

The Unraveling

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The Unraveling

by [SLoan_1007](#)

Summary

Shane was aware of his obsessive-compulsive tendencies, but he wasn't looking to fix them.

Or: he had already found everything he needed to manage it.

Notes

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

Shane knew he had OCD. Not severe enough to disrupt his life, but it was there. It probably stemmed from Yuna and David's strict upbringing—the couple themselves were the epitome of respectability, so much so that Ilya's eyes had widened in shock when he realized Shane was actually the messiest, least put-together one in the Hollander family.

“Another recipe big enough to feed an army, Hollander?” Ilya stood in the open kitchen of the cottage, beer in hand, elbows propped on the island, watching Shane add mayonnaise to a large bowl before stirring.

“Too many ingredients. I can't halve every single one.”

“So what are you making, exactly?”

“A Russian recipe I found online. It's called...” Shane paused, turning to light up his phone screen, “Olivier salad. Is that how you say it? Olivier.”

“Салат Оливье.” The Russian syllables rolled slowly off Ilya's tongue, deliberately drawn out, with a low, magnetic resonance.

“Oh, Ilya, don't make me kiss you right now with vegetable-stained hands.”

“Go ahead. I don't mind.”

A triumphant smirk played on Ilya's lips as he set his beer down, walked over to the counter, and exchanged a deep kiss with Shane. He loved seeing Shane flustered and uncoordinated in front of him—watching those pretty brown eyes, usually so clear and focused, grow hazy and fill with his reflection.

Otherwise, it'd be too boring. Shane's usual by-the-book demeanor was boring, though Ilya loved it.

He loved every version of Shane. Before meeting him, Ilya had never imagined falling for someone so completely his opposite.

“Get off, Ilya.”

After pulling away, Shane licked his damp lips, lowered his hands—still held awkwardly at his sides—then, as if reconsidering, grabbed Ilya's tank top and kissed him again. He took the opportunity to wipe his vegetable-juice-covered hands clean on the fabric.

“Take that off later and throw it in the laundry,” Shane panted, swatting away Ilya's hand as it wandered toward his hip, then turning to open the fridge.

“Yes, sir.” Ilya followed him with his eyes, disappointed. “You do laundry every day? You're a sports star. Daily laundry, seriously?”

“It's just a habit, Ilya. Nothing weird about it.”

“Food has to be measured exactly, clothes must be folded neatly, anything stained gets washed immediately.” Ilya summed it up. “You definitely have OCD.”

Shane and Ilya ended up packing the extra food and taking it to his parents’ house. Yuna and David welcomed them warmly, calling it “the most beautiful summer gift,” and gave them an unopened bottle of Russian vodka in return.

“Have fun, you two. Enjoy the moment.” Yuna winked playfully as she saw them out.

On the drive back to the cottage, Shane let out a long breath. He still wasn’t used to this new rhythm.

Two days ago, he’d been in the middle of the worst anxiety attack of his life. Seeing David through the glass, his mind had gone blank—wondering why he even existed, wanting to plunge into the lake behind him and erase the monster named “Shane Hollander.”

I messed up. Completely. My worst nightmare came true. He couldn’t stop trembling, a cold dread rising from his feet to his head, stripping him of all control.

Until Ilya wrapped his arms around him. Promised to go with him to his parents’ house, to face whatever came next together.

And now, they could hold hands, knock on the door of the most important people in his life, sit and talk hockey, gossip about boring Canadian small-town news, discuss their future as former rivals... and receive smiles and blessings in return.

Shane felt he must have done something incredible in a past life. Maybe saved the planet.

Ilya noticed Shane’s distraction. He took the hand, tracing slow circles on the palm with his thumb.

“Let’s have some fun,” Ilya said suddenly.

“Wh-what?” Shane’s thoughts snapped back. He looked suspiciously at his new boyfriend’s handsome face, now wearing that familiar, mischievous grin.

“Fun. Entertainment. Something exciting. Whatever you call it in English.”

“Oh no, Rozanov.” Shane groaned. “I don’t even want to know what you’re planning.”

Ilya had initially thought of suggesting a dimly lit bar for drinks and cards, but under Shane’s warning look, he just shrugged and let out a meaningless, drawn-out “Ooooh.” He knew that even though one set of parents now approved, they couldn’t risk appearing together publicly. Even a remote hockey-ignorant town couldn’t escape social media.

Especially here, in Shane’s hometown, where he was practically a local legend.

“Ever tried night swimming?”

“Night swimming?”

“You’ve got a huge private lake. The sun’s almost down. In the dark water, no one will bother us, no one will notice.”

Shane relaxed slightly. If it was just swimming...

“Completely, utterly naked, of course.”

There it is. Shane rolled his eyes. “I’m not doing anything that unhygienic.”

“Shaaaaane,” Ilya drew out the name, “babe, we’ve got less than a week of vacation left. Next season, we’ll have a mountain of trouble to deal with.”

“No! No matter what you say, I am not—”

The lake water rose past his ankles. Shane’s face still felt hot. He clung to his towel, refusing to let go, sitting stubbornly on a rock and refusing to go further.

Ilya’s a madman. Completely unpredictable. How did I end up with such a terribly behaved, utterly infuriating Russian? He must be crazy too.

“Shane, come here. To me.”

The man, torso half-emerged from the water, waved, sending shimmering droplets flying. After sunset, the light was too dim to see clearly beyond a meter. Even in summer, the wind sweeping down from the wooded hills stole most of the warmth, raising goosebumps on their skin.

Shane had lit a bonfire outside the cottage, but it was too far away, just a flickering dot in the distance.

“I don’t want to...”

“Yes, you do.” Ilya swam closer to Shane’s feet, his hand sliding up the bare calf in a very deliberate caress. “You do.”

In nearly thirty years of life, Shane had faced panic many times. Some moments were career-related, but most involved the man before him. Ilya’s blue eyes were hard to make out in the dark, but Shane knew they’d be glinting with mischief—the same eyes that had recently pulled him from the abyss, making him believe in a future. In their existence.

He couldn’t refuse. As always, he never really could.

Even if it went against every one of his principles, coexisting in strange, contradictory harmony with his OCD in every pore.

He let go of the towel, folded it neatly, took Ilya's hand, and jumped into the water. He let himself sink in completely, letting his body and senses open wide for the virus named "Ilya", letting that scent of recklessness permeate everything.

Without a single thread of fabric, he felt exposed and awkward. For once, he was grateful for the ink-black night, offering at least some cover.

"Well, Shane? Doesn't this feel good?" Ilya's laughter rippled around them like a prank. He was the true demon of the night—a restless spirit of rebellion and agitation, a heart-thief who could strip away pretenses and expose tender cores.

No one else is here. Just the man he loves. Gradually, Shane relaxed his limbs in the water, trying to move with his usual muscle control, trying to break the rules in his head.

Maybe... this isn't so bad.

Ilya pulled him close, pressed him against the rocky edge, breath hot and damp against his neck.

"You are so pretty." Ilya murmured.

Shane's last shred of conscious thought dissolved into the rhythm of Ilya's movements.

They stayed in the water longer than planned. No surprise there.

Back inside, they rinsed off quickly and collapsed together on the couch, relaxed and lazy.

Shane cradled Ilya's damp, fluffy head against his chest. His fingers brushed over the mole on Ilya's cheek, then, as if fascinated by the texture, began pressing it gently, over and over.

"You say I have OCD. Maybe I do. I hate feeling out of control," Shane murmured.

"Hmm?" Ilya hummed in response.

"Hockey doesn't make me lose control. I can calculate every swing, predict the puck's path, make it go exactly where I want. But you... God, Ilya." Shane seemed to grapple with a sudden surge of emotion, his voice catching before softening. "But then there's you. You're the most unpredictable thing in the world."

"Me? Unpredictable?" Ilya looked up, his eyelashes brushing Shane's palm.

"Remember that half year you didn't reply to any of my messages?" Shane's lips quirked in a bitter, fleeting smile. "I thought it was over between us."

"Yeah."

Ilya's response was low. He didn't know how to explain. Maybe it was easier to just admit he was an asshole?

He couldn't tell Shane how many times he'd genuinely wanted to end it. This twisted, addictive, consuming obsession. He simply couldn't stop.

Especially when he saw Shane's eyes, wet with anger and plea.

"That time in Vegas... yes, we slept together. It felt good, but we..." Shane recalled the messages he'd never sent after leaving, now voicing the words for the first time, "We didn't even kiss."

"We didn't?"

Ilya was briefly confused, struggling to follow Shane's sentimental turn. In his memory, that meet-up had been... pleasant. Physically, at least. It was also when he'd first felt the urge to unravel Shane's perfectly composed façade, to watch him come undone, helpless and scattered beneath him.

And when that unraveling finally happened, he'd fallen even deeper, unable to escape.

In response, Ilya didn't speak. Instead, he pushed himself up, found that captivating source, cupped Shane's face, and kissed him—deeply, from every angle, as if they'd never part.

"Consider it paid in full."

Shane found his OCD had eased considerably. He could mostly accept the random articles of clothing appearing around the house—a tank top here, shorts there, occasionally a Boston team jersey. He rubbed his temples, stepped over the soft pile of fabric on the floor, and ignored it.

Ilya was thrilled to finally eat normal-sized portions before their vacation ended.

The summer had ended perfectly.

End Notes

This is my first English fan-fic as a non-native. Recently, I've been so obsessed with the TV series Heated Rivalry—I'm completely captivated by the genuine emotions between Shane and Ilya at all times.

If there are any parts that aren't described well enough, please let me know, and I'll make corrections promptly.

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