

you remind me of how good it feels to hurt

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by [quantumoddity](#).

Summary

Something is bothering Shane Hollander.

Ilya can tell there's something on his mate's mind and he's desperate to fix it. He's been eager to do things for Shane ever since their son arrived, just seven months ago, desperate to be the perfect alpha.

But in order to solve this particular problem, they're going to have to confront things they'd rather ignore.

Notes

No the medical stuff does not make sense in this fic! We're here for the drama, not the anatomical accuracy!

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

Ilya could always tell when his mate had something on his mind. He'd just never been good at guessing what that something might be.

He knew what it meant when Shane caught his lower lip under his teeth, worrying at it until it bled, usually when he'd first notice he was even doing it. He recognised that distant look in his dark eyes, the restless tap of his long fingers on the counter as the cup of tea he'd been making sat forgotten, stewing into something that would look and taste like tar. He knew why Shane's hand kept searching out the bond mark on his collar, touching it absent mindedly like he needed the reassurance of the dark, bruised flesh under his fingers. Ilya had seen it all enough times, enough to leave him feeling a little like a sailor studying the clouds and seeing a storm rumbling in the future.

So he knew his mate was chewing over something, a worry had taken root in his mind and was spreading rapidly, constricting all his other thoughts like a weed stealing sunlight from its neighbours in the flowerbed. But Ilya also knew that if he tried to play detective and guess at what it was, if he tried to push Shane to spit it out before he was ready, he'd only work himself and his mate into an anxious, prickly impasse. You couldn't rush Shane Hollander, not when he got like this. Ilya had learned that lesson. Eventually.

So Ilya stayed calm, smacking down the catastrophic thoughts that skittered to the forefront of his mind with precise, practiced exercises he'd grasped after years of therapy. Shane wasn't angry at him. Shane wasn't questioning their bond. Shane wasn't hiding some deep rooted, poisonous infection left over from his surgery. Shane wasn't about to announce he was quitting the Centaurs and moving to Alaska to open a bed and breakfast with his new mate, Rose Landry. Ilya didn't know what was bothering Shane but he knew it was nothing they wouldn't be able to work through together. He'd tell him soon and they'd fix it, just like always.

So Ilya wasn't surprised when Shane finally cornered him as he was doing the dishes in that sleepy hour of quiet they got after their son went to bed and before they both collapsed themselves. He wasn't surprised to see his jaw set determinedly, chest puffed up and lower lip trembling slightly like he had a sentence he'd been practicing in the bathroom mirror anxious to jump out.

Ilya wasn't surprised that Shane needed to talk. It was just what he wanted to talk about that caught him off guard.

"We need to have sex. Tonight."

Ilya turned, hands frozen in the middle of setting a glass on the drainer, soap suds taking the opportunity to slide down his arm and drip onto his socks. He blinked a few times, his brain double, triple checking that his mate had actually said what he thought he'd said.

"Guess it's true what they said about the romance dying once we had a kid, huh?"

The joke burst out of Ilya before he could think better of it, his stupid mouth running without permission from his brain as per usual. He regretted it the moment he said it, wincing as

Shane frowned, shoulders tightening under the oversize Centaurs shirt he'd been sleeping in since Ilya joined the team.

"Well excuse me for resorting to drastic measures but when you've been ignoring me asking every other damn way for the last few months..." Shane snapped, folding his arms around himself in a way that told Ilya his anger was more defensive than anything else.

Ilya bit his lip trying to stop more deeply stupid comments from leaving before he could think about it first. But in that moment's pause, his brain snagged on something, "Months?"

Shane bristled visibly, "Ilya. When do you think the last time we had sex was?"

"Before Alexi," the answer came easily, even as Ilya's chest clenched as it dawned on him that, yes, that really was months. Seven months, to be exact.

It was easy to split their lives neatly into before their son arrived and after. It felt almost geological, a profound seismic shift like the breaking of a continent into something entirely new, only the vaguest shapes of who they'd been before. They'd prepared for it for months, they'd thought they were ready and could imagine holding their pup in their arms, had vague sketches in their minds of what he might look like and how it might feel to see his eyes open. They'd had other parents, their friends, tell them what it was like, they'd read all the books they were recommended, but the words had been far too small. They hadn't even come close. None of it had come close.

Not least because it had gone so, so wrong.

So it was easy for Ilya to divide their lives this way but less easy to grasp the nuances of the days, weeks and months that made up that time. Their sleep schedule was in tatters on the floor, making him regret any complaints he'd ever had about red eye flights. The usual rhythm of their lives, dictated by games and travel and media appearances, had disappeared now the two of them had been granted leave until Shane had recovered physically and Ilya had recovered emotionally. Time had stopped meaning much to them, hence why Ilya was washing three day old dishes at two in the morning and realising, with a dizzying shock, that it had been seven months since he'd last had sex.

That had to be some kind of personal record.

Ilya swallowed, buying himself some time to think as he dried his hands, feeling Shane's eyes boring into him while his own stuck guiltily to the kitchen floor, "The doctor said..."

"The doctor said six to eight weeks," Shane cut across him sharply, uninterested in his excuses, his rebuttals primed and ready, "My recovery's been going fine, I've never missed an appointment, I've been doing the exercises every day. For fuck's sake, Ilya, I've started *training* again. If I can put some skates on and take a check, I can have sex."

Ilya was chewing on his lip now, making a mess of it, "Of course. I am not trying to make you sound weak, Shane. I know you are strong, better than anyone else. Maybe we just haven't found the time..."

“Bullshit,” Shane won the face off again, barely breaking a sweat in this argument, “We’ve had time, Ilya, that isn’t the problem. And even if it was, we have time right now. So I’m asking. Fuck me.”

And Ilya hesitated.

He had his husband, his mate, standing in front of him, somehow managing to look wildly tempting in nothing but a pair of very old gym shorts and a t-shirt with their team’s ridiculous logo on it. Shane’s eyes were dark and gorgeous as ever, his mouth begging to be kissed even as it was set so stubbornly, only tempting Ilya more the way it had since they’d both been teenagers. It hit Ilya then, like the right nerve endings had suddenly jumped back online now they’d been noticed. He missed Shane, missed him with an ache right down to his bones.

So why the fuck was he hesitating?

It was too late in half a heartbeat. Something shuttered in Shane’s eyes and he turned on his heel, hiding his face as fast as he could, though Ilya still saw the way his shoulders shook.

Ilya’s heart stopped, “Shane! Shane, wait a second...”

But Shane kept walking. Of course he did. He’d just begged his mate to have sex with him and gotten silence and the world’s dumbest expression in response.

“It’s fine,” Shane’s voice sounded like ice cracking, “You don’t want to, of course that’s fine. I’m going to bed.”

“Like hell you are, come here...”

Ilya caught up with him in front of the huge windows at the back of the cottage, sparing less than a glance to the gorgeous view beyond them, to the lake as still and perfect as glass, the almost impossible, eye watering number of stars you felt like you could fall into.

Ilya didn’t look at any of it, he only cared about the man in front of him.

He caught Shane’s shoulder but he didn’t force him to turn, he wouldn’t, he waited for his mate to do that himself. As much as Ilya knew he deserved it, it still hurt like a kick to the gut, seeing Shane’s lower lip trying so hard not to tremble, seeing the tears caught in his eyelashes.

“Shane, I’m sorry, I just froze up. You caught me by surprise, that’s all,” Ilya groaned, feeling the mounting frustration of the emotions straining against his ribcage outgrowing his ability to put them into words.

“Ilya...” Shane’s shoulders slumped, his eyes already going dull behind the shields he was putting up inside his mind, “It’s okay. I get it. I did kind of spring it on you and...and you don’t want to and that’s fine...”

“Shane, that isn’t it,” Ilya protested, though he had to admit, at that moment, he didn’t know what it actually *was*.

Shane could see it written on his face, his voice taking on an edge of desperation that he couldn't hide in time, "I don't get it, Ilya. You'll hold me, you'll kiss me and it feels like it's going somewhere but then...then it just stops. *You* stop."

He was right, Ilya knew it. He knew it so clearly and undeniably that he only felt like more of an idiot for not seeing it until now.

He touched Shane, certainly. Barely five seconds went by with them in the same room before Ilya would wrap an arm around his shoulders or let him lean back against his chest or stroke his fingers through his hair. He kissed him every chance he got, not caring who was in the room to groan at them or throw things, as the other Centaurs had been forced to start doing. He never missed an opportunity to hold him, some of the best moments of the last few months had been curling up in the nest with Shane while he fed their pup, his arms around the two of them, making a safe, secure island for them in the middle of a terrifying world.

Ilya would call himself touch starved but that implied he could one day be satisfied. He'd been bad as soon as their relationship was shoved into the spotlight, worse once Shane became pregnant and somehow even worse since Shane had come back from the hospital. He was the sole reason there was a PDA jar in the Centaur's locker room, three quarters full of dollar bills.

And who could blame him? Ilya was never going to waste another moment with his mate, not after how long they'd had to hide and sure as fuck not after he nearly lost him forever.

But Shane was right, it always stopped. Ilya could tell himself he hadn't noticed Shane asking for more but it would be cowardice. Shane had been the sun he'd orbited for decades now, he knew what it meant when he got that look in his eyes, when he sprawled across his lap and rolled his hips in that way that made it impossible for Ilya to think of anything but how little clothing separated their skin. He knew that low growl behind his voice, the smoke in his words as he crawled towards him on the couch and murmured that Alexi was finally asleep or yanked the blankets off of Ilya and told him he was going in the shower. He knew the way his scent would change, get sharp around the edges, become a little dangerous like ozone gathering before lightning struck.

But every time he'd seen it, heard it, smelt it on him for the past few months, Ilya had changed the subject. He'd distracted them both, replying that if Alexi was in bed then they'd better get some sleep themselves, if Shane was going in the shower he'd go down and get breakfast started for him. He'd fussed over Shane instead, asking if his chest was hurting, putting his hand over his heart to check it was still beating strong. Hugging him closer, telling him he loved him, saying all the right things and giving him everything he could want, all but what he was asking for.

Shane had been screaming at him for weeks, telling him he missed him. And Ilya, his alpha, had been ignoring him.

"God, *moy lyubimyy*..."

"If it's..." Shane's walls cracked, the voice that came through was so small and so devastatingly sad, "If it's something about the way I look now, I...I'm training again, I'm

working out. I'll look like I did before, I promise it won't-

“Shane.”

Ilya couldn't listen to another word. He just couldn't, it would break him. He knew there was too much alpha in his voice, too much of a command, too much of something he'd sworn he wouldn't hold over his omega's head. But he prayed Shane could hear the pain behind it and know he was only flexing his control because he needed to stop the poison spreading through his mate's veins.

And it worked, thank God it worked, Shane stopped. His eyes were wide and terrified, begging silently for help like a rabbit staring into the headlights of the truck about to run him down. Ilya closed the gap between them, cradling Shane's face between his hands, hoping it was enough to block out everything else.

“Shane, listen to me, please,” Ilya heard the tears in his voice but he didn't hide them, they belonged to Shane, he owed his mate every single one, “This has nothing to do with the way you look, nothing at all. *Moy dorogoy*, you are beautiful to me. You always will be, whatever you look like because you are always *you*. Understand?”

Ilya understood the kind of bravery it took for Shane to take a deep breath and nod. He knew how hard it was to go against the bitter ideas that were etched so deeply on your bones it felt like it had to be true. The exact shape of their demons might be different but they had the same teeth, the same claws. So Ilya knew just how grateful he was when Shane managed to believe him.

“Shane, I am the biggest fucking idiot on the planet.”

That got a smile out of his mate, even if it wobbled a little, hand coming up to scrub the tears off his cheeks, “Well I could have told you that...”

Ilya did it for him, pulling the sleeve of his sweatshirt over his hand to catch them as they fell, “Is for a specific reason this time. I'm sorry I made you feel like this, sweetheart, I had no idea...but I should have.”

Shane shook his head, leaning into his touch like it was easing the ache inside him, “Should have said something sooner. Before it got this bad.”

Ilya did wish he had but he knew what they were up against. They may as well have wished for the moon to fall out of the sky so their son could chase it around the garden like a ball.

“Maybe we can work out what's wrong together?” Shane was already frowning in that way he did when there was a problem he was determined to solve, come hell or high water, “Because if you really don't want to, Ilya, I'd never force you, you know that.”

Ilya sighed, “I know, *moy lyubimyy*...I just...”

And of course he stumbled over it in that moment, his brain tripping over the very thing that it would have been so helpful for him to realise weeks ago.

“I think I am scared.”

Ilya could remember a time when he'd rather have his own teeth fall out of his mouth than those words. Even to Shane, maybe *especially* to Shane. He'd been so afraid to be anything less than the cocky, confident hockey star Ilya Rozanov, who believed he could bend the universe to suit his own whims, because that was who Shane had fallen in love with. And there was no way he'd feel the same way about the scared, broken man he really was. Shane's love had meant so much to him, enough that he'd hide for as long as he could.

And of course Shane had been seeing through him the whole time. He'd been falling in love with the sharpest edges, the darkest, stickiest, most tangled parts of Ilya, just waiting for him to realise he could stand in front of him and say he was scared.

So Shane could do exactly what he did right then, stepping closer to close that last bare inch between them, gripping the front of Ilya's shirt like he was daring anyone to separate them. He met Ilya's eyes without flinching, knowing the fear was there and facing it with him, sliding his hands under Ilya's to help him hold it up.

“Tell me?” Shane murmured, his voice soft.

Ilya didn't know if he could, not there. So he took Shane's hand, leading him to their bedroom. His mate didn't hesitate to follow him, trusting that his answer lay somewhere along the way.

Their room was a mess, cleaning up had slid far down their priority list lately, but Ilya didn't even bother with the light. Shane was the only thing he wanted to see. The moon would be enough, a puddle of silver gathering on the bed, leaking through the blinds they'd forgotten to close that morning because they hadn't exactly been rising with the sun lately. His mate tumbled back into it, eyes soft and hopeful as Ilya swept his shirt off with undeniable hunger, shivering just from the brush of his fingers.

Ilya could feel it now, building inside him like a low rumble that was becoming a growl. He needed Shane, he was desperate for him with the burn of lungs starving for air. He'd just been stamping it down, burying it underneath exhaustion and the chaos that their lives had become, telling himself it wasn't there so convincingly that he believed it. The way Ilya used to make himself believe a lot of things.

And all because of what Ilya found under Shane's shirt. He'd seen it many times, he'd kissed it, pressed his forehead to it, traced it with his fingertip the same way he did now. But still, it made him ache, a sharp, bladed pain right in his guts like Ilya was the one with the inches long scar down his belly.

“I'm okay, Ilya,” Shane breathed, shivering lightly at the brush of his mate's finger, “I'm here.”

“You almost weren't,” the words came out like they hurt to say, “I almost lost you.”

It always came back to Ilya the same way it happened, in swift, sudden punches to the gut, moments going by in razor edged flashes. Shane looking dizzy, like he'd just taken a bad

check, not seeming to hear Ilya when he said his name. The colour draining from his face, far too quickly. The blood, so stark against the white sheets of the hospital bed that it seemed to burn. The machines screaming, the doctor's panic slightly more contained but no less terrifying. Yuna trying to pull Ilya away, coaxing him back towards his newborn son, trying to save him from having to see it. But he was too stunned, too stubborn, too lost in the sick feeling of more joy than he'd ever felt in his life crashing down into grief, punching right through the hole his mother's death had made inside him and spiralling down, down, down.

Ilya didn't just see it, he felt it. His hand had been splayed on Shane's chest, he'd been trying to shake him awake like it had all been nothing more than a nightmare that would fade away if they just opened their eyes. So he had felt the moment his mate's heart had stopped beating.

Ilya gave a shuddering sigh, spreading his palm flat against that scar to anchor himself back in the present, to remind himself that Shane's heart had started again and hadn't stopped since.

"It would have been all my fault..."

"Ilya, no," Shane groaned, just like he'd known he would but Ilya leaned close, silencing him with a kiss. He hadn't gotten it all out of him yet, stopping now, letting himself be comforted would feel like lying.

"I know, *moy lyubimyy*, but that is not what my brain believes," he murmured against the mouth, their lips brushing, their foreheads skating, like he could only face these thoughts with Shane's warmth against his skin, with his own tears rolling down and dripping onto his mate's face.

"My brain tells me that you did not ask for our pup, you did not ask to be in that position. You were there because of me. Because of *being* with me, because I cannot control myself around you. And now I am...I am afraid of letting go again. Of hurting you even worse than I already have."

"Ilya, please..." Shane's voice was agony.

"I know it is pointless, I know it is foolish but there it is. I am scared to make love to you again and...and maybe I do not even deserve to," his voice broke at the end, shattering as he slammed into the truth of it, "I failed you as an alpha."

Shane waited, until he was sure no more poison would come surging out of Ilya's mouth, somehow forcing himself to bite his tongue. When Ilya just stared at him helplessly, that was when he surged up, turning them on the bed until it was Shane pinning Ilya down, Ilya drifting in the puddle of moonlight.

"You're right. You are the biggest idiot on the planet," he breathed, before kissing his alpha so fiercely that Ilya wasn't sure whose blood he was tasting when they broke apart.

His mind finally, blissfully empty, Ilya could smile shakily, shifting so every possible inch of their skin pressed against each other, "At least I'm right."

“Ilya. If I didn’t want to be there in that hospital bed, I wouldn’t have been. As far as I remember, it was me who dragged you into the water that night and put my tongue down your throat.”

A smile tugged at the corner of Ilya’s mouth. It had been a damn good night. They’d swam in the lake, the weather finally warm enough to bear the water, clothes abandoned on the bank on a complete whim. Shane had begged for him in the sweetest voice, wrapping his legs around his waist. Ilya had given it, gladly, knotting him right there, the two of them tangled together on the grass. He remembered wishing they could grow roots, that they would never have to separate, that they’d just become part of the landscape with the birds and the trees and the water.

“And when I realised I was pregnant, I had weeks to do something about it, weeks where I wasn’t even going to tell you, Ilya, not until you talked some fucking sense into me,” Shane said firmly, “And even then, you put the choice in my hands. It was the happiest day of your life, I could see it in your eyes and you still said you would stand by me if I didn’t want to do it. I was there, Alexi is here, because I *chose* it.”

Ilya felt his words pour over the burning guilt in his chest, smothering it. It would never stop marvelling him, the way Shane could take the world in his hands and reshape it so it actually made sense to Ilya, how he could chase off the dark thoughts that clung on like tar when he tried to do it himself.

“And the whole time,” Shane’s voice snagged, tears building in his eyes, “the whole fucking time, you were there, doing exactly what an alpha should do. Ilya, I couldn’t have done any of it without you and it kills me that you think it wasn’t enough. It was everything.”

Ilya exhaled, feeling something awful crack and lift away from him as he did. No language was going to be enough at that moment so he just nodded, tucking his face against the curve of Shane’s neck, hoping he would feel it in the way he clung onto him.

Finally, once he was ready, he let his hands slide down Shane’s body, following those familiar curves he’d missed so much, that had changed so much with a long pregnancy and an even longer recovery, but would always be home to him. He hooked his thumbs in the waistband of Shane’s shorts, pulling them away, letting himself want nothing but Shane’s skin in his hands.

Shane was purring loudly, his scent eagerly flooding the room, until Ilya’s nose would believe they were back outside, back to fucking on the side of the lake, back to the moment where they’d made their son together. He was already rolling his hips, anxious twitches of his muscles like he might shake apart with the force of his desire.

So Ilya gave his omega exactly what he needed. He took control, moving back on top, pressing hungry open mouthed kisses against Shane’s burning skin, chasing the blush as it spread across his chest and down his stomach. But first he lingered over the bond mark he’d almost lost the chance to give him, licking at it until Shane was keening desperately. He’d make that promise over and over again, as many times as he could and he would mean it every single time.

Finally he crouched between Shane's thighs like something ready to pounce. Shane was already begging for him in every way he could, his hole was leaking enough slick to soak the sheets under him, his cock hard and trembling, his voice ragged.

"Ilya, please, I need you, I need you so bad..."

"I am here, sweetheart," Ilya rumbled, kissing the inside of his thighs, thrilling at the redness his off season beard left on the delicate skin there, "Just taking my time..."

Shane yelped as Ilya's tongue flickered against his hole, "Oh fuck, baby, I'm not gonna last."

Ilya laughed, letting the sound thrum across Shane's nerve endings, "Is cute that you think you're only coming once tonight."

Shane kept his promise and Ilya kept his. A few strokes of his tongue and his mate was gone, arching up and howling as he painted his stomach in streaks of white, but Ilya didn't stop or even slow down. He drew one more, two more, out of Shane with nothing more than his teeth and tongue and lips, not pausing until he was completely sure that he could take him.

Pausing to lick the come off his stomach was just for fun, though.

Shane wrapped his arms around him, legs tight around his hips, though it didn't have the same desperation as before. He wasn't afraid of Ilya drifting away any more, he knew exactly where he was. It was just the closeness, the intimacy, that they'd both missed more than they could fit into words. But they had hungry, bruising kisses, hands grasping, sweat beading on skin. They had that impossibly sweet moment when Ilya's cock slipped into Shane's body and everything made sense again.

For a moment Ilya couldn't even move, like he'd forgotten how. Every nerve ending he had was focused on the hot, tight pressure of Shane around him, on the sigh that shuddered out of his mate, a noise of pure relief.

"*Ya tebya lyublyu,*" Ilya choked out, the words pulled from the deepest part of him.

"I love you too," Shane's voice was a raw whisper, lips pressed to Ilya's chest like he was trying to leave an imprint of the words on his heart.

Ilya finally let go, the trust in Shane's eyes unlocking the last few shackles on the hunger pacing in his chest. He surged forward, swallowing his mate's cry of delight in a desperate kiss, his hips rolling.

It was inevitable after that, unstoppable, the two of them racing towards something as sure and certain as the sun rising in the morning. Their bodies moved in a perfect rhythm, every cell in them humming with the same resonant note, the boundaries between them blurring into something meaningless. It had always been like this with the two of them. They'd always known they were two halves of the same whole, even when they'd tried to blind themselves to it, too scared to admit what ran between them when they were in bed together. But it was undeniable, like the feeling of air in their lungs, something so necessary it was impossible to imagine its absence.

And Ilya knew the world would see it too. As soon as they were on the ice together, finally on the same team, he and Shane would show them exactly what they could do together. He couldn't wait.

"Moy lyubimyy," Ilya moaned, voice low under the frantic scraping of the bed under them, the whole frame moving with the force of his body, "Close..."

Shane was keening at the peak of every thrust, gorgeous, hungry little noises that he had to force his words between, "Yes...yes, with me...together...oh god, baby..."

The only thing Ilya could do was give his beloved exactly what he'd asked for. They came at the exact same moment, Ilya's knot finally slipping past the tight seal of Shane's hole, just in time to erupt inside him as a snarl ripped from his lungs. Shane howled, his own release hitting Ilya in the chest and his nails digging into his mate's broad shoulders, leaving long, thin scratches for him to treasure in the morning.

Ilya felt the strength leave him in a rush, hollowing him out and letting him slump bonelessly over Shane. The two of them were a helpless tangle of limbs, of sweat and heat and ragged gasps, of two hearts thumping heavily. It was heaven.

But it left Ilya with nowhere to hide as the sobs rose up in his chest.

He didn't know where they came from, he didn't know why they struck him so hard and so sudden. He tried to stammer out apologies, English and Russian words crowding on his tongue as his shoulders heaved and his muscles clenched painfully.

Shane didn't hesitate. In a heartbeat, he shifted until suddenly it wasn't Ilya holding him but him holding Ilya, cradling his head in the crook of his neck. It was his turn to hold fast, to be the solid presence that kept his mate in one piece until the storm passed. He didn't shush him. He didn't tell him to be quiet. He didn't tell him to calm down. He let Ilya sob against him like the world was ending, tangling his fingers in his hair and holding on tight.

All Shane said was the one thing Ilya needed to hear more than anything.

"I'm here. I'm right here, baby, I've got you."

Ilya remembered other times when his depression had gotten the better of him, when he'd been pulled under into water so deep and dark it had been impossible to believe it would ever end. But with Shane holding him, whispering in his ear, combing his fingers through his curls, while it didn't make it hurt any less, he knew it would end.

When he could finally speak, Ilya pressed a reverent kiss to the pulse in Shane's throat, so wildly grateful for that little movement.

"Thank you..."

He wasn't even sure which part he was thanking him for, for all of it at once, for everything he didn't have the words for. Shane just smiled tearfully and Ilya had no doubt he understood.

“Anytime, Ilya.”

They knew the chaos of their lives would start up again soon, their son would need them, Anya would want her morning walk, they had meetings set up with the Centaurs management about their joint return to the ice, those dishes Ilya had never finished would need putting away. But right now there was nothing but the sound of their own breathing growing steady and soft with sleep, the warmth spreading through them from the place they were still joined, the knowledge that there would always be moments like this. That whatever else happened, these quiet moments wouldn't disappear. They could be daddy and papa, they could be Hollander and Rozanov, they could be Shane and Ilya. There was room for all of it. They'd figure it out.

Ilya let Shane fall asleep first, wanting to gaze at him for just a little bit longer and watch his face soften into something peaceful. He got to see the moment the deep lines of anxiety eased, the tightness in his mouth unwound, all those signs that had told Ilya there was something on his mind in the first place faded.

Ilya could always tell when Shane had something worrying him, even if he wasn't good at guessing what it was. But he did know that as long as they faced those things together, he knew they would be okay.

End Notes

Please let me know if you enjoyed this! Comments absolutely make my day and I've absolutely got more ideas for this omegaverse AU! I'd love to hear any ideas you have too, I'm on tumblr @mollymauk-teafleak!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!