sick in boston

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sick in boston

by prettyhoney

Summary

Shane's in Boston to play against the Raiders until he gets an awful cold and Ilya offers to take care of him.

Notes

i wrote this because i came down with a cold and i'm very resentful about it so i'm projecting it on to shane. shane's had his accident in this and has already recovered but it doesn't really come up; i just wanted ilya to take care of a sick shane because why not, it's adorable.
also, i haven't read the books so any inconsistencies with the lore (ie: ilya's babushka) cannot be held against me, thank you!

See the end of the work for more notes

Shane was in Boston for another game against the Raiders when he awoke with a skull-splitting headache. It was five in the morning, his alarm had just gone off for his early-morning exercises when he blinked awake and his brain started throbbing so bad, he thought he must've somehow gotten concussed throughout the night. He groaned, moving to sit up before slumping against the headboard. His muscles were lead, heavier than they were when he'd gotten slammed into the ground and admitted into the hospital. He sneezed. Oh no. He was sick. He was undoubtedly sick, just hours before a big game. He must have caught something on the flight. The rest of the team had flown in before him, Shane having to stay back an extra day to get his pain-meds refilled after he forgot that the 24-hour pharmacy didn't actually have 24-hour pharmacists on duty and his meds weren't exactly found in a regular aisle. So, he ended up taking a commercial flight where the coughing baby in the seat behind him kept *adorably* wailing the whole flight, while its equally coughing mother kept shushing the poor thing. It didn't help that the middle-aged man next to him was also coughing and sneezing. It was no wonder he had woken up the next day feeling like chewed gum stuck to the bottom of a shoe. One perk of having flown in by himself: he had his own hotel room. He hated the thought of passing the sickness on to Hayden who was eager to get his vengeance against the Raiders after the whole incident. Tit for tat, Shane supposed. Although he was heavily against it. It didn't help that the team lost—*badly*—after Shane's injury but that was neither here nor there.

"What's important is that you're feeling better," Hayden told him through the phone when Shane was back at his parents' house. *"We can kick their asses another time and show them we won't take their 8-4 win lying down!"*

Shane crawled back under the covers. He clearly wasn't going to magically cure his sickness anytime soon so a few lazy minutes in bed wouldn't hurt. Still, responsibility gnawed at him. He grabbed his phone off the nightstand and texted his coach about his sickness. He placed the phone face down on his stomach and blissfully closed his eyes. When his phone buzzed a mere ten minutes later, Shane was expecting it to be his coach replying in his disappointed-but-understanding tone and wishing him a fast recovery. When he glanced at his screen, he didn't expect Ilya's alias to be glaring back at him.

Lily

Come over after the game?

Shane couldn't fight the smile, although tired, that tugged at his mouth. He chewed on his lip as he texted back:

Jane

Can’t.

I won’t be playing today. I’m sick.

Lily

Food poisoning sick or sick sick?

Jane

Sick sick.

When Shane’s phone vibrated again in his hand, he startled but picked up the call, holding it up to his ear as he sat up, a little more alert. He cleared his throat and hoped he didn’t sound like death.

“Hello?” He croaked. He cringed at the sound; he sounded like he had swallowed rocks. It hurt like rocks, too. He massaged his throat.

“Wow, you really are sick,” said Ilya, his gorgeous Russian accent still gorgeous as ever. Shane was never more jealous of someone’s voice than he was of Ilya’s healthy vocal chords. Even if said vocal chords made his headache a little less unbearable.

“Did you think I was lying?” Shane asked, smiling down at the comforter.

“No,” admitted Ilya, “but I didn’t think you’d be so sick.”

“Yeah, my head’s killing me.” Shane suddenly caught a wave of heat and pulled the covers off. Great, now he was cold. He pulled some of them back on. “My throat, too.”

Ilya hummed. Shane could hear some clattering in the background. He wondered if Ilya was making breakfast for himself. He closed his eyes and imagined it: Ilya gliding through the kitchen in that elegant, self-assured way of his, grabbing a frying pan, adding oil to it, cracking an egg. He heard the egg sizzling in the background and imagined Ilya poking at it with his metal spatula, shirtless and in his low-hanging pajama bottoms. Fuck.

“Come over,” Ilya said. Shane nearly whispered a ‘yes,’ completely enamored by the visual he had conjured in his head until he remembered he was disgustingly sick.

“Ilya, I’m sick,” Shane stated as if Ilya had already forgotten.

“Yes, I know,” said the Russian. In the background, a metal spatula scraped against the bottom of a frying pan. Shane could see him with the phone wedged between his cheek and shoulder as he plopped the fried egg on a piece of toast. Shane had never actually seen him eat toast. He wondered what he put on it. It definitely wasn’t avocado. Maybe something pretentious like cottage cheese? No, it was likely just buttered toast. Knowing Ilya, it might even be dry bread.

“I don’t want to get you sick,” said Shane. He got up and grabbed a bottle of water from the mini fridge. It was likely absurdly priced but he couldn’t bother turning on the tap.

“Russians do not get sick,” said Ilya. Shane scoffed. His throat prickled; he downed some of the bottle.

“That’s not true.”

“Fine,” Ilya conceded, “*I* don’t get sick. So…come over.”

“Ilya…”

“Shane…” his name was drawled out and Shane’s breath hitched in his throat. “What is better: you alone in the hotel room or you coming over and being with me?”

Well, he made a good argument. Shane was quiet for a moment, deliberating. He scanned his room. It was so lonely. A king-sized bed, a TV, a mini-fridge and a bathroom. He missed the comfort of his own bed, he missed asking his mom to make him her awful-tasting medicinal teas and delicious warm soups; he missed watching old hockey games with his dad, bundled up in blankets while his father injected another old VHS and they watched Sidney Crosby win the Cup for the thousandth time because his father was stubborn enough about his VHS collection to have been taping that game in 2009. At Ilya’s place he wouldn’t have his mother’s teas or soups, nor would he have his dad’s collection of old VHS tapes but he’d have Ilya’s couch, soft and warm with the leftover scent of his cologne and he’d have Ilya, if he stayed home after the game, and his calming blue eyes, the comforting rumble of his voice, the warmth of his touch. Shane still had dreams about the softness of his fingers against his cheek from when he was at the hospital and Ilya had gently caressed his face. That alone was enough for Shane to relent, uttering a plain ‘okay’ into the phone.

“Good,” said Ilya. There was a cockiness to his tone and Shane could hear the smirk that was surely on his face. “Be ready in ten minutes. I will pick you up.”

Ilya, true to his word, was outside the hotel in ten minutes. His sleek Mercedes waited for Shane at the back-entrance, window coming down to reveal his familiar face, adorned with black sunglasses. Shane opened the door to the backseat, carefully setting down his backpack and sitting down on the leather seat. When the door closed and Shane didn’t appear at the passenger’s seat, Ilya turned to look at him.

“What are you doing?” He asked. “This is not a taxi, Shane.”

“I know. I told you, I don’t want you to get sick,” Shane explained. “Especially not because of me.”

Ilya sighed. “And I told you I don’t get sick. Now, get over here.”

Shane, after scanning the gap between the passenger’s and driver’s seats and the height of the console, left the car and hurried to the passenger’s seat rather than climbing over. He shut the

car door once inside, exhaling at how much warmer the car was compared to the frigid Boston weather. The car radio quietly played a Russian song Shane didn't recognize and Shane found it quite relaxing to be in Ilya's car, listening to his music, warm and comfortable. The windows were tinted so Shane let himself lean back into the seat, eyes shut, headache slowly subsiding.

They were at Ilya's house faster than Shane hoped, his eyes fluttering open once the ignition shut off. Slightly delirious, Shane slid out of the car at the sound of Ilya's announcement of their arrival and the shutting of the driver's door. He opened the backseat door and found that Ilya had grabbed his backpack for him which was a lot more flattering than Shane wanted to admit. He followed Ilya inside.

Ilya's place was unchanged from the last time Shane had visited. It was still minimalist, not quite lived-in, and spacious. It didn't quite feel like a house but rather a very nice hotel. Still, it was Ilya's and that was enough.

"Make yourself comfortable," said Ilya as he placed Shane's backpack on a nearby chair. Shane sat on the couch, sniffling and clearing his throat. Ilya handed him some blankets—which Shane threw over his legs—and went into the kitchen. Shane carefully laid down on the couch—tentatively, given his slight apprehension at taking up space in Ilya's own home. He laid his head on the pillow leaning against the arm rest where he could watch Ilya in the kitchen. He watched the movement of his muscles as he grabbed a mug from the cupboard to place on the counter. He placed a pot on the stove and tipped a container of milk into it, stirring before adding a little bit of butter. The smell of it spread through the air and Shane inhaled it, the scent alone calming his pounding head. Once the milk began to simmer, he ladled it into the mug, swirling honey into it. Ilya then reached into his fridge for something else: a jar of something that looked like raspberry jam. He spooned it into the mug, stirring carefully. With light taps against the rim, he removed the spoon and walked over to where Shane had his head slightly tipped back, eyes half-lidded, watching him. Ilya handed him the mug. Shane sat up and sipped.

"Wow," he said, "this is amazing." He drank some more, cupping the mug to warm his hands. It was a lot better than his own home remedy: a can of ginger ale from the corner store. As the drink settled in his stomach, the warmth of it engulfed him. It wasn't similar to his mother's concoctions, not at all, but it was calming, homely, and utterly comforting. Shane hid his content smile behind the mug's rim. "This is a lot better than ginger ale."

Ilya scoffed yet it sounded fond and very amused. "This is Babushka's recipe. You cannot compare it to ginger ale. Especially not the one you drink, it is full of sugar. Not good for colds."

"Babushka." Shane mulled over the word. "That's grandmother?"

Ilya nodded. He was sitting on the edge of the couch, his back leaning slightly against Shane's bent knees. Shane liked the gentle pressure, it grounded him and he liked any contact he got from Ilya, it was as comforting as his drink.

"She died a little later than my mother," Ilya said quietly. "I remember her better. She made this when I was sick." Then, as if to cushion what he had just admitted: "is it hot enough?"

Shane drank again. It tasted sweeter, somehow. “It’s perfect.”

When Shane finished, he laid back down and Ilya placed the mug on the coffee table. He turned on the TV. Yesterday’s game was on. Ilya moved to change the channel but Shane stopped him. He left it. The Centaurs were winning 5-3. As Shane flickered in and out of consciousness, he faintly registered Ilya’s soft touch on his kneecap, a circling motion with his thumb.

“Don’t you have practice?” Shane asked, vaguely worried he was keeping Ilya from his obligations. Mostly, he was dreading the moment when Ilya would have to leave for his game and Shane would be alone, watching TV in Ilya’s massive house without Ilya’s soft touches.

“Is not until ten,” Ilya said. He kissed Shane’s knee. A heat unrelated to the drink or the blankets gathered in Shane’s cheeks and he shyly smiled to himself. Ilya gingerly swept the hair off of Shane’s forehead and laid the back of his hand there. The pressure of it was magnificent. When Ilya removed it, Shane greedily wished for it back—for Ilya’s slightly cooler skin to weigh heavy on his forehead and never leave. Shane shut his eyes, the TV chatter practically white noise to his semi-conscious state. Before he knew it, Shane was breathing steadily when he sensed the faint pressure of Ilya’s mouth on his forehead and floated into sleep.

When he awoke, the TV was still on but the game was over. Shane grumbled, chastising himself for having missed it. He looked around. The house was empty. Shane’s heart dropped. He knew Ilya would have to leave eventually but he hoped he could have enjoyed his presence more, could have seen him rooting around the kitchen for his pre-practice meal, watched his body move as he prepped it and his mouth move as he ate it. Most of all, he wanted to watch him disappear into his bedroom and reappear in his workout clothes and duffle bag and hear him say his goodbyes, even if it didn’t end with a kiss on Shane’s forehead. Instead, Shane awoke to an empty house. Shane sat up and a white thing on the coffee table caught his attention. A note. Shane picked it up.

Left for practice. Will be back after game. There is soup in the fridge for you. Eat it, I do not want it. See you later.

-Lily.

There was a roughly-drawn heart next to Ilya’s pseudonym and Shane traced it, smiling. He pocketed the note and got up. There was, in fact, soup in the fridge. It was in a square container, just enough for him. Shane blinked at it. Did Ilya cook it for him before he left? Shane shook the thought away. He grabbed a pot from a cupboard and placed it on the stove. The soup slid out of its container with a nauseating thump and into the pot. Adding water to the container, Shane rinsed out the leftover soup bits and slid them into the pot with the sludge. The soup simmered and Shane stirred it lazily, still half-asleep. He ladled it into a bowl and brought it with him to the couch. He placed a rag underneath his bowl and perused the channels until it landed on the Metros-Raiders game. It was still the first period, only ten

minutes in with nil-nil on the scoreboard. Shane sat back on the couch, slightly tense as he watched his team play. His team and Ilya. He wore the black version of the Raiders' jersey tonight, which Shane thought looked especially good on him. He watched as Ilya flew across the ice, hockey stick expertly guiding the puck as he weaved through Shane's teammates. Ilya slid to a stop before the blue line and shot at the goal. The puck slid through the gap between the goalie and the post, a straight shot into the net. The alarms blared, the crowd roared, the commentators gushed over Ilya's exceptional shot and Shane let out a loud cheer, grinning at the TV with Ilya's soup warming the bowl in his hands.

Shane sat at the edge of his seat during the entire game. When the second period ended, the Metros were down only one point at 4-5. Shane spooned soup into his mouth as the commercials played, tuning them out and focusing solely on his food. It was good, it was *really* good, with potatoes and chicken and bell-peppers and spinach. It was better than his favourite soup that he ordered when he couldn't get his mother's homemade one. It soothed his throat and calmed his tense muscles. He ate until the bowl was completely clean, not a speck of food left. He rotated the spoon around his mouth, getting every last bit. Placing the bowl down on top of the rag, Shane threw the blankets back on and watched the rest of the game unfold. He watched as Hayden made a goal and Ilya scored another. The game ended 6-5 for the Raiders, the win just slightly out of reach for the Metros. Still, Shane couldn't help but watch proudly as Ilya cheered with his team, huddling and jumping with them. Shane kept watching until the post-game interviews flashed across the screen. He watched as the interviewer asked about the game, about Ilya's goals. Ilya rushed through all of the questions, barely answering them when he wasn't being completely vague. *"Sorry,"* he said halfway through one of them, *"I cannot stay. I have somewhere to be. It is very urgent."*

Ilya came home a lot sooner than Shane expected. So much so that Shane worried that it was someone else and he froze on the couch at the sound of the keys turning in the front door lock. Ilya walked in, huffing, and dropped his duffle bag on the kitchen floor. He dragged himself toward the couch.

"Good game," Shane said before Ilya threw himself on top of him like a ragdoll, eliciting a laugh out of Shane. Ilya burrowed his face in Shane's chest, laying on top of him. Shane threaded his fingers through Ilya's slightly-damp hair. He didn't smell like sweat, Shane observed, he must've showered at the facility.

"I am exhausted," mumbled Ilya, voice muffled by Shane's hoodie. Shane swiped away the little curls that framed his face, just above his ear. This was nice. Selfishly, Shane found himself wondering if he could want this: living with Ilya, waiting for him on his couch when Shane didn't have a game, accepting Ilya's full weight as he threw himself on him, burying his fingers in his hair and knowing they could do this the next day, too. Well, he was here now. Shane could smell his cedarwood and tobacco cologne, the faint tinge of his eucalyptus bodywash underneath it. He could feel the rough heaviness of his muscles as Ilya lay on top of him and the stretch of his shoulder blades when Ilya's arms snaked around Shane's waist. He could see the golden mop of hair and its impeccable curls, the smooth expanse of his skin peeking out of his muscle-tee and the moles that dotted it. This could be enough, Shane thought. This *was* enough.

Shane sneezed. Ilya lifted his head to look at him. Shane bashfully tore his eyes away as Ilya sat up.

“Still not better?” He asked. It was night; the kitchen’s lamp was the only light source, the TV having been turned off after Ilya’s interviews had finished. The slight darkness of the room made everything so heavy, so intimate.

“Guess not.”

Ilya hummed, massaged his thumbs into the clothed muscle of Shane’s lower legs. Shane’s eyes fluttered closed at the sensation.

“Then we have to change that,” said Ilya. Shane watched him through half-lidded eyes, the faint glow of the kitchen lamp haloed around Ilya, painting him as some sort of angel. To Shane, he might as well be. Ilya lifted up Shane’s leg and kissed it, just above the ankle.

“Guess so.”

Ilya climbed up off the couch, much to Shane’s disappointment, and wandered toward the kitchen. Shane tilted his head back, preferring not to watch but to listen. Rustling, the opening of a zipper. Then, a clank of tin on the marble counter. A loud, crisp crack and the sound of bubbling carbonation. Glass thudding against a surface. Liquid pouring. A knife sliding through something hard and thumping against the cutting board. Plops into liquid. The smooth sweep of something against a grater. Then, footsteps.

Shane tipped his head forward and saw Ilya approaching him again, a glass in his hand.

“Is that…”

“Ginger ale,” Ilya confirmed. Shane smiled, accepting it. He drank from it and Ilya sat down on the couch again.

“This is pure ginger ale,” Ilya emphasized. “None of that sugary shit. *This* is good for you.”

Sure enough, it was sharp and refreshing rather than overpowered with sugar. Fresh and pure ginger ale. In it, bits of grated and sliced ginger floated around.

“Thank you,” Shane said. Ilya shrugged as if it was nothing, as if Ilya going to a store to buy fresh ginger ale after his exhausting game to take home to Shane wasn’t a big deal, as if he’d do it a thousand times over. Shane imagined it: Ilya walking into likely a Russian-owned Mom-and-Pop shop and asking for ginger ale in Russian, just one bottle, the store employee asking why just the one and Ilya answering it was for his sick friend or maybe that it was for himself, worried he might come down with a cold. Shane drank from the glass.

“If you really want to get better,” Ilya began, “I have vodka. Vodka and garlic chase away colds in no time.”

Shane snorted, amused. “I’m good with ginger ale, thanks.”

Ilya shrugged. “More for me.”

“You played really well today,” Shane said, almost shyly. He watched Ilya from over top of his lashes, feigning a casual air as he drank the soda. Ilya moved closer to Shane, one arm on the edge of the couch, the other on the other side of Shane’s hip, in the gap between Shane and the back of the couch. Ilya got close to him, breath fanning his face.

“I know,” Ilya replied, voice gruff. He kissed the edge of Shane’s mouth. Shane wanted to remind him he was sick, that kissing was off limits and if Shane was a stronger man, he would’ve. Instead, he let Ilya kiss him; he had craved the feeling of it all day, he had craved it before he set foot in Boston, before he set foot on that damn commercial airline. The kiss was sweet, devoid of heat.

Abruptly, as Ilya was diving in for another, Shane’s phone buzzed. Annoyed, Shane rooted it out of his pocket, expecting it to be Hayden or his coach. Instead, it was his mother. Ilya caught the caller ID and backed away, hands on the sides of Shane’s knees.

“Hi, Mom,” Shane answered.

“Shane! Shane, you didn’t think to tell me that you’re sick?” Her voice was fuzzy on the other line. She must be home, he thought, the cell reception at home was always a little spotty. “I was watching the game and I didn’t see you on the ice! I was worried something must’ve happened to you. I had to learn from Hayden that you got sick!”

“Sorry, Mom.” Shane felt a little bad. In the strangeness of being cared for by Ilya, Shane had forgotten he still hadn’t told his mom he wouldn’t be on the ice. Even after he promised her when he got home from the hospital after his accident that he’d text her whenever he knew he wouldn’t be able to play. It was only fair when she had no idea where he was when he wasn’t home. “I completely forgot.”

“Well, are you feeling better, honey?” She asked. “Are you by yourself?”

Shane cleared his throat. In front of him, Ilya was watching him carefully. Shane knew he could hear everything in the silence of the house.

“Yes, I'm fine and no,” Shane admitted, “I’m…with a friend.”

Ilya seemed amused by his reply, a ghost of a smirk on his face. Shane looked down so he wouldn't blush. He watched the bits of ginger floating in his cup.

“Oh, good. Hayden asked me where he could find the teas I usually get you,” his mom continued. “Did he end up finding them?”

“I-I don’t know, Mom.”

“Okay, well, say hi to Hayden for me,” she said. “And take care of yourself, Shane.”

“I will.”

He and his mom exchanged goodbyes (“I love you, Shane. Take care of yourself, I’m serious!” “I will. I love you, too, Mom.”) and Shane ended the call, finally meeting Ilya’s stare. His hands were massaging the skin below Shane’s kneecaps.

“You lied to your mother?” Ilya teased, massaging harder. Ilya clicked his tongue, chastising. "Naughty."

Shane swallowed and shifted on the couch.

“I didn’t lie,” he defended himself. “I just didn’t correct her.”

Ilya kissed his knee and hummed. “So you lied.”

Shane’s mouth stretched upwards into a restrained yet elated smile, slightly crooked at the edges. Ilya looked up at him from between his lashes, mouth still on Shane’s knee, applying a pleasant pressure. Shane swept away a curl that fell onto Ilya's forehead.

“Asshole.”

End Notes

oh, to be shane being taken care of by ilya. oh, to be ilya taking care of shane.
this was really fun to write! i really love them so i hope i got their characterization right.
thanks for reading!

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