

i'm gonna make this place your home

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by [aequitas](#)

Summary

Shane and Ilya go grocery shopping so they can make borscht. That's it, that's the fic.

“No, no, fresh dill, fresh dill, Hollander. Put that back.” Ilya swats at the offending dried dill - who would dry dill? - in Shane’s hand, which had been coming dangerously close to the basket Ilya is currently carrying. “You want to make borscht you need fresh dill.”

“Alright, fresh. Got it.” Shane’s mouth tips up at the corner, and Ilya knows he is not angry. This was his idea, after all – he had asked Ilya what he misses from home, and Ilya had struggled to come up with anything. Eventually, after what felt like hours, he had only been able to give the names of a few dishes. And Shane, ever attentive, and endlessly obsessive, has apparently decided that Ilya cannot go another day without borscht.

So here they are. In a supermarket. Together. This, too, had been a debate, as most things in their lives are. They could have arranged for a delivery, but Ilya had been sure some of the ingredients would be wrong, replaced by people who did not know the difference between beets and sweet potatoes. Then Ilya had said that he would go alone, because he knew what to get. This, Shane had argued, defeated the purpose, because then Shane would not know what to get if he wanted to make it again and Ilya wasn’t around to come shopping. The solution then is this - the two of them in a supermarket together, shopping together, and pretending that they are just friends.

They’re used to that, at least. Pretending. Not normally so public, like this, but pretending is not difficult for them, now. It’s in the way they angle their bodies, in the way they don’t let their fingers brush as Shane hands Ilya beets for inspection, each one having to be approved before it goes into the basket. Even with the charity slowly finding its legs, there are boundaries that can’t be crossed, even here.

It helps that Ilya looks particularly grumpy. He hates Canadian supermarkets, with their bright lights and their music, their overly apologetic customers who apologise at the mere potential of bumping into someone nearby. He has said sorry more times today than he thinks he has ever before in his life maybe. And it makes Shane smile *every* time, which is the only reason Ilya is not going completely insane.

They’re in the dairy aisle, arguing over what constitutes *good* sour cream - Shane has apparently decided he is now an advocate for the Canadian dairy farmers - when a shy voice says, “Excuse me,” drawing both of their attentions.

Before them is a group of three boys, all around ten, Ilya imagines. The one who had apparently spoken is bright red, and Ilya’s expression softens as he spots the phone clutched in the boy’s hands. “You want photo, yes?” The boys nod, eager, and apparently relieved that they hadn’t had to ask aloud. Shane glances at Ilya, and then at the boys, and then back again. Ilya pays it no mind - the charity, again, is their cover, is it not? “Okay, you can have photo. But on one condition.”

Shane looks positively alarmed now, and it has Ilya biting back a wider smile as one of the boys asks, nervously, “What?”

“You must never cheer for Metros ever again, yes? They are terrible team, with very bad captain.”

The boys stare at him for a moment, and then dissolve into giggles, shoving at each other as they step forward to crowd around Ilya and Shane. An adult - presumably a parent - steps forwards to rescue the boy's phone. Ilya arranges himself on the other side of the boys, opposite to Shane - barely in touching distance. They look like nothing more than two people who happen to know each other through hockey. Ilya says to the group, "Say Centaurs rule!" and grins at the noise Shane makes. It's all over fairly quickly, the parent thanking them profusely, Ilya reaching out to high five all of the boys, and then they're on their own again - more or less.

Shane grabs a sour cream, shoving it into the basket, and says, "You're really good with kids."

It catches Ilya by surprise - so much so that he doesn't even bother beginning the argument again, simply following Shane to the next aisle. "Is easy to be good with kids. Say things that make them laugh and then do what they ask. You are not good with kids?"

"I'm alright with kids." Shane glances back at him, adding loose bits to their basket. They have all they need for the borscht anyway, now. "I don't know how to talk to them, I guess. Hayden always says I talk to his kids like they're tiny adults."

"This is because Pike is idiot with four children who does not know how to -"

"Ilya."

"Shane."

They check out in relative silence, after that, loading the car. Ilya slides into the passenger side and slides his hand straight into Shane's, as though deprived of the feeling. He has been, and if the way Shane squeezes his hand back is any indication, he feels the same. It sets something in Ilya at ease, the way it always does when he is reminded that whatever he feels for Shane, whatever big something sits in his chest is reciprocated, and Shane feels it too.

They don't talk about kids again, or the picture. They discuss stats, instead, whose team is looking better, who has more of a shot at the cup this year. They both know it won't be the Centaurs, but it's nice to argue anyway, as though they are on teams of equal footing.

This carries through their unloading of the car, their putting away of all of the things not required for borscht. And then all the ingredients are laid out, and Ilya is summarily banished to the other side of the island. Shane is learning, he insists. He will learn.

Ilya lets him peel one beet, watching with a smile, before he says, "You need gloves."

"What?" Shane looks up with pink fingertips, expression baffled. "What do I need gloves for?"

"Beets."

"The beets I'm peeling now?" Shane's eyebrows pull together in an expression Ilya adores, one that makes him laugh.

“Yes, the beets you are peeling now. Wear gloves, or your hands will be pink for days.”

Shane fixes him with a glare that makes something in Ilya’s stomach shift hotly, and then he puts the beet down, washes his hands, and stomps away. Ilya doesn’t move, which seems an intelligent choice. There is some banging in the bathroom, and then Shane reappears, pulling latex gloves on.

“You have gloves in bathroom?”

“In the first aid kit. You would know that, if you ever used it when I tell you to.”

“Russians do not need first aid kit. If injury does not kill me then I am fine.”

That starts an argument, teasing on both sides, about the times Ilya has played injured, or the times that Shane has asked for a band aid and Ilya has been unable to find them. It makes Ilya smile, warm and content.

Soon, the kitchen is filled with a smell so familiar to Ilya that he doesn’t know what to do with himself. On the stove, a pot simmers gently, and for the moment Shane stands before it, stirring as he peers at the contents. Ilya’s heart clenches in his chest, then swells. Ignoring earlier instructions, he slides from the stool at the kitchen island, rounding it. He knows Shane hears him, but he doesn’t move - lets Ilya press against his back, slide his arms around Shane’s waist, his chin resting on Shane’s shoulder, watching. Something in him is alight, and he has to press his eyes closed to keep tears from falling.

This, Shane must see from the corner of his eye. He turns to Ilya, then, and then turns in his arms so they’re face to face, pressing a hand to his cheek. “What? What’s wrong?”

“No, no, not wrong, nothing’s wrong.” Ilya smiles, looping his fingers around Shane’s wrist, even as he presses his face into Shane’s hand. “Is right, this is...*right*.”

Shane looks confused again, and Ilya leans in to press a kiss to the corner of his mouth, then to his mouth, properly, gentle. Shane kisses him right back, soft, holding him right there. He is, Ilya knows, giving Ilya time to put the words together in English, and Ilya is grateful. It is hard, sometimes, with these huge swells of...something that sits in his chest, takes residence inside him.

“This reminds me of home,” and he’s not sure that’s the right word, but he’s also not sure what the right word is. He doesn’t mean Russia, and he doesn’t mean his father, or his brother. He means some...distant idea of home, of being small enough to cling to his mother’s legs as she cooked, of a kitchen filled with the promise of comfort, and Ilya feels impossibly small, impossibly safe.

Shane doesn’t push against it. Instead he presses into another kiss, holds Ilya tighter. And Ilya lets himself be held, for a moment, before he manages to twine them up tighter, wrapping himself as much around Shane as he can, and over his shoulder Ilya can see the pot still simmering. “You are my home,” he says quietly, and means it.

Later, they sit side by side at the island, elbows bumping as Ilya shows Shane how much sour cream and dill to add, how to mix it so that the flavours make the most sense, so that they sing. Shane makes a face when he first tries it, and then seems to decide that he likes the idea of it, and takes another mouthful. Declares, without much argument, that it's one of his favourite things he's ever tasted. Ilya does not know how true that is, as it stands, but he is willing to take it for now. For now, it is enough. And for now, together, they are home.

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