

A Safe Place

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A Safe Place

by [ThePromptWasntThisLong_\(shredded_potato\)](#).

Summary

High on painkillers, Shane is a giggly, handsy handful; Ilya is just trying to keep him still, if only he'd stop whispering "Daddy" against his neck.

Or: Ilya came to the hospital to apologize, not to have his sanity systematically dismantled by a concussed, clingy Shane who won't stop touching him.

Notes

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

- Translation into Русский available: [A Safe Place | Безопасное место](#) by [PANDAR](#)

The automatic doors hiss apart as Ilya trudges into Saint Catherine's Hospital, shoulders hunched in defeat, hood pulled low despite already being inside. Fluorescent lights bleach the hallway until everything looks like a washed-out television static. He presses one palm to his sternum, as if he might physically push the guilt back in, as if the jagged worry could be smoothed down by pressure. He's already rehearsed the words to ask for Shane's room number a dozen times between the parking garage and the sliding doors, and every version has fallen apart in his mouth like wet tissue—even though no one's heard them yet.

The front desk is manned by an older woman with a halo of gray curls and rectangular glasses that make her eyes look kindly magnified. She's typing when he arrives, fingers clacking briskly. Ilya stands there for a full five seconds, throat dry, mind blank. Finally, he clears his throat once, twice. It sounds strangled.

"Hello," he says, the word stretched wide by his accent. "I am need... to see, uh." He scowls, pinches the bridge of his nose, digging for vocabulary. "Guy. Man. Friend." He grimaces. "Hurt friend. Hollander. Shane."

Her eyebrows lift but she smiles. "Visiting a patient?"

"Yes," he says, grateful for the translation. "Exactly. That. Please."

"Name?"

He shifts his weight, confused. "Name. He is Shane Hollander. You know, number twenty-four? Ice hockey?" He mimes smacking a puck, his hand slicing through the air, a weird shh-shh sound escaping him.

The woman fights a laugh. "No, sweetie, your name."

"Oh," he says, then slaps his own chest. "Ilya Rozanov." He tries to say it slow, but it still comes out like one long growl. "I spelled: R-O, Z—"

She waves him off. "You're on his list." She rummages through papers, then peers at her computer. "He's in room 407, fourth floor. Elevators to your left."

"Room four-oh-seven," Ilya repeats, heavy on the numbers. "Four floor. Elevator." He nods vigorously. He should stop talking. He doesn't. "Thank you. You are being very... service. Helpful."

"You're welcome," she says, and he sees the tiniest twitch at the corner of her mouth, held laughter perhaps. "Enjoy your visit."

He starts to leave, then pivots back, because he needs to ensure she knows the gravity of the situation, that he isn't just some passerby wandering into the team's wounded star. "He is concussion," he says solemnly, wagging a finger. "So, please, be careful of his head."

She blinks at him. "We're a hospital, sweetie."

“Yes.” He winces, mortified. “Sorry. I just—okay.” He spins away, nearly colliding with a gurney. “I am calm,” he mutters in Russian, except he absolutely is not.

The elevator ride feels interminable, every floor a reminder of the impact. Marleau’s shoulder burying itself into Shane’s collarbone. Shane’s body whipping backward, helmet hitting ice at a vicious angle. Shane crumpling and not popping back up right away the way he always does. Ilya wasn’t even on the ice yet, he’d just hopped the boards for his shift change when the collision happened, but the image burned into his mind regardless: Shane motionless, trainers sprinting, the building swallowing its own breath.

It is ridiculous to think he could have prevented it. Absolutely no sense. Marleau aimed for the puck, a clean hit gone wrong. Still, the thought loops, a relentless knell. If he had jumped sooner. If he had yelled. If he had seen Marleau’s momentum. If, if, if.

The fourth floor is quieter, narrower hallways painted a weird pastel green, the color of a nursery for a baby whose gender remains unknown. He feels absurdly large walking through this hush, a hulking presence with worry etched beneath every step. The nameplates beside the doors are small silver rectangles; 401, 403. When he reaches 407 he stops, heart ramming at his ribs.

He inhales, tries to steady himself, but his lungs feel stiff. He rubs the back of his neck, thumb worrying at a knot of tension that’s been sitting there since the ambulance sirens first wailed. The door is closed. He lifts a hand to the handle, hesitates, drops it. Does it again. He wonders if Shane is awake, if Shane wants him there, if his presence will make anything worse. He thinks about turning around. He imagines the surge of disappointment that would flood Shane’s face if he heard later Ilya didn’t come.

Another breath, this one barely sufficient. He curls his fingers around the handle and pushes the door open.

The room is bright, sun slanting through half-open blinds. Shane sits propped up against pillows, hair a ridiculous fluff spiking in every direction as if a small, affectionate tornado has just finished cuddling him. His right arm rests in a sling. His left hand is flapping wildly as he talks to the nurse adjusting the IV beside the bed. He’s giggling. Actual giggling. High-pitched and infectious and entirely inappropriate for someone with a fractured collarbone and concussion.

“I swear,” he says, enunciating as though this is a solemn oath, “if you leave I’m going to call the police. I’ll tell them you abandoned me. They’ll arrest you.”

The nurse, a woman with braids coiled on top of her head and a patient smile, shakes her head. “Pretty sure they won’t.”

“You don’t know that,” Shane sing-songs. “You don’t know my influence.”

Ilya clears his throat. He means for it to be subtle. It comes out like a growl. Shane’s head jerks, and the instant his eyes click onto Ilya’s frame, they light up. “Ilyaaaaa,” he coos, syllables stretching like warm taffy, his grin wide enough to split his cheeks. “Look at you.

Look at your face.” He waves his good hand toward Ilya’s chest as if presenting an award. “You have a face.”

All the tightness in Ilya’s spine loosens by degrees. His mouth softens. His shoulders drop. He’s helpless against the transition, against how Shane’s voice wraps around his name, sweet and goofy, as if saying it tastes good. He should feel embarrassed, probably, because the nurse is watching this exchange with a knowing smirk, but he doesn’t care. He steps deeper into the room, sucked toward the bed like gravity is a real lover.

“Hi,” he says, answering way too softly to match his size. He lifts his hand in an awkward wave. “How are you?” The question is ridiculous. Shane’s arm is in a sling, there’s bruising blooming along his jaw, and he looks loose-limbed in the way only narcotics can accomplish. Still, Ilya asks it, because he doesn’t know what else to say. Because he wants to hear the answer from Shane’s mouth.

“Great!” Shane chirps. “Fantastic. Never been better.” He pats the bed with his free hand. “So comfy. Nurse Heather has the softest blankets. Feel.” He grabs the blanket, tries to thrust it toward Ilya, mostly just manages to tangle the corner in his fingers.

The nurse—Heather, apparently—chuckles. “You’re a handful today,” she tells Shane, then looks to Ilya with a conspiratorial wink. “You heading the night shift?”

“You will be leaving?” Ilya asks. He hates the way it sounds. Too formal. Too abrupt. He’s trying to translate Russian into English in real time; the result is a string of clipped fragments.

“For a bit,” Heather says. “You gonna keep him out of trouble?”

Ilya swallows. “I will try to keeping him inside bed.” He winces instantly. “In bed. Keeping. Whatever word is right.” His ears burn. His brain scrambles for the correct phrasing and finds none. He decides to abandon grammar entirely. “I watch him. I hold him down. It is okay.”

Heather snorts. “Didn’t need the hostage plan, but good to know you’ve got this.” She taps Shane’s foot. “Behave. Let your friend here know if you need anything. No pulling at the sling, no hopping around.”

Shane pouts, lower lip jutting. “Can’t you stay? We were talking about birds.”

“And cops,” Heather reminds him.

“I can multitask.”

“You have ten minutes of focus on a good day. Today you’re on enough meds to knock out a horse.”

“I’m the horse,” Shane declares proudly.

Heather glances at Ilya with a face that says this is not her first time dealing with high athletes. “Keep an eye on him. He probably shouldn’t try any gymnastics.”

“I do not think he does gymnastics,” Ilya mutters, deadpan, and Shane starts giggling again before dissolving into a wheezy “ow” when the laughter jostles his ribs.

“See?” Heather says. “Too much movement hurts.”

“I forgot,” Shane says mournfully. “Pain is rude.”

Heather gives Ilya a final nod. “Hit the call button if you need anything. He’s on a strict schedule for meds, so don’t let him charm you into extra.”

Ilya’s eyebrows shoot up, because he absolutely would have handed Shane anything he asked for. “Understood,” he says, which comes out more like “Under-stood,” heavy on the t’s.

She steps toward the door, and Shane reaches out with his left hand, fingers flexing in a feeble attempt to grab her sleeve. “Don’t go,” he pleads. “I’ll call the police. I mean it. You’re abandoning a national treasure.”

“You’re Canadian,” she teases.

“I’m international.” He narrows his eyes. “Don’t underestimate my power.”

Heather laughs, squeezes Shane’s toes through the blanket. “I’ll be back. Try not to drive him nuts before then.” She nods at Ilya. “And you, enjoy Horse Boy.”

“Hear that?” Shane gasps, eyes wide, as soon as she’s out of the room. “She knows I’m the horse.” Then he turns fully to Ilya, gaze bright as stadium lights. He holds it for a second, two, then bursts into another stream of giggles. “You’re here.”

“I am here,” Ilya says. He can feel the smile tugging at his lips, helpless and fond. He drags the visitor’s chair closer to the bed and sits, the seat creaking under his frame. His knees angle toward Shane automatically, like a compass needle finding north. He rests his forearms on the edge of the bed and feels the tremor in his hands, the leftover adrenaline still rattling through him.

Shane watches him as if this is the funniest thing he’s ever seen. He presses his palm to his lips to contain laughter, fails, a “hee-hee-hee” escaping before he surrenders to it entirely, body shaking with mirth.

“What?” Ilya asks, bemused.

“You’re so serious,” Shane gasps between giggles. “Like someone told you there’s a test. No tests, Ilya. Just vibes.”

“No vibes,” Ilya deadpans, but he’s thawing, warmth seeping through him despite himself. He studies Shane’s face, the smattering of freckles only visible this close, the way his eyes go half-mast when the meds drag him toward drowsiness. Checking for signs of pain, he tells himself. Checking for swelling. It is an excuse; the truth is he wants to memorize every line.

“So,” Shane says suddenly, eyes darting around the room. “I made friends with the hallway plant. Big leafy guy. Named him Harold. Harold listens to me.”

“Harold is plant,” Ilya echoes.

“Yep. He doesn’t interrupt. Unlike some horses.”

“I am not horse.”

“Everyone’s a horse if you try hard enough,” Shane states sagely.

Ilya can’t hold in the laugh that slips out then. It’s shaky, surprised, but real. “I don’t think that is correct.”

“Don’t doubt me. I’m very smart right now.” Shane gestures wildly, then winces as his sling shifts. “Ow. Ow. Okay, rude.”

“Don’t move.” Ilya’s voice goes sharp with alarm. He leans forward, covers Shane’s left hand with his own to still it. His palm dwarfs Shane’s hand, fingers enveloping. “Doctor said no moving.”

“That’s boring.” Shane’s lips push outward in a cartoonish pout. “I want to move. Want to go outside, see the birds. There’s a cardinal. It was right there.” He points at the window. His pointing skills are limited; his finger wobbles mid-air. “Bright red guy. He was checking me out.”

“Bird was checking you out,” Ilya repeats.

“Yeah. Everyone thinks I’m cute. Even the cardinal. I’m irresistible.” He sighs dreamily. “Do you think the staff thinks I’m cute?”

“Yes.” The answer is immediate, no hesitation. Ilya’s cheeks heat. “They all think you are very... adorable. They trust me to watch you.” It almost sounds like he’s boasting.

Shane’s eyes widen in mock horror. “You? Watch me? That’s a terrible idea. You let me do all kinds of bad stuff.” He reaches his left hand out in a beseeching motion, voice dropping to a wheedle. “Can I get up? Please?”

“No.”

“Why?” He drags the syllable out, twirling it.

“You have broken bone.”

“So? I’ve had worse.” He flops backward dramatically, then yelps as his collarbone protests the motion. “Ow. Okay, maybe not worse. But, like, only mildly worse. Let me stand. I want to show you something.”

“No.”

He stares at Ilya, lower lip trembling exaggeratedly. “Do you not love me anymore?”

The words hit Ilya like a slap. His throat tightens around an immediate protest, but he knows this is the medication talking, knows Shane is playing. Still, part of him flinches, because to even joke about Ilya not loving him implies the possibility that Ilya does. And maybe he does. Maybe that's why he's here, voice shaking, chest aching, stomach hollow with remorse.

"I..." He exhales. "Stay in bed." He chokes on the rest.

Shane narrows his eyes, suspicious. "You didn't finish that sentence."

"Yes, I did." He wipes a hand down his face. "You make me crazy."

"I'm adorable," Shane corrects. "Say it."

"You are adorable," Ilya mutters.

Shane beams. "See? Everyone thinks so." His attention drifts to the window again. "Maybe the bird will come back. Harold misses him." He looks down at his sling, fingers brushing the fabric. "I want to touch him."

"The plant?" Ilya asks.

"Yeah." Shane twists toward the edge of the bed, legs inching as if he fully plans to climb out. "I'll just say hi. Two seconds."

Ilya's hand shoots out and plants firmly on Shane's thigh, holding him in place. "No," he says, voice brooking no negotiation.

"You just want to keep me trapped," Shane pouts. "You're mean."

"Maybe."

"You're smiling," Shane accuses.

"No." He isn't. Or maybe he is. He can't tell anymore. Everything's dissolving under the warmth of Shane's ridiculous commentary.

Shane slumps back against the pillows, huffs. "Fine. Be mean." He folds his good arm across his chest, even the motion of crossing looks like a toddler sulking. The effect is ruined when he starts giggling again five seconds later. "I'm kidding," he says. "You're not mean. You're nice. You have soft hands. Big, but soft." He squeezes Ilya's fingers. "How are your hands soft? You punch guys all the time."

Ilya groans and drops his forehead briefly to the edge of the mattress. "You are exhausting," Ilya mutters, but his voice is tender, reverent even, the syllables curling around the edges of a smile.

They sit like that for several minutes, Ilya monitoring him like a hawk, Shane basking in the attention, occasionally humming some tuneless melody under his breath. Shane tries to pick at the hospital bracelet; Ilya slaps his hand away. Shane tries to reach for the nurse call button to ask for another pudding cup; Ilya intercepts it. Shane claims he's suddenly starving for

popsicles; Ilya tells him he just ate one. Shane looks betrayed by the passage of time, moans about how everything is unfair and Ilya hates him. Ilya threatens to call his mother if he doesn't behave. Shane gasps in horror and instantly settles down, mumbling about how Ilya plays dirty.

It only takes five minutes of corralling him before Ilya feels a year older. Ten minutes and he feels ancient. He can't imagine what Heather deals with every day, wrangling not only professional athletes but regular adult patients who apparently revert to kindergarten when given painkillers. Still, some part of him cherishes the chaos, the opportunity to keep Shane safe even in small ways – to be the one person allowed to scold him, soothe him, laugh at him, love him without saying it aloud.

Eventually, Shane's energy dips. His eyelids droop, the meds tugging him downward. He yawns wide enough to make his jaw click, then mutters, "I'm bored," like a kid about to fall asleep in the back seat.

"Sleep," Ilya orders.

"Don't wanna." Shane reaches out and tugs weakly at Ilya's sleeve. "Come up here."

"No."

"Please?" The word is drawn out, sugar-laced, a weapon he wields expertly.

Ilya shakes his head. "Bed small. You hurt. I will break you more."

"You're huge. You'll keep me safe." Shane pats the empty space beside him. "Come."

Shane keeps patting the mattress, eyelids heavy, stubbornness melting into sleepy neediness. "Come on," he murmurs. "Bed's big enough. You can protect me from the bird police."

Ilya exhales a rough laugh. He glances toward the door as if someone might burst in to scold them, then gives up and toes off his shoes. The bed frame creaks a warning, but he ignores it, sprawling carefully along the opposite side, mindful not to jostle Shane's sling. The mattress dips, and Shane immediately switches from sulky to gleeful, rolling onto his side to face him.

"Hi," he whispers, nose barely an inch from Ilya's cheek. "You're really here. In my bed. Hospital bed romance, new trope unlocked."

"This is not romance," Ilya grumbles, but the words are undone by the way his arm instinctively curls around Shane's waist, drawing him closer. He can feel the heat of Shane's body, the flutter of his breathing. He can smell shampoo and antiseptic, the faint metallic tang of blood dried on gauze. He strokes Shane's hair gently, fingertips threading through the locks, and Shane melts against him with a sigh that sounds suspiciously like a purr.

"You're so warm," Shane mumbles, nuzzling under Ilya's chin. "I'm gonna stick to you. Like a koala. Except sexy." He giggles at his own joke, then tips his head to press light, almost weightless kisses along Ilya's jaw. Tiny pecks, each one a soft punctuation, until Ilya's breath

stutters. “Mwah,” Shane says, with a grin. “Mwah-mwah-mwah.” He peppers his way from jaw to cheek, hovering dangerously close to his mouth, swaying like a drunk homing pigeon.

“Careful,” Ilya warns, even as his hand moves in slow circles across Shane’s back, anchoring him.

“Why?” Shane’s voice drops to a whisper as he brushes his lips against the corner of Ilya’s mouth. “You’re gonna stop me? I don’t think you can. I think you’re weak for me.” He nibbles the edge of Ilya’s jaw, teeth grazing skin, playful and lazy. “Daddy.”

The word lands like a spark on dry tinder. Ilya’s spine goes taut, his hand locking reflexively on Shane’s hip. “What.”

“Daddy,” Shane repeats, softer, breath ghosting over Ilya’s ear. He giggles, low and syrupy, eyes sparkling. “Keeping me safe.”

Ilya’s breath stutters. Heat flashes down his spine so swiftly it nearly buckles him. He squeezes his eyes shut, battles the instinct to flip Shane onto his back and pin him there. “Shane,” he warns, voice hoarse.

“Mm?” Shane pretends innocence, eyes wide and shining as he lifts his head to glance at Ilya through his lashes. Then he squirms, grinding his hips unconsciously, and lets his teeth graze Ilya’s jaw in a playful nip. “Did you hear me?” Another bite, this one on the line of his neck. “Daddy.”

A ragged sound claws up Ilya’s throat. His free hand clamps around Shane’s hip to still him. “You must stop,” he grits. “You are hurt.”

Shane mews, the sound ridiculously high, needy, like a kitten begging. He rubs his cheek against Ilya’s throat, presses a kiss there, then another. “You like it,” he whispers, giggling again, eyes fluttering. “Your ears turn red when I say it.” He peeks up and grins. “They’re red right now.”

“Because you are driving me insane,” Ilya growls.

“Mmm. Daddy’s mad.” Shane’s voice has turned sing-songy again, but there’s a glaze of heat underneath it, a lazy seduction muddled by painkillers. He squirms another time, earning a curse muttered in Russian. “Oops.” Another giggle. “You said a bad word. I like when you swear.”

Ilya thinks he might actually combust. It’s a visceral battle: his body urging him to grab, to kiss, to devour; his brain screaming that Shane is injured, concussed, high as a kite. He focuses on breathing. He counts backwards from ten in Russian, then again. He forces his touch to remain gentle, stroking down the length of Shane’s spine, rubbing his back in soothing circles until, mercifully, Shane’s restless wriggling eases, the medication dragging him toward drowsy compliance again.

“You’re so warm,” Shane murmurs, voice slurring at the edges now. He settles fully against Ilya’s chest, nose tucked beneath his jaw, lashes resting against his cheeks. He breathes in and

sighs it out in a little happy puff. “I like you. You smell good.”

“I smell like hospital soap,” Ilya says, but Shane shushes him with a finger pressed to his lips, then replaces it with a slow kiss that lands at the corner of his mouth.

“Mmm. Soap daddy.” He snickers, then yawns. “Don’t leave.”

“I will not,” Ilya vows, a simple truth he can offer without qualifiers.

A pocket of quiet unfurls. Monitors beep softly in the background, the hallway muffled behind the closed door. Ilya keeps his hand in Shane’s locks, smoothing them back from his forehead, carding through the strands, memorizing every texture. Shane hums indistinctly, half-asleep, shifting only to burrow closer as if Ilya’s ribcage is the only safe harbor.

The stillness stretches long enough for Ilya’s thoughts to slip sideways. His guilt seeps back in, creeping under the edges of the calm like ink bleeding into fabric. He can’t stop seeing it: Marleau barreling down the wing, Shane’s stick lifting to intercept, the momentum carrying them both, the crack of bodies colliding, the horrifying thud of Shane’s head hitting ice. If Ilya had shouted. If he’d leapt the boards a second faster. If he had just— “Marleau feels terrible,” he blurts, voice roughened. He isn’t even sure Shane is awake enough to parse the words, but they rip free anyway. “He did not mean to hurt you.”

Shane’s eyes remain closed, but his mouth twitches. “I know,” he whispers. He speaks like he’s underwater, words slow, but he’s listening.

“I should have—” Ilya’s throat tightens. He swallows, tries again. “I should have seen you there. I saw him coming. I should have yelled. I should have...put myself in front. I should have—” He breaks off, jaw clenching. He’s making no sense. The guilt tastes metallic, a constant companion that never lets him rest.

Shane studies him for a beat, the seriousness in his gaze incongruous with the haze of meds. Then he giggles softly, leaning forward to press a slow, tender peck to Ilya’s lips. “It’s not your fault,” he murmurs, words muffled against his mouth. “There’s nothing you could’ve done. Stop worrying. I’m okay.” He pulls back to search Ilya’s face. “Or I will be.”

“You’re not okay,” Ilya counters automatically, because the sling, the IV, the concussed fog all say otherwise.

Shane rolls his eyes and funks his forehead against Ilya’s cheek with a whisper of exasperation. “Fine. I’m not okay.” His lips trail down to Ilya’s neck again, a satiny glide. “Then make it up to me.”

Ilya’s eyebrow arches, skepticism sliding into reluctant amusement. “How?”

Shane’s grin turns feline, slow and mischievous. He tilts his face up, eyes softened, the corners crinkling. “Kiss?” he asks, voice barely above a whisper, all innocence and longing folded together.

Ilya huffs a short laugh, unable to resist the fond exasperation swelling in his chest. “You’re impossible.”

“Please.” Shane’s smile goes lazy, hopeful.

He looks helpless and fearless all at once—injured yet still trying to charm, medicated yet fully himself, soft around the edges but sharp where it matters. Ilya knows he should resist, should remind Shane about concussions and rest and propriety. Instead, he cups Shane’s cheek with his broad palm, thumb tracing the slope of his cheekbone. “Okay,” he breathes.

He tilts his head and meets Shane’s mouth in a slow, careful kiss. The kiss is gentle, careful, a meeting of lips rather than a clash, yet it carries every bit of pent-up worry, affection, and stubborn devotion Ilya’s been choking on since the moment Shane hit the ice.

Shane sighs into it, tension melting, fingers fisting weakly in Ilya’s shirt. When they part, he rests his forehead against Ilya’s, eyes half-lidded, smile satisfied. “See?” he whispers. “Better already.”

End Notes

a small tribute to ep 5~

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