Birthday kisses?"

"Yes. Thirty-five. One for each year."

Shane turned bright red, all the way to his ears. "Ilya…"

*Cute.*

"I cannot forget, is bad luck."

Shane huffed a laugh, placing the wine bottle down, his hands on Ilya's hips and Ilya pressed thirty-five delicate kisses to Shane's face.

Ilya took his time, his heart so full of love for this man, and even though he'd been joking, now that he was doing this, he wanted to imbue as much love as he could into each kiss.

Shane giggled and smiled and blushed and at the end, Ilya kissed his warm, soft mouth.

"I love you," Ilya murmured as Shane rubbed their noses together, his hands pressed to Ilya's back.

"I love you, too."

By the end of the night, they were all sitting around the fire, Shane curled up against Ilya's side, talking about Shane's childhood, and the shenanigans he used to get up to during the summer as a kid.

"You had an active imagination," Yuna mused. "You liked keeping yourself enterained, pretending to be an intrepid explorer."

Ilya chuckled and Shane huffed a little, though he was smiling.

Yuna and David where staying the night and they turned in after a while, taking Anya inside with them, leaving Shane and Ilya alone by the fire.

Shane crawled into Ilya's lap and Ilya bundled him close, kissing his head, and snuggling up with him.

"Did you have a good day?" he whispered, a loon calling in the distance.

"Yeah," Shane whispered back.

He tilted his head up, reaching up to touch Ilya's cheek as Ilya pressed their foreheads together. Shane nuzzled their noses, thumb brushing over Ilya's cheek.

"I love you so much. Thank you."

Ilya blinked slowly. "I love you, too. Very much. I did nothing."

Shane made a face. "That's not true."

"As long as you are happy."

"I'm very happy."

Ilya kissed his palm in reply, turning his head for Shane to kiss his mouth, then his cheek, then tuck his face against Ilya's neck, breathing deep.

They settled together, all cuddled up by the fire, the night calm and quiet.

Ilya didn't want to be anywhere else. He was home.

FIN

End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!
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