

Catch and Keep

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Catch and Keep

by [Nyvarie](#)

Summary

Shane has two kids, a soft belly, and a husband who looks at him like he hung the moon — which is great, except Shane can't stop standing in front of mirrors picking himself apart. Ilya has a solution. It involves a dark forest, five minutes head start, and absolutely no mercy.

Or, Shane is getting fucked in a Forest

Notes

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

"But you look pretty, Daddy!" Their oldest looked up at him, clutching her favorite stuffy — a worn-out bunny with one floppy ear that she'd named Benny, for reasons neither Shane nor Ilya had ever fully decoded — in her tiny hands. Her eyes were big and earnest, the same dark shade as Ilya's, and completely impossible to argue with.

Shane crouched down to her level. "Yeah?"

"Yeah." She nodded seriously, curls bouncing with the motion. "Papa thinks that too. He said so. He said Daddy is the prettiest." She held up Benny as if offering supporting evidence. "Benny thinks so too."

Shane let out a breath that was almost a laugh. "Well. I'm glad Benny has an opinion."

"He has lots of opinions," Alice said gravely.

"I bet he does." Shane pressed a kiss to her forehead, her curls soft against his cheek, smelling like the strawberry shampoo she'd refused to let anyone replace since she was two. He stayed there a beat longer than he meant to. "Thank you, sweetheart. Really."

"You're welcome, Daddy." She patted his cheek with one small hand, very solemn about it, and then immediately turned and toddled off down the hallway, Benny dragging behind her.

Shane straightened up slowly.

In the doorway, Ilya stood with Wyatt balanced on his hip, their son already half-asleep against his shoulder, one fist curled in Ilya's shirt. He was looking at Shane the way he sometimes did when he thought Shane wasn't paying attention — quiet and unbearably fond, like Shane was something worth memorizing.

Shane looked away first. Old habit.

"Alice, honey —" Ilya's voice shifted, going soft the way it only ever did for the kids, "— can you and Wyatt play in your room until Grandma and Grandpa arrive?"

After a small nod from Alice and the soft patter of feet on the ground, Shane found himself pressed against their bedroom window, their children loudly playing in Alice's room — talking in both English and Russian.

"So, Shane Hollander." Ilya nuzzled his nose into Shane's neck, trying to find the scent he would kill for, but not finding it. A low growl rumbled through Ilya's chest as he realized that

Shane had scent-blocking patches on his glands. "Why?" Ilya asked, pulling his face away from his mate's neck.

Shane huffed. Not only did the omega know, but the alpha knew too — he couldn't stand it when other alphas or even betas could smell his fresh, minty strawberry scent. "Well, you know how you act when someone who's not you can smell me." Shane looked at Ilya, his eyes straying down to his alpha's lips, which were spreading wide into a grin. "Well, you are right. My pretty omega is right." Ilya came closer to his face. "But I also love it when they smell you, and then they smell me. Then they know you are mine, yes?"

Shane sighed. That was typical for the other. Ilya loved it — loved that everyone knew Shane was his. Not only the mating bite showing them, but also the lingering smell on Shane himself.

"Ilya." Shane looked up at the other. "You know that I only love you and won't do anything with someone else." Shane placed a kiss on Ilya's cheek and pushed him away. His parents were about to arrive and Shane did not want his dad to walk in on him again.

"Why did Alice tell you that you looked pretty?" the alpha asked, looking around and seeing all his omega's clothes scattered around the room. "I— I—"

Well, Shane knew he couldn't lie to Ilya. He clocked it every time, but it was so, so hard to tell his mate and husband how he felt about his body.

He didn't like how soft he was. He kind of hated the scar left after their youngest's birth. He loved his children — don't get him wrong — but sometimes he really wished he could have his old body back. The hard muscles he had worked for since he was eight.

"Not this again." Shane didn't even need to say something and Ilya already clocked his bullshit. Shane knew it was bullshit. "Hollander, you birthed two children! Your body nursed them. There is nothing ugly about that." Ilya stood in front of him at his full height. "You know that, yes?"

Well, yes. Shane knew it. Ilya couldn't keep his fingers off of him when he was pregnant — licking and kissing his swollen body. Ilya loved it when his mate was full of his pups. He would knock him up again, no questions asked, but Shane was certain that he was fine with just two children.

"Yes, baby, I just—" Shane couldn't help himself and looked into the mirror again. He was wearing a dark blue silk shirt he'd gotten before he'd gotten pregnant with Alice. The soft fabric stretched over his soft belly. Back then it had been a little too big for him, but now — Shane needed to get back into shape.

"I can hear you thinking from here, Shane." Ilya groaned, wrapping his arms around Shane and pulling him back against his chest. "You look pretty." Ilya's hands placed themselves on Shane's belly, directly where his womb was supposed to be. "You are the prettiest omega I've ever seen, Shane Hollander. Do I need to fuck you in front of our team? Maybe on national TV, yes?" — "No, no, I understand, really." Shane whined, his dick twitching. "I'm just a little insecure," the omega whispered.

"It better be just that, my love." Ilya left an open-mouthed kiss on his omega's neck, looking directly into Shane's eyes through the mirror.

"Get ready. I'll deal with Yuna and David. Take your time."

Fuck. Shane had really won.

Shane had his hands balled up in fists while Ilya went into the gas station to refuel this stupid sports car. Their family car was a bigger SUV — electric, good for the environment — but of course, Ilya had to keep at least one of his stupid fast sports cars. The reason, you might ask? "You find it sexy, Hollander" were the alpha's words when Shane asked why he was so certain about keeping this car, followed by "and we can have sex in it. No baby seats, see?"

And fuck, Shane hated it. He hated that Ilya was right. This fucking deathtrap of a car turned Shane on an embarrassing amount. Just sitting in it, thinking about all those times Ilya and Shane had fucked on the back seat, made his dick twitch.

But well, they hadn't even gotten to the restaurant yet. They were about twenty minutes away from their house.

"What's wrong?" Ilya came back, sat beside him in the driver's seat, and put down a plastic bag full of things he'd bought at that 24/7 kiosk.

"Nothing," Shane murmured. "Hm, sure, love." Ilya chuckled, placing a firm hand onto Shane's upper thigh. For about ten minutes, neither of them spoke. The silence was comfortable, wrapping around them.

"Do you remember?" Ilya started. "Back in college — the mating run." Ilya's eyes were fixed on the street, his lips stretching into a small smile. "Of course. Why would I forget?" Shane breathed out shakily. Back then their college had held a fund-raiser walk. Different omegas from different sports teams had been chosen, and students needed to donate money so they could participate in the run.

Well, of course there were rules — the alpha who caught an omega wasn't allowed to bite them. The whole thing was more of a hunt than anything else, but calling it a mating run was more fun.

Back then Ilya and Shane were already hooking up, being each other's rut and heat partners — nothing serious.

"You were so mad at me." Shane let out a little laugh. "Only because you imprinted on me first." — "Well, do you blame me?" Ilya was pulling into a more hidden parking lot, parking the car. The low rumble of the engine went silent.

"I needed to have you, Shane." His husband turned toward him, looking straight into his eyes. "I'm still happy that you bit me." The omega smiled, leaning forward into the alpha's space. "You know, Shane," Ilya's cold, big hands wrapped around his omega's chin, pulling him

closer, "I was thinking about this date for a long time." His eyes scanned Shane's face, coming closer, leaving a chaste kiss on his lips. "And then I thought about the run — that you had no chance, since of course I was faster than you." — "Fuck you."

Their lips pressed together again, melting into each other, kissing hungrily and sloppily for the first time in weeks. Ilya nipped at his lower lip, biting down until he could taste Shane's blood in his mouth. His tongue pushed further into his omega's mouth. Shane's tongue fought back a little before giving up and submitting. Ilya let out a low groan, his alpha loving how well-behaved their omega was.

"—Fuck." Ilya pulled back, but not by much. He could still feel the labored breath clashing against his swollen lips.

"So this is why you brought me here? To make out with me?" Shane chuckled a little, closing his eyes and breathing in his alpha's scent — a strong vanilla and musk, with a little spice around the edges. "Well, no, Shane." Ilya placed a chaste kiss on his lips, licking the blood from them. "You know, I never got the chance to fuck you after the mating run." — "So you want to fuck me here?" Shane pulled back, hoping Ilya would suggest what he thought. "Yes and no."

Ilya let his seatbelt spring free. "I was thinking I'd give you — hmm, let's say five minutes — to run away from me." The alpha let his eyes wander over his omega's body, fixing his gaze on his crotch. "And when I catch you, I get to fuck you, then and there." — "And what do I get?" Shane asked, his scent glands throbbing under the patches, his scent pooling up beneath the tightly glued patch.

"You can tie me up on the bed." Oh — Shane liked that. Shane liked that a lot. Ilya hated it when he couldn't touch him — hated it when Shane fucked himself on the alpha's dick, took his sweet time, edged himself until he cried and couldn't move anymore.

"Sounds good." The omega pressed a chaste kiss on his alpha's mouth, lingering in its bliss until he heard his seatbelt buckle click. "Your five minutes start now, sweetheart." Ilya growled, grabbing Shane's shoulders, squeezing them and messing up the scent patches — them no longer sticking, Shane's scent flooding the car. Sweet and ripe, a little too fresh from the mint.

"Run, baby."

This was Shane's cue. His omega pumped adrenaline into his body, making him shake a little. He scrambled to get the stupid car door open, his legs feeling a little too weak when his feet hit the ground.

The cold hit him the moment he was out of the car — sharp and immediate, biting at the exposed skin of his neck and wrists. The parking lot was dark, lit only by a distant streetlamp that barely reached the tree line, and beyond that the forest stretched out black and dense and completely silent.

His legs felt stupid. Weak at the knees in a way that had nothing to do with running and everything to do with Ilya's hands still ghost-warm on his shoulders, the ruined scent patches,

his own slick already cooling against his inner thighs.

He ran anyway.

The grass was wet underfoot, squelching with every step, and Shane nearly went down twice in the first thirty seconds — arms windmilling, heart lurching — before he hit the tree line and the ground went from open lawn to roots and mud and darkness. He couldn't see more than a few feet ahead. Branches snagged at his sleeves. Something cold and wet slapped across his cheek and he flinched but didn't slow down.

His lungs were already burning. God, he really needed to get back on the ice.

Focus. Shane ducked under a low branch, feet finding something like a rhythm on the uneven ground. Just run. You're faster than him. You've always been faster than him, he just has longer —

A sound behind him. Close. Closer than it should have been.

Shane's stomach dropped.

He veered left, instinctive, crashing through a cluster of undergrowth that tore at his jeans. His omega was screaming now — not fear exactly, something more complicated than fear, something that made his heart race and his mouth go dry and his body feel electric and alive in a way that was deeply, embarrassingly not fear at all.

Silence again. Just his own ragged breathing and the soft crush of his footsteps in the mud.

Maybe he'd lost him.

He slowed, just slightly, pressing a hand to a tree trunk to catch his balance. His pulse thundered in his ears. The forest was dark and still around him, the cold settling into the damp fabric of his shirt, and for one long moment —

Something moved in his peripheral vision.

Shane bolted.

Too late.

A hand closed around his wrist — iron grip, yanking him off balance — and Shane crashed sideways into a tree, bark rough against his palm, Ilya a solid wall of heat at his back before he could recover. One arm banded across his chest. Not tight enough to hurt. Tight enough to be absolutely inescapable.

"Got you." Low. Rough. Right against his ear.

Shane thrashed on instinct, twisting hard, and for one wild second he actually got loose — sheer desperation and years of being the fastest skater on every team he'd ever played for — and ran.

He heard Ilya make a sound behind him. Not a word. Something lower than a word, something that raised every hair on Shane's arms and made his legs move faster than they had any business moving.

He didn't make it far.

Ilya hit him like a freight train — arms around his waist, both of them going down hard into the mud, Shane twisting to take the impact on his shoulder rather than his face. They landed in a graceless heap, breathing hard, Shane still squirming even though it was completely pointless.

Ilya's weight settled over him. Heavy and warm and absolutely immovable.

"Done?" Ilya said, and he sounded wrecked — breathing ragged, voice dropped to something barely human, pupils so blown Shane could see it even in the dark.

Shane went still.

His omega went very, very quiet.

"Yeah," Shane breathed. "Done."

"Well, Hollander." Ilya's eyes were dark as he took precise steps toward Shane, locked in on the other's face. So prettily flushed, dark pink spreading down his neck into the neckline of his shirt. Fuck, Ilya needed to ruin him.

"Looks like I won. So be a good omega and show me." The alpha's eyes darted down to the ground — a silent command to submit. Shane's eyes went glassy with lust, his knees buckled. Ilya was sure he was about to submit, present his pretty ass and take it like he was made to — but that fucker bolted. His weak, shaky legs carrying him away.

Ilya was startled. Back then, Shane had submitted, bared his neck to Ilya, whimpering and begging for Ilya to fuck him. But now he ran. Fuck.

Ilya, a little startled, nearly fell as he bolted after his needy, wet omega. All he could focus on was the blood rushing in his ears, the need to pin Shane down making him feral. "You little —" Ilya gritted through his teeth, chasing Shane, running. His legs started hurting, his lungs burning, but he needed to win. This was all that mattered right now.

Twigs from low-hanging trees hit Ilya's face. It stung, but chasing his sweet, sweet omega was more important. As long as he didn't bleed, everything was fine — and Shane wouldn't put up a fuss about him needing to be careful.

Just one calculated jump and Ilya could take Shane down. And that's what he did — he pounced forward, grabbing Shane's ankles and bringing him to a rapid stop. They both fell. The ground was muddy and cold.

The omega struggled, tried to get away, tried to get back on his legs — but Ilya was not having it. He growled, low, his chest rumbling as he clamped down on Shane's legs. The hold was so strong that Shane whimpered and slowly submitted to the alpha's grip.

"Fuck, finally." Ilya cursed, slowly climbing over Shane, taking in the shaking figure.

So warm. Soft and perfect.

"This is unfair," Shane protested, getting up on his forearms and looking up at Ilya, who was hovering over him. "No — you are slow." Ilya shrugged, his eyes going dark as they roamed over Shane's body, especially his crotch.

The tight pants showed off his hard cock perfectly, the outline going down his right thigh. Thick and wanting.

"Fuck you, I'm not slow!" Shane swatted at him, pouting, his eyes gleaming a little. "So why are you beneath me?" The alpha's hand got a hold of the shirt's buttons, slowly opening the silk shirt, slightly tanned skin coming into view. A little damp from sweat, glowing in the cool moonlight. "You know, omegas aren't supposed to be fast," Shane grumbled, looking away. "We are supposed to care for the family. Alphas need to be fast — to hunt and stuff." Ilya hummed. "You are right. I provide. But now—" Ilya lowered himself down to Shane's chest, licking over his sensitive nipple, "—I get to eat." He grinned as he sucked the bud into his mouth.

Shane, well — Shane was more than happy about that. He arched into it. Ilya's mouth sucked greedily, as if he was trying to milk him. And oh fuck, how much Ilya had missed Shane being pregnant. And how could anyone blame him? Shane's already big chest had gotten even bigger — all because of Ilya.

Sometimes the alpha wished Shane would wear bras, but when Ilya suggested it, Shane looked at him like he'd asked him to wear a dress in public.

Not that Ilya had ever asked that.

The alpha's train of thought got interrupted by Shane's whiny moan, his hand grasping at his soft blond curls. "Fuck, Ilya." Shane's breathy moans went directly to Ilya's dick. It throbbed and ached — all he wanted was to fuck his husband, make him scream and claw at the muddy ground, fuck himself back on Ilya's cock while the alpha took in the trembling figure of his mate.

God, Ilya was so fucking gone.

He let the hard, throbbing bud pop out of his mouth. The bud and the skin around it were dusty pink and glistening from his spit, Shane squirming under his heavy gaze. "Fuck, Shane. Look at you." Ilya whispered, trailing a single finger down the other's chest and slightly pressing where his womb was. Shane shivered visibly — the pressure stinging a little, but feeling way too good. "Want to get you pregnant again." Ilya murmured, looking a little sad, because Shane was on birth control.

They loved their children, but it was painfully obvious that Wyatt and Alice were Ilya's kids — always so loud and speaking their minds on everything.

"Sorry, Ilya." Shane knew that Ilya would love to have an even bigger family. "No, it's okay." Ilya's finger was replaced by his big, warm hand. "Your health comes first." They locked eyes. Ilya's dripping with love and hunger, Shane's seconds away from leaking tears. Fuck, Shane really loved Ilya so, so much.

"No, sweetheart — don't cry yet. You're not even on my cock yet." Lightening the mood was Ilya's thing, and he succeeded at it. "Then just fuck me already." Shane snapped back, laughing a little and wiping away a stray tear. "Don't need to tell me twice." With that, Ilya was at Shane's pants, nearly ripping them in the process of taking them off. The black boxers Shane was wearing — well, that was a different story. Ilya gripped them, tugging with all the strength he had and ripping them into useless pieces of cloth.

"Much better." Ilya growled, while Shane whined, the muddy forest floor making contact with his heated skin. "Cold," the omega pressed through his tightly pursed lips, looking up at Ilya.

"Don't worry — you'll be warm soon." Before Ilya did anything else, he took in Shane's figure — again. His husband's spent cock was now leaking onto his lower belly, smearing cum on the smooth skin Ilya loved so much. Ilya loved everything about Shane — his chest and his hole — but one thing Ilya was obsessed with was Shane's cock.

It was rock hard, the foreskin covering his pink head. The size was a little bigger than the average omega cock, but still small enough to fit perfectly in Ilya's hands. "I fucking love your cock." Ilya groaned as he took it in his hand, leaning down over his husband, pressing his mouth onto Shane's — muting his moans.

The kiss was sloppy, wet, teeth clacking together as Ilya pumped Shane's cock. He lost himself in the kiss, Shane's lips being so soft and tasting like cherry chapstick.

But that one thing that made Ilya go wild was Shane's scent. It was even sweeter now — the mint sharper, reminding Ilya of mint liqueur. The strawberry reminded him of fresh strawberry jam they'd both had when they went to Paris for their babymoon. God, Ilya could lose himself in the memories of the weeks leading up to Alice's birth.

Shane had been nesting — refusing to let Ilya wash his clothes and cuddling up with them in the nest Shane had built with so much care. But he had also cleaned the entire house, getting anxious about the possible health risks a dirty house could pose.

Their house wasn't dirty.

"Ilya." Shane whined, separating himself from Ilya's lips — red and swollen, slick with their spit. "Shh, baby." A wide grin spread over Ilya's lips. "Turn around." He twisted his wrist in an upward motion one last time before letting go of the omega's dick, it slapping back against his lower belly with a wet sound.

Shane did as he was told, lying down on his chest, his ass up and his legs spread. The view was something Ilya would never get tired of — his ass wet with slick that was slowly making its way down his thighs.

"I'll never get enough of that." — "Ilyaaa." Shane whimpered, already cock-dumb even though Ilya hadn't fucked him yet. "I know, baby. You need my dick, yes?" Ilya pressed his clothed cock against his ass, loving the look on Shane's face — pressed into the mud, red and panting. "Please, Ilya. Need it—" His big brown eyes blown wide, the brown almost hidden by black. "Alpha~."

Oh fuck. Shane was gone — like really gone. He would never call Ilya by his subgender, calling it primitive and degrading. It was a sign — a sign that his omega had fully taken over, making Shane stupid and needy.

And god, did Ilya love it.

He took his time undoing his belt, slow and deliberate, watching Shane squirm against the muddy ground. The omega whined, hips rolling back into nothing, chasing friction that wasn't there. "Ilya — please —"

"Shh." Ilya pressed a firm hand to the small of his back, holding him still. "You take what I give you. That's all you're good for right now, yes?"

Shane cursed into the dirt. And then, quieter, muffled — "yes."

Ilya worked himself out of his pants just enough, hissing at the cold air, and then — nothing. He just pressed the head of his cock against Shane's slick-wet hole and waited. Felt him flutter desperately. Felt him clench around nothing.

"Ilya."

"Tell me what you want." His voice had dropped low, the alpha bleeding through every word. "Use your words, Hollander. Beg for it."

"Fuck me." Shane gritted out, what was left of his pride still clinging on. "Come on, just — fuck me already —"

"That's not begging." Ilya dragged the head of his cock through his slick, slow and mean. "Try again."

"Please —" It came out wrecked. Broken open. "Please, Ilya, I need it, I need you, please just —"

"Good boy."

Ilya pushed in slowly. Inch by inch, feeling every bit of resistance melt away, Shane's body opening for him like it always did — like it was made to. And fuck, maybe it was. Made for him specifically. Slick dripping down Ilya's cock the moment he bottomed out, Shane's whole body shuddering.

"Fuck —" Shane's voice cracked. "You feel — god, you're so —"

"I know." Ilya ground his hips forward, deep, just to feel him clench. "Say it."

"You fill me up so good —" Shane choked on the words, fingers scrabbling at wet earth. "Ilya —"

"That's right." He pulled back and snapped forward, hard. "Mine. This body is mine, yes? No one else gets this."

"Yours —" Shane shoved back against him, desperate. "Only yours, just — move —"

"So greedy," Ilya murmured, but he moved — rolling his hips, grinding deep, watching Shane fall apart beneath him. "Look at you. Dripping for me, shaking for me. Such a pretty omega."

"Shut up —" Shane shoved back against him harder, and Ilya's grip on his hips tightened, fingers bruising.

"Make me."

What followed wasn't gentle. Shane pushed and Ilya pushed back harder, snapping his hips forward until Shane choked on a moan and forgot whatever argument he'd been making. The wet sounds of slick filled the cold night air, Shane's whimpers pitching higher the faster Ilya moved.

"There —" Shane gasped when Ilya angled just right. "Don't — don't stop —"

"You going to come like this?" Ilya pressed his chest to Shane's back, lips dragging over his mating scar. "Going to make a mess in the mud like a desperate little —"

"Yes —" Shane sobbed. "Yes, I don't care, just don't stop —"

He could feel it — the base of Ilya's cock beginning to swell, just barely, that first warning pressure that made Shane's whole brain short-circuit. "Your knot —" he gasped. "Ilya — give it to me, please, I need it, I need you to knot me —"

"Not yet." Ilya's voice was strained, rough at the edges, his own control fraying. "You come first."

"Please —" Shane was outright begging now, shame completely dissolved. "Please, I want it, I want to feel you lock inside me, please —"

"Soon." A hand slid beneath him to wrap around his cock, grip tight and sure. "Come for me first. Then you get what you want."

Shane went apart at the seams — clenching down hard as he came, a broken sound torn out of him, striping Ilya's fist and the muddy ground beneath him. His whole body shook with it, thighs trembling, and through the white haze he was still whimpering — "knot, knot, please, Ilya —"

"I have you." Ilya's voice dropped to something almost tender, even now. "I have you, solnyshko."

He pressed deep — deeper — and then his knot caught, locking them together with a pressure that punched the air out of Shane's lungs. Shane sobbed, full and overwhelmed, clenching down instinctively around it as Ilya groaned low against his neck and spilled inside him.

For a long moment neither of them moved. Shane's fingers had gone slack in the mud. Ilya's forehead rested between his shoulder blades, breathing ragged, both of them locked together and trembling.

"Too much —" Shane whimpered weakly, but he didn't mean it. He never meant it. His body was already settling around the knot like it belonged there, pliant and satisfied in a way nothing else ever managed.

"I know." Ilya pressed his lips to his spine. "You took it so well. So good for me."

Shane made a small, wrecked noise and said nothing.

Ilya shifted carefully, easing them both onto their sides without breaking the knot, one arm wrapping around Shane's middle — right over his belly, right over his womb, the same place his hand always found in the dark.

Rational brain knew. Two was enough. Shane's body had given enough.

But locked inside his omega, feeling him warm and full and his, Ilya's hand pressed flat against soft skin and his chest ached with it — quiet and helpless and overwhelming.

Again. More. Keep. Mine.

He didn't say it out loud.

He pressed his lips to the back of Shane's neck instead, and Shane exhaled slow and soft, and that was enough.

—

They made it home eventually.

Shane wasn't entirely sure how — his legs had been useless for a solid ten minutes after the knot released, and Ilya had made it insufferably worse by being unbearably gentle about it. Wiping him down with his own shirt. Carrying Shane's weight back to the car without being asked. Not saying a single word about any of it, which was somehow the worst part.

Shane had called him smug anyway, on principle.

Ilya had smiled and said nothing, which proved his point.

Now they were home — parents gone, kids asleep, the house dark and quiet around them — and Shane was boneless in their bed, clean and warm and so tired he could feel it in his teeth. Ilya's arm was heavy across his middle, his chest pressed against Shane's back, his breathing slow and even in the way that meant he wasn't asleep yet but was thinking about it.

Shane stared at the ceiling.

"You know," he said, quiet enough not to carry down the hall, "back then I actually thought I could outrun you."

A low sound from behind him. Almost a laugh. "You almost did."

"I did." Shane corrected. "I got loose."

"For four seconds."

"Four very impressive seconds."

Ilya huffed, warm against the back of his neck. His arm tightened slightly around Shane's middle — not possessive, just present. "You were so fast," he said, and it came out soft. Genuine. "I remember watching you at the start line. I thought — if he runs, I will have to actually try."

Shane was quiet for a moment. "You never told me that."

"I'm telling you now."

Outside, the wind moved through the trees. Somewhere down the hall, Wyatt made a small sound in his sleep and went quiet again. Shane exhaled slowly, feeling the tension he hadn't noticed he was still carrying bleed out of his shoulders.

"I was so angry at you," Shane murmured. "When you bit me."

"I know."

"I wanted to kill you."

"I know." A pause. "And then?"

Shane thought about it. The way everything had shifted, immediate and irreversible, like a key turning in a lock he hadn't known was there. The way he'd looked at Ilya afterward — furious and shaking and already, helplessly, gone.

"And then nothing," Shane said. "And then it was just — you."

Ilya pressed his lips to the back of his neck. Slow and deliberate, the way he did when he didn't have words for something.

Shane closed his eyes.

"Alice was right, you know," Ilya said after a while, very quietly. "You are the prettiest."

"Shut up."

"Benny also thinks so."

Shane laughed — surprised out of him, tired and real — and felt Ilya smile against his skin.

"Go to sleep, Rozanov."

"Yes, Hollander."

He didn't move. Neither did Shane.

Outside the window the night was dark and cold, and inside it was warm, and Shane thought — not for the first time, not for the last — that he had won. Really, genuinely, embarrassingly won.

He was asleep before he could think anything else.

End Notes

okay so. this is my first hollanov fic and i genuinely don't know how to feel about it?? i've been rotating these two in my head for so long and somehow it turned into this. if you made it to the end — thank you, genuinely, it means a lot!! kudos and comments make me feral in the best way, just so you know :3

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