

Better than nicotine

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Better than nicotine

by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

Ilya's cigarettes have always been easier than love...but Shane tastes too good to keep smoking.

It isn't easy to quit smoking, Ilya knows that. He's tried, multiple times without success. Something Shane has quietly, stubbornly hated since their rookie year.

An off-season at Shane's cottage forces Ilya to confront the habit he's clung to for comfort, the one that could keep him from fully being with the man he loves.

Notes

The "Ilya tries to quit smoking, which isn't as easy as he may thought" oneshot fic.

Yes the idea is that every time Ilya craves a cigarette, they fuck. Sounds like a good idea to me and honestly it probably would have helped me quit smoking as well haha

Kudos and comments are as always appreciated!!

The ashtray shouldn't have meant anything.

It was simply a clear, thick, glass ashtray. The type of ashtray that was available in almost every store. Nothing special. It sat there like it belonged, like it had always been part of the place. Shane's place: clean, orderly, pine-scented, by the lake. Ilya knew better than anyone else that the ashtray didn't belong.

Ilya stared at it longer than necessary.

He knew, *of course*, that Shane hated smoking. Not in a dramatic way. Shane didn't lecture or nag him constantly. He didn't wrinkle his nose every time Ilya lit up (at least, not on purpose). But Ilya noticed the small things: the way Shane opened windows after he smoked inside, the way he washed his hands a little longer after holding hands when the smell still lingered, the way he avoided stealing any clothing that hadn't been in the wash since the latest cigarette. The way his mouth always tasted faintly of mint and coffee and nothing else.

Cigarettes were the one habit Shane had never tried to and never would be able to understand, he had said so himself.

Ilya had learned Shane's sensitivity the hard way.

In the beginning, before words like *boyfriend* or *love* or *us* had ever been spoken, Shane's reactions had been easier to miss.

They had been careful with each other then. All sharp glances and stolen moments, hands lingering just long enough to pretend it was accidental. When they had finally crossed that line, it had been messy, fast, and breathless, driven by a tension neither of them knew how to release any other way.

Afterward, Ilya always did the same thing.

He rolled away, reached for something to wipe off the cum from his stomach, and pulled out a cigarette. And every single time, Shane tensed.

At first, Shane tried to hide it. He lay on his back, staring at the ceiling, breathing carefully through his mouth as if bracing for something. His fingers fidgeted against the sheets, twisting the fabric, smoothing it out, twisting it again.

It was repetitive, nothing like the way he gripped the sheets to prevent Ilya from fucking him into the headboard from behind. And while Ilya secretly loved seeing Shane reduced to a babbling, moaning mess, tearing up the hotel's sheets beneath him, he had started to hate when Shane didn't relax after they both finished.

The first time Shane actually said something, his voice came out too casual.

“Do you have to do that right now?”

Ilya paused, lighter raised about to light up.

“What?”

“The cigarette” Shane said, avoiding eye contact as he fidgeted with his hands. “Just... yeah.”

Ilya scoffed, not unkindly. “Relax, Hollander. I’ll open window.”

Even with the window cracked and the smoke drifting into the cold night, Shane couldn’t settle. He shifted away, subtly but unmistakably. He sat up instead of sprawling against Ilya’s side. He reached for his water bottle and took slow, deliberate sips, as if trying to wash the taste from his mouth even though he hadn’t kissed Ilya since before the cigarette.

It wasn’t disgust. Not exactly.

It was discomfort. Sensory overload. Like loud arenas sometimes made Shane retreat inward, or certain textures made him grimace without meaning to. Cigarettes hit him everywhere at once: taste, smell, air. They crowded his senses until there was no room left for calm.

One night, much earlier than Ilya expected, Shane admitted it quietly.

“I can taste it” he said, voice low. “Even if you’re not blowing it near me. It’s just... there.”

Ilya went still.

That was when the fidgeting made sense. The way Shane’s hands never quite knew where to go. The way his body angled away without him realizing it. The way he only relaxed after Ilya crushed the cigarette out and washed his hands.

After that, Ilya started delaying it. Five minutes, ten. Sometimes he skipped it entirely if Shane had already tucked himself into his side, warm, trusting, unaware of how much power that gave him.

Shane noticed those changes too.

He sighed softly when the lighter didn’t click. He curled closer, fingers tracing absent patterns against Ilya’s ribs. He kissed Ilya more deeply, grateful but not wanting to make a big deal out of it. And when Ilya did smoke (old habits died hard), Shane still got fidgety, still shifted, still reached for gum, water, or fresh air.

And yet...

Ilya picked up the ashtray, turning it over in his hands. Shane had bought this. For him. Brought it to the cottage, knowing full well what it meant. Knowing full well that Ilya still smoked.

The thought settled warm and heavy in his chest.

You are ridiculous, Ilya told himself. *It's just an ashtray.*

But it wasn't just that.

It was the same way Shane always stocked the fridge with Coke even though he said it tasted "too chemical." The way he made sure Ilya's favorite snacks were in the cupboard, even though he never ate them himself. The way he made space. For Ilya's habits, flaws, mess.

Even the ones he didn't like.

Ilya stepped onto the porch, the lake stretching dark and quiet in front of him. He lit a cigarette, the familiar burn grounding him instantly.

He had started young, too young, back when hockey had been pressure and expectations, noise, and smoke-filled locker rooms where older guys told him it would help take the edge off.

It had, at first. Then it had just... stayed.

The cigarette glowed between his fingers as he exhaled, smoke curling into the cool evening air. He thought about how many times he had promised himself he would quit—during off-seasons, after losses, after Shane. Especially after Shane.

When the cigarette burned low, Ilya frowned and checked the pack.

Empty.

He snuffed it out carefully in the ashtray, watching the ember die.

Inside, the cottage was quiet and warm. Shane was already in bed, propped against the pillows, reading with his glasses on. He looked up immediately when Ilya entered, a soft smile breaking across his face.

"Hey" Shane said.

"Hey" Ilya replied, leaning down to kiss him.

The reaction was almost imperceptible, but still there...the brief tightening of Shane's mouth, the slight turn of his head. Not rejection. Never that. Just sensitivity.

Ilya pulled back, chest tightening. He thought about how Shane could taste everything. Wine notes, spice blends, the difference between brands of toothpaste. Of course he could taste the cigarette.

“Sorry” Ilya murmured.

Shane shook his head quickly. “It’s okay. I just... yeah.”

“I know” Ilya said softly, stroking through Shane’s dark bangs.

He did know. He knew how much Shane despised cigarettes. The smell, the taste, the way it lingered. And yet Shane had bought the ashtray anyway.

Ilya stood there for a moment, looking at the man who had quietly rearranged his life to make room for him without asking him to change.

“I’ll be right back” Ilya said.

He brushed his teeth thoroughly, scrubbing away the bitterness, the lingering smoke. He stared at his reflection afterward—at the faint lines of exhaustion around his eyes that appeared after a long season.

I can try, he thought. For him, I can try.

When he returned, Shane watched him with that open, hopeful look that always made Ilya’s chest ache.

“Thank you” Shane said quietly as Ilya leaned down again.

This time the kiss was slow and sure, Shane’s hands resting at Ilya’s waist. No hesitation. No pulling away.

Ilya pressed his forehead to Shane’s, breathing him in. Soap, fabric softener, and something uniquely Shane.

“I love you” Ilya said, the words still feeling new, terrifying, and right.

Shane smiled softly. “I love you too.”

Ilya moved slowly, deliberately, afraid of breaking the moment.

Shane watched him, glasses set aside, hair mussed from the pillow. Unguarded, soft in a way he rarely let the world see.

Ilya climbed onto the bed and kissed him again, deeper this time. Shane responded immediately, one hand curling into the fabric of Ilya’s shirt. The kiss wasn’t rushed. It was exploratory, familiar in the way only long-term secrecy could make something feel.

Ilya tugged Shane closer, bodies lining up, warmth bleeding through layers of cotton and skin. Shane made a small sound into the kiss, barely audible, sending a sharp spark straight to Ilya’s cock.

They undressed each other without ceremony. No fumbling, no urgency that felt desperate, just hands working with quiet confidence. Ilya pushed Shane's shirt up and over his head, fingers skimming familiar skin, committing the lines of his shoulders and chest to memory all over again. Shane's hands followed suit, tugging Ilya's shirt free, palms warm as they slid over his back.

Ilya trailed his hands down Shane's body, skimming over skin before circling his hole. Shane's breathing hitched immediately. He had been loose from earlier, still sensitive, and Ilya took his time, letting every touch linger.

"I love doing this" Ilya murmured, his lips brushing Shane's inner thighs. Shane shivered at the words.

Ilya pressed his tongue against Shane, slow and deliberate, tasting him fully. Shane arched, hands clutching the sheets, hips tilting up instinctively. "God... Ilya," Shane whispered, voice breaking. "You... *fuck*..."

Ilya hummed, teasing, letting Shane adjust to every flick of his tongue. He moved with patience, exploring, mapping, savoring the intimacy of this private connection.

Shane's moans grew louder, uncontrolled, his hips pressing into Ilya's face. "So good... I can't... I can't" he panted. Ilya smiled against him. "Then don't. Let go. Show me."

Shane groaned, trembling, gripping the sheets as Ilya's hands pressed against his prostate. Each motion hit perfectly, Shane's back arching higher. He cried out, not embarrassed, just lost in sensation. Ilya leaned back just slightly, teasing Shane's rim with his fingers, letting the tension build until Shane's entire body quivered.

"You're... so greedy" Ilya whispered, sliding fingers inside him gently, holding him open, making Shane shiver around his touch.

Shane's face flushed, mouth open, eyes half-lidded. "I... I can't... I'm close..."

Ilya's pace didn't falter. He matched Shane's natural rhythm, riding every flinch, every shiver, letting Shane feel fully seen, fully desired. "Make noises for me" Ilya urged softly. "I want to *hear* you."

Shane's moans broke into choked, breathless cries. "Ah... Ilya... I'm... *fuck*... yes..."

Ilya grinned, pulling Shane closer. He pushed deeper, slow and precise, until Shane was fully impaled on him. Every movement sent tremors through both of them. Shane's hands dug into Ilya's shoulders, then slid down his back, gripping him tight, desperate for more.

"*Fuck*... you feel... so good" Shane panted, hips jerking up into every thrust.

Ilya adjusted his angle, sinking all the way, letting Shane wrap around him completely. Every motion was careful, intimate, a conversation of skin and breath and desire. Shane cried out again, louder, breaking down all his usual control. "Ilya... please... I'm gonna..."

"Then come" Ilya whispered. "I've got you."

Shane arched fully, trembling, spilling onto Ilya. The sound of his release echoed in the quiet cabin, mingling with Ilya's own slow, steady rhythm. Ilya held him through it, letting Shane ride the waves until he finally collapsed into him, soft and spent.

Shane was the first one to mention it.

He shifted out of Ilya's arms, then froze as his eyes narrowed while he looked down at the sheets like they'd personally offended him. "Ok" he said, voice mildly distressed. "Nope. This bed is definitely... not clean anymore."

Ilya huffed a quiet laugh. "You say like it's a tragedy." "It is" Shane insisted, already having peeled himself free of the sticky mess made up of both of their cum, sweat, and drool. "I'll clean it in the morning," Ilya promised immediately, as he reached for him. "I swear. I'll wash everything."

Shane hesitated, then relented with a sigh. "Fine. But we're not sleeping here."

They migrated down the hallway to the other guest room. Shane flipped on the lamp and tugged back the covers with practiced efficiency. Ilya watched him with fond amusement.

They settled in quickly, their bodies fitted together like they had done hundreds of times before. Shane curled into Ilya's chest, one arm slung across his waist, face tucked comfortably against his neck.

As the quiet stretched, Ilya realized something. This was usually the moment he slipped out. Usually he would be staring at the ceiling, already thinking about the cigarette waiting for him outside.

His body seemed to still crave it. But he didn't have any cigarettes left.

Instead, Shane cuddled closer, breath warm against Ilya's skin. He inhaled deeply, content, and let out a soft, satisfied sigh.

Ilya felt it like a decision clicked into place. This was what Ilya wanted Shane to smell. Not smoke clinging to his clothes or his skin. Just him. Just warmth and fresh air and the quiet intimacy of being held.

Shane shifted slightly, then murmured something, already out like a light. Ilya tightened his arm around him, pressing a gentle kiss to the crown of his head.

Ilya knew that the next day was going to be hard, but he knew it was worth it.

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