

meanwhile,

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77280796) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77280796>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander , Hayden Pike , Montreal Voyageurs Team Ensemble (Game Changers)
Additional Tags:	Domestic Fluff , Domestic , mentions of rose - Freeform , Mentions of JJ , Alternate Universe - College/University , Fraternities & Sororities , Twin Peaks References , Shane is a nerd , ilya is fond , Idiots in Love , Light Angst , Enemies to Lovers , Enemies to Friends to Lovers , Sexual Tension , Slow Burn
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-07 Words: 10,073 Chapters: 1/1

meanwhile,

by [hyuckyuk](#)

Summary

“It’s a mystery,” he added, quieter. “Small town one.”

The silence stretched again, but it didn’t scrape at him the way it usually did. It just hovered, fragile.

Shane waited for the joke. For the comment about it being boring or pretentious or a waste of time. He waited for the familiar sting. It didn’t come.

Instead, Ilya nodded once, slow and deliberate, like that answer had settled something.

“Okay,” he said. “I can do that.”

or

Shane and Ilya have spent months dancing around each other, teasing, competing, and sharing quiet, stolen moments. Between hockey practice, frat house chaos, and long nights watching Twin Peaks, the tension finally breaks—and neither of them can deny what’s been there all along.

Notes

hi !!! so i havent written anything in AGES but the hollanov curse got to me lol im rewatching twin peaks rn and this just came to me okay so u dont have to watch twin peaks to understand this theres just a few references !!!

anyways, hope u guys enjoy !!

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

Shane Hollander hated living in a frat house. He really did. He hated the noise, the smell, the way it was *always* dirty, messy and disgusting despite his own best efforts to keep it somehow liveable (all in vain). He only really *accepted* living in one because despite the scholarship he got for playing damn good hockey, he still had to pay for housing and the hockey team's frat was the best (monetarily speaking) he could find.

But what he hated the most was not having a television for himself.

"Dude, what the fuck *is* this?" he heard Hayden's voice from behind where he was sitting at the (disgusting) couch.

"I'm just trying to watch a movie." he sighed, because that was the thousandth time he *tried* to watch something other than fucking Hangover 2 ou Fast and Furious 7 and was interrupted by someone who just couldn't understand the beauty of *weird movies*.

Really it wasn't even that weird. It was just Inland Empire. A *classic*, in Shane's humble opinion. And now it was ruined. Totally ruined, because Hayden's commentary had caught the attention of some of the guys and now they were all laughing as poor Laura Dern suffered from the most horrific experience ever. Classic frat behavior.

But worst of all (because honestly Shane could care less about his team's opinions about cinematography) was catching a glimpse of fucking Ilya Rozanov in the back of the room, his brows furrowed, like he was really concentrating, and when their eyes suddenly met, he had the nerve to smirk at Shane as if Shane was something he couldn't quite place.

Shane gave up on watching his movie and just went to his room, where he didn't have a TV but at least he had peace and quiet.

Shane was accustomed to Ilya Rozanov's stares more than anyone else. He was usually the one being stared at. It was honestly spooky, but he had gotten kind of used to it, after knowing him for almost a year now.

He was always doing it. Looking at people like he was preying on them. Waiting for the right moment to attack. Usually with stinging words that always left someone furious, and sometimes even violent.

Shane never got *furious* when Ilya targeted him, it was more of a game. Ilya would stare for a while, then say some bullshit about his game, how slow he was on the ice, how weak his backhand was, and Shane always had something just as nasty to respond back on the tip of his tongue.

But he didn't say anything. In his room, Shane replayed it again and again and again. The way Ilya had just stared at him right into his eyes.

Why did he look like that? Shane had been mocked before, that was familiar. The confusing part was that Ilya hadn't even *laughed*.

Maybe Shane was reading too much into it. Or maybe that was exactly the problem.

Shane spent the following days hyper alert of Ilya. Waiting for something to happen. For the other shoe to drop.

But it never came.

Things were *normal*. Well, maybe not totally normal because Shane felt as if Ilya was quieter. He kept making a thinking face, like he was trying to form a thought that never came (maybe he had taken one hit too many on the ice). As if he was waiting for Shane to make the next move, to say something so he could pretend nothing had happened.

Yeah, because nothing did happen, idiot, his own brain supplied.

But he kept looking. And Shane kept pretending he didn't notice.

Two days later, there he was. On that disgusting couch again.

It was Friday, and most of the guys had gone out, as usual, and as usual Shane had declined all of the invites, he already had plans.

He didn't know if Ilya was home, he probably wasn't anyway, as the so-acclaimed playboy usually went out on Fridays and came back only on Sundays, but that didn't matter (Shane had to tell himself that a couple of times).

Shane had gone lengths to make sure nothing would disturb him tonight, he even made sure to book the entire night on the television for himself on the frat's groupchat, not that any of the guys took him seriously, but it should count for something, right?

So there he was. Wearing his most comfortable pajamas, his glasses and a can of ginger ale on his hand. This was going to be the perfect night.

He was going to watch *Twin Peaks*. His favorite show *ever*. And no one would stop him.

Except.

“This one is different from other.”

Shane didn't answer right away.

The theme song kept playing, low and steady, and Shane was holding his breath. He could feel Ilya's presence without looking, the weight of him settling into the space like it always did — uninvited, impossible to ignore.

“Is different, right?” Ilya said again, his voice low. Not teasing. Just...there.

That, too, was different.

Ilya's voice was usually loud, sharp-edged, made to carry across locker rooms and bars. This one was quieter, rougher, like it hadn't been used much tonight. It settled somewhere uncomfortably deep in Shane's chest.

“It's a show,” Shane said finally, eyes fixed on the screen, avoiding looking at Rozanov
“They're usually different.”

The words came out flat, defensive. He hated that he could hear it himself. He hated how small Rozanov made him feel.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Ilya lean back into the arm of the couch. He wasn't dressed to go out. No stupid tight shirt, no polished boots. Just a worn hoodie and sweatpants, like he'd meant to stay in. His hair was a mess, soft-looking, curls falling into his face like he hadn't bothered with it at all.

Shane looked away too quickly.

He shouldn't have noticed that.

He definitely shouldn't have noticed that it was Friday.

“You were watching movies before,” Ilya said. Not accusing. Just observant. “Strange ones.”

“Yeah,” Shane replied. “So?”

His jaw tightened. He waited for the usual follow-up. The smirk. The punchline.

Instead —

“This feels... slow,” Ilya said. “Not much going on.”

Shane glanced at him then, sharp and involuntary.

Ilya was watching the screen like it mattered. Brows drawn together, mouth slightly open, that same thinking look Shane had been pretending not to see all week. He looked... focused. Present.

Home.

“Not yet,” Shane said before he could stop himself.

He shifted on the couch, putting a little more space between them that didn’t really exist.

“It’s a mystery,” he added, quieter. “Small town one.”

The silence stretched again, but it didn’t scrape at him the way it usually did. It just hovered, fragile.

Shane waited for the joke. For the comment about it being boring or pretentious or a waste of time. He waited for the familiar sting.

It didn’t come.

Instead, Ilya nodded once, slow and deliberate, like that answer had settled something.

“Okay,” he said. “I can do that.”

Something in Shane’s chest went uneven.

He told himself it was nothing. Just Ilya being strange in a new way. Just a coincidence that he was home on a Friday, dressed like this, sitting here like he belonged.

Still.

Shane didn’t reach for the remote.

Didn’t tell him to leave.

And when the episode really began, he let himself stay exactly where he was.

Shane really didn’t think Ilya would stick around for much longer. He figured he’d get bored, throw one last comment just to be annoying and disappear back into the night — he loved calling Shane boring anyway.

But he did stay.

And worse (or better, Shane wasn’t sure), he seemed to actually enjoy the show. He didn’t fidget, didn’t complain, didn’t reach for his phone. He watched. Really watched. Like he was trying to understand it on its own terms.

He would throw a few comments sometimes, quietly, spaced out between long stretches of silence. When Laura’s family found out about her being dead, Shane felt Ilya shift beside him, the couch dipping under his weight.

“Hurts to watch,” he said.

Shane nodded without looking at him. His throat felt tight, even though he’d seen this scene a dozen times before. Maybe it was different watching it next to someone else. Maybe it was

different watching it next to Ilya.

When Agent Cooper made his entrance, Ilya snorted softly.

“Sounds like you, Hollander.”

Shane scoffed, but he couldn't stop the corner of his mouth from lifting.

“He's my favorite character,” he said, like it was a confession he hadn't meant to make.

“Figured.”

The word landed strangely. Not sharp. Not mocking. Almost warm. Shane told himself he was imagining it.

The episode moved on, the room growing darker as the night deepened, the only light coming from the TV. Shane relaxed without realizing it, shoulders sinking into the couch, knees drawn up slightly. This was his show. His safe thing. And somehow, inexplicably, it didn't feel threatened anymore.

He laughed softly at parts he loved, smiled openly, forgot to guard himself.

“I like this part,” he said during the scene about coffee, the words slipping out before he could catch them.

“I can see,” Ilya replied.

His voice was low, unguarded, closer than it had any right to be. Shane startled, heat creeping up his neck. That wasn't the Rozanov he knew — loud, cruel, deliberate.

But he liked this one.

He didn't know why he felt so calm sitting there, shoulder-to-shoulder with his rival, listening to the quiet hum of the house around them. Maybe it was the late hour. Maybe it was the show. Maybe it was the simple fact that, for once, Ilya wasn't trying to win.

When the episode ended, Shane yawned, long and unashamed, eyes burning with sleep. He turned the TV off, plunging the room into darkness, but didn't move right away.

Neither did Ilya.

The silence wasn't awkward. It was thick, almost heavy, like something waiting to be named.

“So who killed the girl?” Ilya asked eventually.

Shane smiled into the dark, a small, private thing.

“You'll have to watch and see.”

“When?”

The word caught him off guard. Shane blinked, heart giving an unexpected stutter. He hadn't planned for this part — for interest, for continuity, for Ilya wanting more.

“Uh,” he said, buying himself a second. “Maybe Sunday? We don't have training early on Monday.”

“Not now?”

There was something almost childish in the way he said it, impatient and sincere, and Shane laughed before he could stop himself.

“It's late, Rozanov,” he said, stretching as he stood. “I need my sleep.”

“Yeah, yeah. Beauty sleep,” Ilya muttered. “Okay. It is date then.”

He said it lightly, like a joke, like it didn't matter.

Then he got up and left, footsteps fading down the hallway, leaving the room colder than it had been before.

Shane stayed where he was for a long moment, staring into the dark, heart racing for reasons he didn't want to examine.

A date.

He shook his head, finally standing, more confused than he'd ever been — and, deep down, already waiting for Sunday.

They didn't talk about it. About any of it.

Saturday came and went in fragments. The sound of skates on ice, the smell of sweat and cheap deodorant in the locker room, voices overlapping too loud. Everyone was talking about how Rozanov had stayed home on a Friday night, like it was some kind of urban legend.

Ilya just shrugged when they teased him about it, lazy and unbothered, saying he had better things to do than get drunk on “bad American vodka.” Like it was nothing. Like it hadn't mattered.

Shane could feel his cheeks heat up anyway.

Better things.

Was that him? Him and his stupid, slow, weird show? The one with lines Rozanov hadn't understood so he had made them turn the subtitles on and the one Shane had half-expected him to mock into the ground?

That was ridiculous. Obviously.

He told himself it had to be some kind of game. A setup. Some long, cruel con where Ilya lulled him into comfort just to knock him flat on the ice later. To win like he always wanted.

Yeah. That made sense.

Except it didn't.

Because something in the back of Shane's mind kept replaying the night before in unwanted detail: the quiet, the way Ilya had watched the screen like it mattered, the way his voice had gone low and unguarded. How strangely open.

Vulnerable.

Shane waited for the joke to come and for Ilya to throw it back in his face in front of the guys, to turn it into ammunition, to make him regret every second of it.

But he didn't.

He didn't say a word.

He just kept looking at Shane — not openly, not enough for anyone else to notice. A glance held half a second too long that felt intentional. A quiet acknowledgment that lived only between them.

A private little thing.

And Shane hated how badly he wanted to keep it.

What started as one episode turned into a habit.

Shane stopped noticing when Ilya sat down because the weight of him had become part of the room, something expected, like the low hum of the fridge or the way the floorboards creaked when someone walked past. The couch dipped and Shane shifted instinctively, then didn't bother correcting himself when their knees touched and stayed touching, the contact unremarkable in the way things only became after they happened often enough.

"Move," Ilya muttered once, half-hearted.

"You move," Shane replied, not actually making any effort to do so.

Neither of them did.

He watched the screen, listened to the dialogue, argued under his breath, and let himself relax into the shared space, into the warmth at his side, into the quiet that no longer felt like something he had to defend. Ilya didn't leave when the credits rolled, or when the music lingered too long, or when the screen faded to black between episodes.

"That's it?" Ilya asked, squinting at the TV. "They just end it like that?"

"That's the point," Shane said automatically. "You're supposed to sit with it."

Ilya huffed. "Hate that."

He stayed anyway.

Leaning back, asking questions that pretended to be insults, paying attention in that infuriating, deliberate way of his. Shane talked more than he meant to, explained symbolism, corrected pronunciations, laughed when he caught himself doing it and didn't stop.

"You get really annoying when you like something," Ilya said once. "This and hockey."

Shane didn't look at him. "You're still here."

"Unfortunately."

The rivalry didn't soften where it mattered most. On the ice it sharpened, elbows biting harder, chirps landing closer to the bone, like all that closeness had to be displaced somewhere else.

"You're slower today, Hollander," Ilya taunted, breath fogging between them.

"Still beat you," Shane shot back, breathless, grinning despite himself.

The guys noticed in pieces — glances held a second too long, jokes thrown like feelers. Someone laughed about Rozanov disappearing every Sunday. Someone else asked Shane if he'd finally found a life.

"It's a TV show," Shane shrugged. "Relax."

Ilya didn't.

"Drop it," he snapped, sharp enough to cut through the locker room. "Mind your own business."

Shane kept his eyes on his hands, on his skates, on anything but him, aware of the strange safety in knowing Ilya would never let it turn into something ugly. After that, the jokes stopped.

The Sundays didn't.

The show unfolded in its own slow, strange way, conversations spilling out and tangling with memories Shane hadn't planned on sharing, with silences that felt earned rather than

awkward.

“Do you think he knows?” Ilya asked once, nodding at the screen.

Shane thought about it. “Yeah,” he said. “I think he does.”

Ilya hummed, considering.

Shane let him sit closer. Let him stay. Let the space between them dissolve until it would have taken effort to put it back. And by then, he wasn't sure he wanted to.

They were very close to the end of the season now. Episode seven had started and Shane already felt uneasy. This was going to be a tough one.

He'd stayed quiet for the most of it. Not talking excitedly much like he used to, and he knew Ilya could feel it too.

“Things got weird now,” Rozanov tried making conversation. Shane just murmured a weak yeah that he couldn't even hear.

Something about it all felt wrong. Or maybe too right, which was worse. This thing with Rozanov was messing with his head, he felt like he was going crazy.

He liked it. Shane didn't like that he liked it. This wasn't supposed to happen, he wasn't supposed to look forward to this, to Rozanov being by his side so comfortably, so soft, without holding back.

It was obvious that the russian liked it too, by the way he kept coming back, usually with popcorn, ginger ale for Shane and a Coke for himself.

It was almost domestic. Something only *theirs*. So soft and tender that Shane was scared something would suddenly go wrong. He didn't want it to go wrong. He wanted this.

And he felt like Ilya wanted that too, with the way he paid so much attention to the details, how sometimes their bodies got glued together on the couch and none of them moved, how Ilya actually sought Shane's touch, like he was aching for it.

For the first time in a long while, Shane didn't know whether he was scared of losing Ilya, or of what would happen if he didn't.

They still hadn't pressed play.

The episode waited on the screen, frozen in a blue haze that softened the room in a way it didn't deserve. The frat house was quiet for once, the kind of quiet that felt borrowed, temporary. Ilya was stretched out beside him, solid and warm, his knee brushing Shane's whenever he shifted. Close enough that Shane had stopped noticing where one of them ended and the other began.

It felt routine, comfortable. Like something he shouldn't have.

Shane's phone vibrated against the cushion.

The sound was sharp in the stillness.

He looked down, frowning—and then his stomach sank.

Rose.

He answered immediately, heart already in his throat.

"Hey," he said, voice dropping without him meaning it to.

He listened, shoulders tensing as her words spilled out, rushed and uneven. His fingers curled into the fabric of his pajama pants, grounding himself. He nodded even though she couldn't see him, like that might help.

"Yeah," he said quietly. "Yeah, I can come."

He glanced sideways.

Ilya hadn't turned his head, but Shane could feel the shift anyway—the subtle withdrawal, the way his body seemed to go still, like a muscle locking in place.

"It's okay," Shane added, too fast and eager. "I wasn't really doing anything."

The words tasted wrong the second they left his mouth.

He pushed himself up, already reaching for his hoodie, like if he moved fast enough he wouldn't have to sit with the feeling creeping up his spine.

"I'll be there soon," he said into the phone. "I promise."

When the call ended, the room felt colder. Empty. Like something fragile had cracked and he hadn't heard the sound.

"I'm sorry," Shane said, turning to Ilya. "She just needs—"

"It's fine," Ilya cut in, voice low.

Not sharp. Not teasing. Flat.

"We can finish later."

He stood, setting his drink down with care, like he was afraid of making noise. He didn't look at Shane when he walked away.

Shane stood there for a second too long, heart thudding, the echo of I wasn't really doing anything looping in his head.

He told himself Ilya understood.

He told himself this didn't mean anything.

But he was not so sure anymore.

Ilya shut his door and leaned his forehead against it, trying to even his breathing.

I wasn't even doing anything.

The words lodged deep, irritating in a way he couldn't shake. Not because Shane had left—he would've left too. He knew that. He wasn't angry at Rose. Wasn't even angry at Shane.

He was angry at himself.

For staying for so long and expecting something in return. For getting too comfortable in their bubble that now that it was popped he couldn't help but feel disappointed.

His chest felt tight, that familiar pressure he usually worked out on the ice or drowned in noise and bodies.

This was worse. This was quiet.

He picked up his phone, thumb hovering over Shane's name, then locked the screen again.

No.

If Shane wanted him there, he would've said it.

If this meant anything, Shane wouldn't have called it nothing.

By the time the front door opened again later that night, Ilya had already decided.

Next time, he'd remember his place.

The week had been wrong from the start.

Not loud-wrong. Not obvious. Just... off, in a way that settled under Shane's skin and stayed there.

Every practice, every shared space, every almost-look that never quite happened stretched the distance between them thinner and tighter at the same time.

By the time they stepped onto the ice that morning, Shane already felt frayed.

The rink was too bright.

The lights hummed overhead, bouncing off the ice and making everything feel exposed, like there was nowhere to hide from the tension that had followed him all week. Shane skated out, muscles wound tight, breath shallow, already braced for something he couldn't name.

Ilya was there.

Of course he was.

Already geared up perfectly. Helmet on, jaw set, eyes forward. He passed Shane without so much as a glance, like he was skating past empty space.

All week, Shane had waited for it to break—for a comment, a look, some sharp remark he could push back against. Anything familiar. Instead, there had only been this: distance, measured and deliberate.

The drill started.

Ilya skated like nothing was wrong. Fast. Controlled. Untouchable. His passes were flawless, hitting tape after tape—just never Shane's. Not mistakes. Choices.

Once, Shane called out, voice cutting through the air.

"Rozanov."

Ilya didn't turn.

The puck clipped his stick and slammed into the boards.

The sound echoed longer than it should have, sharp and hollow, vibrating through his chest. Shane forced himself to skate back into line, head down, fingers tightening around his stick until his knuckles ached inside his gloves.

He told himself to focus. To breathe. To stop reading into things.

But his eyes kept finding Ilya anyway.

Focused and cold and already moving on.

And that was when it hit him—not all at once, but slowly, sinking in like something he'd been trying not to name.

This wasn't about the drill. Or the missed pass. Or even the week that had felt stretched too thin.

This was about the couch.

The quiet.

The way Ilya had walked away without looking back.

Shane swallowed hard, chest tight, and pushed off again, skating harder than necessary, like speed might shake the feeling loose.

It didn't.

Because for the first time since this thing between them had started—whatever it was, unnamed and fragile—Shane understood something with painful clarity:

He hadn't just been left out of the play.

He'd been shut out.

Practice dragged on like it would last forever.

The drills weren't hitting. Everyone seemed out of their usual game. Especially Shane.

The whistle cut through the rink, sharp and final.

"Reset," the coach barked.

Shane skated toward the boards, lungs burning, sweat cooling too fast under his pads. He kept his eyes on the ice, on the scuffed lines near his skates, anywhere but—

"Hey,"

He looked up.

Hayden stood there, helmet off, concerned look on his face. And that alone made Shane feel all wrong.

"What's going on with you two?" he asked with a low voice "You and Rozanov."

Shane frowned. "What do you mean?"

"You're off," Hayden said, glancing down the ice "Both of you. All week."

Shane opened his mouth, searching for something—anything—that didn't sound stupid.

“Nothing’s going on,” he said finally.

Hayden snorted. “Sure.”

A shadow crossed his peripheral vision.

“You guys talking about feelings?” Ilya asked pleasantly as he skated up. “Because I forgot to bring diary.”

Hayden turned to him, unimpressed. “I’m just saying you two are playing like shit.”

Ilya smiled.

It wasn’t a nice one.

“Funny,” he said. “From the guy who missed three passes last drill.”

Hayden bristled. “That’s not the point.”

“Oh, I think it is,” Ilya replied smoothly. “If you are looking for problems on the ice, maybe start with your own stick.”

Shane’s stomach twisted.

Hayden’s jaw tightened. “You’ve been freezing him out.”

Ilya tilted his head, mock-curious. “Have I? Or is he just slower this week?”

Shane felt the words land like a slap.

Before he could react, Ilya continued, voice light, almost bored.

“But don’t worry,” he added. “I’ll adjust. I always do.”

The implication hung there—sharp and unmistakable.

Hayden scoffed. “You’re being an asshole.”

Ilya’s smile widened just a fraction. “And still better than you.”

The whistle blew again, shrill and demanding.

“Line up!” the coach shouted.

Ilya pushed off first, skating away like the conversation had never happened.

Shane stood there for half a second longer, heart pounding, then followed.

As he took his place, he realized something cold and sickening:

Ilya was making sure it hurt.

The house was too quiet when they got back.

Not the usual kind of quiet that meant people were asleep or passed out somewhere upstairs, but the kind that only happened when everyone else was gone. No music bleeding through the walls, no laughter, no voices drifting down the hallway. Just the low hum of the fridge and the distant tick of the old clock over the kitchen sink.

Shane shut the door behind them, the sound echoing louder than it should have.

They were alone.

Really alone.

Most of the guys were out celebrating the end of the week, others crashing at girlfriends' places, a couple gone for the weekend. Shane had known that already. He'd felt it the second he stepped inside—the way the space opened up around them, empty and unavoidable.

Ilya didn't say anything.

He kicked his shoes off by the door and walked in like Shane wasn't there, pads slung over his shoulder, posture tight and controlled. He didn't head for the couch. Didn't even glance at it.

Shane stood there for a moment, helmet still in his hands, fingers curled too tightly around the straps. His chest felt full in the wrong way, pressure building with nowhere to go.

The living room looked unchanged. The couch. The TV. The exact spot where they'd sat, close and careless and comfortable.

It felt like a different lifetime.

Ilya set his gear down by the stairs with deliberate care, every movement precise, restrained. He wiped his face with the hem of his shirt, exposing a strip of skin before pulling it back down again, like it didn't mean anything.

Shane watched anyway.

"Rozanov," he said, and his voice came out rougher than he meant it to.

Ilya paused.

Just for a second.

He didn't turn.

The silence settled heavier, thick and pressing, filling every corner of the empty house. Shane took a step forward before he could stop himself, heart pounding, because there was no one else here to interrupt them this time.

And whatever had been building all week had nowhere left to go.

“Why are you doing this?” Shane’s voice was barely a whisper.

This time, Ilya did turn around, his face was unreadable, almost indifferent and it was just so off. That wasn’t the Rozanov he knew, it was something bitter and painful. And he had to know why.

“What did I do?” he didn’t care if he sounded desperate. He needed things to go back to normal.

He needed Rosanov’s laughter and low voice asking stupid questions and the feel of his skin touching his own like it was nothing.

When did this become their normal?

“Not everything is about you, Hollander,” Ilya’s sharp words cut through the heavy silence like knives.

“You won’t even look at me,” Shane could feel his chest tightening and his breathing getting heavier. He wouldn’t cry. *Couldn’t* cry. Not in front of Ilya.

Ilya let out a short, humorless laugh.

“Maybe I’m just tired of looking,” he said. His voice was calm, but there was something jagged underneath it, like he was holding the edge of a blade. “You ever think of that?”

Shane shook his head, slow, disbelieving. “That doesn’t make sense.”

“It does,” Ilya replied immediately. “You just don’t like the answer.”

He took a step closer, not invading Shane’s space, but close enough that Shane could feel the heat of him again. It made his stomach twist painfully.

“I didn’t do anything wrong,” Shane said, quieter now. “I left to help Rose. You know that.”

Ilya’s jaw clenched.

“I know,” he said. “That’s the problem.”

The words landed heavy between them.

Shane frowned, confusion and something like fear creeping in. “I don’t understand.”

Ilya looked at him then. Really looked at him. His eyes were dark, sharp, stripped of all the usual teasing and cruelty. What was left was raw and unguarded in a way that made Shane’s

chest ache.

“I don’t stay where I’m optional,” Ilya said.

The sentence came out flat, controlled, like it had been rehearsed too many times in his head.

Shane opened his mouth, then closed it again. His throat felt tight.

“I never—” he started, then stopped. The words tangled up, useless. “You weren’t nothing. I didn’t mean—”

“I know what you meant,” Ilya cut in, voice rising just enough to crack. He took a breath, forcing it back down. “You didn’t mean anything.”

Silence rushed in, thick and suffocating.

Shane felt it then, fully, the weight of it. Not just the couch. Not just Twin Peaks. Not just the way Ilya had been sitting too close, like he belonged there.

The choice.

The fact that he hadn’t even realized he was making one.

“Ilya,” he said softly, the name slipping out before he could stop it.

Ilya flinched.

Just barely.

And that was worse than any insult.

Ilya laughs.

It’s sharp, hollow, nothing like the sound Shane has been missing all week.

“Relax,” he says. “You’re not that important.”

The words hit clean. Efficient. Meant to end things.

“This was just convenient,” Ilya adds, shrugging like it costs him nothing. “You were there. That’s all.”

For a second, Shane almost lets it work.

Almost lets the shame settle in his chest, almost lets Ilya walk away with the upper hand, with the lie intact.

But something in him snaps instead.

“That’s bullshit.”

The words come out rough, unfiltered. Shane barely recognizes his own voice.

Ilya stills.

“You don’t look at people like that when they’re just convenient,” Shane continues, stepping closer now, heart hammering. “You don’t come back every night. You don’t bring my stupid ginger ale and sit there asking questions you pretend not to care about.”

Ilya’s jaw tightens.

“You don’t get to tell me what I—”

“I *know* you’re lying,” Shane cuts in. “Because I was *there*.”

The silence that follows is fragile, trembling.

Ilya scoffs, but it’s weaker this time. “You are imagining things.”

“No,” Shane says quietly. “I imagined it at first. But not anymore.”

He takes a breath, forcing himself to stay where he is, not retreat.

“You didn’t stop because it didn’t matter,” he says. “You stopped because it did.”

That lands.

Ilya turns away, dragging a hand down his face, pacing once like a caged animal. When he speaks again, his voice is lower, stripped raw around the edges.

“I do not do this,” he says. “I do not sit around waiting to see if someone feels like staying.”

“I didn’t mean to make you feel like that,” Shane says immediately.

“I know,” Ilya snaps, spinning back around.

His eyes are bright now. Not with tears. With something sharper.

“You didn’t choose,” he continues. “You just left. And I told myself I was stupid for expecting anything else.”

Shane’s chest aches.

“I should’ve stayed,” he says again. “Or at least— I should’ve told you I wanted to come back.”

Ilya lets out a breath that sounds almost like a laugh, almost like a crack.

“And I should’ve said something,” he admits, barely audible. “Instead of pretending I don’t care.”

They stand there, the space between them charged and fragile, neither winning, neither losing.

Neither of them moves.

The silence isn't sharp anymore. It hangs, heavy and uncertain, like something bruised but not broken. Shane's chest rises and falls too fast; he forces himself to slow it down.

He takes a step forward before he can talk himself out of it.

"I don't want this to be nothing," he says, quiet, stripped bare of defensiveness.

Ilya's eyes flick to him, then away again. "Then do not make it go away."

Shane swallows.

He lifts his hand, stops halfway. Waits.

The space between them stretches, taut as a wire.

When his fingers finally graze Ilya's sleeve, it's accidental enough to be believable. The fabric shifts under his touch. Ilya stiffens — not pulling away, not leaning in. Just registering.

Shane lets his hand fall slightly, brushing skin this time. Wrist to wrist. Warm. Solid.

Ilya's breath catches.

For a heartbeat, nothing else exists.

Then Ilya's fingers slide against Shane's, hesitantly testing. Not a grab. Not a hold. Just contact, mutual and deliberate.

Shane doesn't move.

Neither does Ilya.

The touch settles between them, quiet and loaded, saying everything they're still too careful to say out loud.

"Do not make me guess," Ilya says softly.

"I won't," Shane replies, just as soft. "I'll tell you."

Ilya releases him first, stepping back like he needs the distance to stay upright. His expression is unreadable again, but his shoulders have dropped, tension leaking out.

He doesn't leave.

And Shane stands there, fingers still tingling, knowing something fragile has shifted — not fixed, not finished, but real.

They don't move for a long moment, just standing there, breathing in the same quiet air, letting the contact linger longer than it should. Shane can feel the warmth of Ilya's skin even after their fingers separate, like a trace burned into his nerves. His chest is tight, lungs struggling to fill, but he doesn't step back. He can't.

Ilya finally drops his gaze to the floor, hands shoved in his hoodie pockets, shoulders still tense but less rigid. The shadows from the ceiling light flicker over his face, softening it in a way Shane isn't used to seeing. He wants to say something, anything, but the words stick in his throat.

Instead, Shane moves slowly toward the couch. He sits, careful not to make a sound, not wanting to break whatever fragile thing hangs in the space between them. Ilya follows, settling a little farther down the couch than Shane expects, but close enough that the air between them is charged.

Neither speaks. The silence is thick, but it doesn't feel hostile. It feels like a pause, like the house itself is holding its breath, waiting for them to breathe again. Shane watches the little details — the way Ilya's hair curls over his forehead, the faint shadow of his jawline in the dim light, the way he shifts slightly as if testing whether Shane will reach out again.

Shane doesn't. Not yet. He just notices, quietly, storing everything like a secret he doesn't want to share.

Ilya breaks the quiet first, voice low, almost a whisper. "You are staring."

Shane swallows, cheeks heating. "I'm... not," he mumbles, though his eyes refuse to leave him.

"You are," Ilya says, smirk ghosting across his lips. "Pathetic, Hollander."

Shane laughs, soft and uneven, and it feels like relief spilling out, the tension in his chest loosening just enough. "Yeah, well, you're not exactly subtle either."

Ilya glances at him, that same sharp, unreadable expression, and then finally tilts his head back, letting a breath escape like a secret he doesn't care if Shane hears. "We are disaster," he mutters.

Shane smiles, a little bitter, a little tender. "Yeah. But... I think it works."

The words hang between them, unspoken but understood. And for the first time all week, Shane feels like he doesn't have to pretend, like the tension, the sarcasm, the walls — none of it matters here. Not tonight.

He leans back, letting himself sink into the couch, and notices Ilya doing the same. Not close, not touching — but close enough that it feels like a quiet truce.

The world outside the house might still be messy, still loud, still unforgiving, but in this moment, with Ilya just sitting there, Shane feels like he's home.

The next week slipped in almost unnoticed. They fell back into routine, like a rhythm that had always been there but was suddenly sharper, closer, warmer. Shane noticed it in small things first — the way Ilya would hand him his coat sometimes without being asked, the quiet glance from across the locker room that said exactly what neither of them dared to speak.

They sat together more often now, in the cafeteria, in the living room, even at practice. Not touching, not openly affectionate, but close enough that it felt deliberate, claiming space for just the two of them. Shane caught himself laughing at things he didn't usually find funny, the kind of soft, small laughs that made his chest ache in the best way.

"You really do have the worst backhand," Ilya teased one afternoon, tossing a puck toward him with just enough force to make Shane lunge. Shane swore under his breath and smirked. "Says the guy who nearly missed the net yesterday."

Ilya laughed, a low, satisfied sound that made Shane forget the world for a second. He leaned back, stretching his arms over his head, hair falling messily into his eyes, and Shane caught himself staring, heart stuttering.

But even in these moments, the tension lingered, thin but persistent, like a shadow at the edge of every laugh, every brush of hands passing a notebook, every quiet evening watching *Twin Peaks* alone together.

Shane felt it most on the couch at night, when Ilya would settle in beside him after practice, hoodie rumpled, sweatpants loose, curling into his own space without asking. They didn't always touch, but Shane could feel the heat between them, the brush of air as they shifted, the faint sound of Ilya's breathing.

"You're too quiet tonight," Shane whispered once, not wanting to break the fragile calm.

Ilya just smirked, low and sly. "Careful, Hollander. Might start thinking too much."

Shane laughed softly, but his chest tightened anyway. Because he knew. He knew this closeness wasn't permanent. That sooner or later, something would shift — a word, a touch, a confession — and everything they'd built, every quiet joke, every small routine, would have to change.

Still, he stayed. Still, he let himself lean a little closer, let his shoulder brush Ilya's, let the warmth settle there, stubborn and comforting.

And for now, that was enough.

They were alone in the living room again, the evening quiet except for the faint hum of the heater. Shane was curled up on the couch, hoodie over his head, knees drawn up, a notebook balanced on his thighs as he was finishing up his work. Ilya was on the floor, leaning against the couch, elbows resting on the cushions, hair falling in soft curls over his forehead. The room smelled faintly of popcorn and sweat, warm and domestic in a way Shane hadn't realized he craved.

He looked at Ilya. He had been doing that a lot lately. *Really* looking. The way Ilya's jaw tightened when he laughed at something Shane muttered under his breath. The way his fingers drummed absentmindedly on the carpet. The tilt of his head as he watched Shane, patient, steady, like he wasn't just seeing him but trying to understand him.

Shane's chest tightened. He realized, painfully, that it wasn't just familiarity, not just comfort. He liked Ilya. More than he'd expected. More than he could ignore. The way his heart skipped when Ilya leaned just a fraction closer. The warmth that spread through him whenever Ilya laughed, soft and low, or tossed him a look that made his stomach flip.

And then Shane caught it—the subtle pull from Ilya, the careful way he mirrored Shane's small movements, how he lingered just long enough when handing him a blanket, letting their knees brush ever so slightly. Not accidental. Deliberate. Shane's breath caught in his throat.

Ilya's eyes flicked up, meeting his, and Shane felt the weight of that gaze. Not teasing, not sarcastic, not distant — just present. Shane's pulse raced. He could see it there, too: the way Ilya stayed, the quiet attention, the way he let Shane fill the space beside him without complaint. It was soft, but there was tension in it, a thread of something neither of them dared to name out loud.

Shane swallowed, heart hammering. *He feels it too.* He could feel it in the tilt of Ilya's shoulders, in the little hesitations, in the way his lips pressed together just slightly before he looked away. Shane had been trying to ignore the thought, but now it was undeniable. Ilya notices me. Ilya wants this too.

Shane shifted slightly, leaning back against the cushions, letting the couch give way beneath him. Ilya didn't flinch. Shane didn't move away. And in that couch, in that quiet moment, Shane realized just how deep it went. How much he *wanted* it, and how much Ilya wanted it too, even if neither of them would say it.

And for the first time, Shane allowed himself to smile, a little breathless, a little vulnerable. Because even if the world outside their quiet room was loud and messy, right now, with Ilya just there, noticing him, waiting, Shane knew that whatever it was — whatever this was — was theirs alone.

Shane's fingers itched, and before he could think better of it, he let his hand shift slightly, just enough for the tips of his fingers to brush against Ilya's hair. The contact was light,

accidental-seeming, but Shane felt it spark along his skin, warm and alive.

Ilya froze for a heartbeat, eyes lifting slowly to meet Shane's. There was no smirk, no teasing edge. Just awareness, sharp and steady, and Shane felt his chest tighten in response. The subtle weight of that gaze pressed down on him, and for the first time he didn't want to pull away.

"Careful," Ilya murmured, voice low, rough around the edges in a way that made Shane's stomach twist. "Do not start something you can't handle."

Shane's lips curved into a small, almost shy smile. "I think I can handle it," he whispered, more to himself than to Ilya.

His hair was so soft. Shane couldn't help but start carding his fingers through the golden locks of Ilya's hair, it almost soothed him.

He then moved to Ilya's nape, feeling the goosebumps start to rise, and he smiled to himself. He could almost bet that Ilya was blushing, with the way his neck suddenly felt hot and red. And Shane just couldn't stop touching him.

Ilya leaned back slightly, letting the space between them remain small but deliberate, a question hanging in the air. Shane's heartbeat thundered in his ears. The brush of warmth from Ilya's shoulders was enough to make him hyper-aware of every subtle movement, every inhale, every flicker of expression.

Shane's hand twitched again, wanting to linger, wanting more. Ilya noticed. Shane could see it in the slight tightening of his jaw, the tilt of his head, the way he didn't move away. It was acknowledgment, consent, and challenge all at once. Like he was asking for more.

They stayed like that for a long moment, suspended in quiet and tension. Shane's mind raced, chest tight, stomach fluttering, but beneath all the chaos, he felt it: Ilya wanted this too. He could feel it in the careful way Ilya matched his posture, the small, deliberate closeness, the way he let Shane take the lead without protest.

Shane let out a shaky breath, leaning back into the cushions, letting the warmth of Ilya's presence settle over him. It was soft, intimate, and entirely theirs, and for the first time, Shane didn't feel the need to hide the way his chest was pounding, the way his thoughts kept spiraling, the way he had wanted this for so long.

And in that quiet room, with Ilya just there, Shane finally let himself believe that maybe, just maybe, they didn't have to be careful forever.

Ilya didn't pull away. Not at all. Instead, he tilted his head slightly, eyes lifting to meet Shane's, steady and sharp, like he was daring Shane to do more. Heat pooled low in Shane's stomach, spreading upward, making his chest tighten and his breath catch.

"You are making me crazy," Ilya murmured, voice low, roughened by quiet amusement. Shane swallowed, chest tightening further, because crazy was exactly what this felt like.

“Good,” Shane whispered, letting his hand linger on the curve of Ilya’s shoulder, just enough to feel the warmth under the fabric. He could see the faint rise and fall of Ilya’s collarbone, the soft hitch in his breath.

Ilya’s eyes flicked to Shane’s lips, then back to his eyes, and Shane’s pulse jumped. He leaned forward slightly, the couch giving just enough for him to lower himself toward Ilya without breaking the small, charged space between them.

“You like this,” Ilya said softly, not a question, more a statement, and the edge in his voice made Shane shiver. “You like being this close.”

Shane’s hands moved subtly, brushing hair aside, tracing a careful path down to Ilya’s shoulder again. “I...maybe,” he admitted, voice catching. “You like it too.”

Ilya leaned in fractionally, closer, the warmth of his body pressing up just enough against Shane to make the moment feel electric. Shane’s breath hitched; every small movement — the brush of hair, the tilt of a head, the soft inhale — was a spark that set his chest on fire.

They stayed like that, suspended, breathing in tandem, the distance shrinking with every second. Shane’s fingers lingered, Ilya’s presence heavy and insistent, a quiet challenge in the way he didn’t move away.

And then — the sharp clatter of something dropped in the kitchen. Both of them jerked apart instantly. Shane’s hand froze mid-air, Ilya’s inhale was sharp, and suddenly the spell was broken. Shane’s cheeks flamed, but even as he leaned back, he could still feel the heat lingering between them, the tension thick and undeniable.

Even with the interruption, Shane knew it: the fire was far from out, and Ilya wasn’t moving away anytime soon.

The memory of Shane’s fingers in his hair, the brush of skin against skin on the floor, haunted Ilya all day. He couldn’t shake it, couldn’t stop replaying the warmth, the weight of Shane’s presence, the way his chest had ached with something he didn’t have words for. Every step through the empty corridors of the frat house felt heavier, like gravity itself had conspired to keep Shane in his mind.

By the time he found Shane in the kitchen later, alone again, Ilya’s chest was tight, fingers curling into fists almost against his will. Shane was leaning casually against the counter, hoodie loose, hair messy and soft, glasses slipping slightly down his nose. It was the kind of sight that made Ilya’s stomach twist and pulse all at once, like hunger and fire combined.

He didn’t think. He moved. Across the floor, closing the space between them in a few long strides, stopping barely a foot away. Shane looked up, startled, the calm facade slipping just slightly.

“You are doing it on purpose,” Ilya said, voice low, rough, carrying the weight of every week they’d danced around each other. “You want to make me crazy, your stupid glasses and stupid

freckles.”

Shane’s breath caught, heart hammering. He could see it in Ilya’s eyes: desperation, need, that sharp edge of want that mirrored his own. He’d felt it too, every time Ilya leaned closer, every accidental brush of fingers or shoulders, every teasing smirk that had sent his stomach twisting.

“I’m... I’m not,” Shane said, low, voice tight, because hearing it out loud made it real. “I just... didn’t think you—”

“Think I would do something?” Ilya cut him off sharply, stepping closer, heat radiating between them. His hands hovered near Shane’s hips, but he didn’t touch yet, waiting, testing. “Do you know how hard it’s been... to watch you, to sit with you, and—” He swallowed roughly, voice dropping even lower, “...not have you?”

Shane’s fingers itched to reach out, but he froze, heart pounding in his chest. “You don’t have to...” he began, but the words died as Ilya’s gaze locked on his, dark and hungry, holding him in place.

“You think this is a joke?” Ilya’s voice was sharp, almost dangerous, every syllable heavy with desire. He stepped even closer, Shane’s breath hitched, chest tight, as the heat between them became unbearable. “I can’t... I can’t ignore it anymore, Shane.”

Shane’s own hands rose on instinct, brushing along Ilya’s arms, feeling the taut muscle under the hoodie. “I...” His voice cracked, but he let his body lean slightly closer, mirroring the desperation in Ilya’s movements. “I don’t want you to.”

Ilya’s lips parted, a soft, rough sound escaping him, and he leaned forward just enough for Shane to feel the heat of his body pressing into the curve of his own. Shane’s pulse thundered; every nerve was alive. Fingers curled through his hair, along his shoulders, teasing, deliberate, tasting the space between them.

The intensity between them was unbearable. Ilya’s hands hovered impossibly close, Shane’s own trembling slightly as they shared the air between their lips, the space charged with months of slowburn longing, teasing, frustration, and finally, the first real acknowledgment.

Then — Shane remembered where they were. A sudden yell from the back of the house, a loud noise somewhere, and the spell broke. Both of them jumped slightly, heat lingering, breaths ragged, hearts hammering.

“Not here,” Shane stepped back, cheeks flaming, but his gaze stayed locked on Ilya’s, who smirked, slow and dangerous, like he’d claimed this night—and Shane—for himself

The next week felt different, even if nothing had really changed. They still moved through their routines—practice, classes, meals, the usual frat chaos—but the air around them was charged, taut with something neither wanted to name out loud.

Shane found himself sitting closer to Ilya during breakfast, lingering just a fraction longer than necessary, letting his fingers brush against Rozanov's when reaching for the same carton of orange juice. Ilya noticed, of course, and smirked, that small, sharp curve of lips that made Shane's chest tighten.

"Slow down, Hollander," Ilya murmured, voice low, teasing, as if he'd been waiting for the gesture all week. Shane just rolled his eyes but didn't move away.

They ate together after practice too, Shane on the counter, Ilya perched on the floor, knees drawn up, sharing sandwiches and soda, laughing quietly at inside jokes nobody else could follow (like Ilya calling Hayden Andy). The other guys started noticing. J.J nudged someone across the table. "Look at them. They're... you know."

Shane's stomach dropped. He knew exactly what J.J meant, and he braced for Ilya to wave it off, deny it in front of everyone.

But Ilya only leaned back, arms crossed, smirk widening, and said, loud enough for the table to hear, "Yeah, we are. So what?"

Shane's jaw almost dropped. His face was probably red, because he'd been expecting some smooth deflection, some sarcastic dodge. Instead, Ilya owned it. Shane felt a rush of something—relief, heat, and an odd sort of pride.

"You are cute when shy, Hollander," Ilya said casually, voice low, eyes darkening just enough to make Shane swallow.

Later, in their rare free time, they found themselves sprawled across the empty living room, watching one of Shane's weird movies (that no one dared to call weird again), shoulders brushing, knees occasionally touching. Shane laughed at something Ilya whispered, small and rough, letting the contact linger.

They walked home from practice together more often, Ilya's arm brushing Shane's deliberately, Shane leaning into the small warmth. Even brief touches carried months of tension, of knowing and not acting, of quiet acknowledgment of what had been simmering.

And every time Shane caught Ilya staring just a little too long, a smirk twitching at the edge of his lips, Shane's chest fluttered. He knew Ilya felt the same pull he did, and even if they didn't speak it aloud, the world around them seemed sharper, brighter, loaded with everything neither dared to say fully.

By the end of the week, Shane realized just how much he was looking forward to these small moments, this stolen domesticity, this shared quiet. The world was chaos—practices, games, frat responsibilities—but here, in these tiny pockets, it was theirs, and that knowledge made every look, every brush, every teasing smirk electric.

The rink was loud, sticks clacking, skates scraping the ice, shouts echoing off the walls. Shane moved through drills with practiced ease, but his mind wasn't on skating. It kept drifting back to the weekend, to Ilya's smirk, to the brush of his fingers, to the warmth of him.

"Hey, slowpoke!" Hayden shouted, grinning, nudging another teammate. "What's wrong, Hollander? Daydreaming about Rozanov again?"

Shane felt heat rise to his cheeks. The usual instinct would be to snap back, but he froze, expecting the usual roll of Ilya's eyes, the "ignore them" shrug.

Instead, Ilya's skate cut closer, stopping just beside Shane. He leaned in slightly, voice low but sharp, dripping sarcasm. "Careful, Pike. Don't make Hollander realize you are bad player and bad friend."

"What's that supposed to—"

Ilya's smirk deepened, tilting his head toward Shane as if to say try me. "Do not bother," he added, loud enough for a few nearby teammates to hear. "I save Hollander from the embarrassment."

Shane blinked, caught somewhere between shock and amusement. The team snickered, whispering, nudging each other. He'd expected denial, a dodge, anything. But Ilya owned it, loud, sharp, and protective.

During a pause in drills, Shane skated over to the bench, towel draped over his shoulders. Ilya followed, dropping his stick carelessly, leaning against the boards. "What is the look for?" Ilya said, smirk in place. "What? Did I embarrass you in front of your crush Pike?"

Shane shook his head, grinning despite himself. "You do this on purpose."

"Of course I do," Ilya's voice was casual, almost teasing, but the weight behind it—dark eyes, deliberate tone—made Shane's pulse spike. "You love it."

They ate together after practice, fingers brushing over the water bottles, elbows bumping, knees pressing under the bench in ways only they noticed. Shane caught Ilya's gaze, quick and sharp, and felt a pulse of heat, of something messy and thrilling that hadn't existed before.

Across the table, a Marlow muttered, loud enough to be heard, "Man, they're like... a scary couple."

Shane's stomach lurched, expecting denial, expecting Ilya to shake it off. But Ilya just leaned back, smirk sharpening, and said flatly, "Yes, be careful."

Shane's chest warmed, a rush of pride and desire mingling. He realized he didn't care who knew anymore, as long as Ilya stayed near, smirking like he owned every moment.

By the time they left the rink, skating side by side, Shane felt it again—the pull, the heat, the unspoken promise lingering between them like static in the air. He knew things weren't over,

and he didn't want them to be.

The room smelled faintly of ginger ale and popcorn, the soft glow of the TV casting lazy shadows across the walls. Shane's head rested fully on Ilya's shoulder, hair tousled and soft, hoodie pulled tight enough to be comforting, but loose enough to let him breathe. Ilya's arm was draped over the back of the couch, fingers brushing against Shane's hair, thumb tracing along the edge of his temple in the quiet rhythm of familiarity.

"You know," Ilya murmured, voice low, teasing, "you look ridiculous leaning like that. Like a small cat."

Shane snorted, muffling it against Ilya's shoulder. "And you love it," he said, grin in his voice.

"I do," Ilya admitted, smirk tugging at his lips. "Way too much." He shifted slightly, letting his knee brush Shane's leg, casual but deliberate. "Seriously...your freckles. Way too distracting."

Shane's chest tightened in a way that had nothing to do with the show. "You—" he began, but stopped, laughter bubbling instead. "You notice everything."

"Everything about you," Ilya said, leaning just enough so their sides pressed together. "Every stupid little thing."

The TV hummed in the background, the opening music of *Twin Peaks* wrapping around them like a private cocoon. Shane's hands drifted to Ilya's arm, squeezing lightly. "I didn't think it would feel...like this," he admitted softly.

Ilya chuckled, the sound low and rough in Shane's ear. "Like this?" His thumb traced tiny circles along Shane's shoulder, deliberate but light. "Do you mean...like comfortable? Or...messy?"

"Both," Shane whispered, pressing a little closer, feeling the slow, steady beat of Ilya's heart under his hand. "Like...like it's always supposed to be this way."

"I've been waiting for this for months."

Shane's laugh was low, breathless, vibrating against Ilya's chest. "Months, huh? That long?"

"Long enough," Ilya murmured, leaning down, lips brushing Shane's temple in a soft, teasing kiss. "Way too long."

There was a pause, the kind that isn't empty but full of all the things they hadn't said—the teasing, the touches, the stolen moments of closeness, the months of quiet tension finally

unraveling. Then Ilya's lips were brushing against Shane's hairline, soft, lingering, a gentle claim that made Shane shiver.

Shane tilted his head, letting their lips meet in a slow, teasing kiss, warm and sweet at first, fingers curling into the sleeve of Ilya's hoodie, pulling him just a fraction closer. Ilya's hands tangled in Shane's hair, thumb tracing along his cheek, brushing over the line of his jaw, dragging Shane into the heat of the moment without haste.

"You are too soft," Ilya muttered, voice teasing but heavy with something sharper, almost desperate. "Makes it impossible to keep my hands to myself."

Shane tilted his head, brushing his lips along Ilya's jaw in reply, careful, slow, tasting just enough without breaking the teasing rhythm. "Good," he murmured. "Because I don't want you to."

Ilya let out a low laugh, then leaned down, and their lips met, slow and sweet at first, teasing and soft, but charged with everything they'd been holding back. Shane's hands curled around Ilya's arms, tugging him a fraction closer, and Ilya's fingers tangled in Shane's hair, thumb tracing along his temple, pulling him even nearer.

When they finally broke apart, just enough to breathe, Shane rested his forehead against Ilya's shoulder, both of them panting softly, eyes half-closed. Ilya's smirk returned, playful but dangerous, and Shane felt heat curl through his chest.

They lingered there, lips and hands and shoulders pressed together, the show continuing in the background but fading into nothingness compared to the electricity between them. Ilya whispered nonsense lines from the episode, making Shane laugh quietly, then laughed himself, voice low and warm, brushing kisses along Shane's hair, cheek, jaw—each one a claim, a tease, a promise.

Finally, Shane pulled back just enough to rest his forehead against Ilya's shoulder, chest rising and falling, breath mingling. Ilya's arm tightened around him instinctively, smirk softening into something warmer, almost tender.

"Finally," Ilya murmured, voice low, full of relief, mischief, and desire all at once.

"Yeah...finally," Shane whispered back, soft laugh catching, hand still entwined in Ilya's sleeve. "Took us long enough to get here."

The TV hummed on, the world outside forgotten. But they didn't move, didn't speak, just stayed in their quiet cocoon of laughter, teasing, soft kisses, and gentle touches—the culmination of months of stolen moments, longing, and teasing, finally, beautifully, theirs.

End Notes

leave a kudo or a comment if you'd like !

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!