

A Weight Lifted

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A Weight Lifted

by [broccolicheddarchicken](#), [bubbleomatic](#)

Summary

Alone in his room, Ilya smiled. Not the public-facing smirk he used as a mask in daily conversation, not the silly slant he offered teammates and staff. No, this was a real, big goofy smile. A smile he'd unconsciously tucked away for months, maybe even years. It almost felt foreign to smile this *big*.

He needed to call Shane.

With a sigh, Shane set his book on the nightstand. He couldn't focus on it at all, so he might at least *try* to sleep. After checking his phone—no texts from his fiancé—and turning off the light, he laid down to sleep.

About five minutes later, his phone rang.

Notes

Prompt: Ilya calls Shane after his dinner with Svetlana and tells him how it went. He's happy, relieved, and drunk, and he tells Shane how and what he feels.

Chapter 1: Ilya

Chapter by [bubbleomatic](#)

Chapter Summary

Alone in his room, Ilya smiled. Not the public-facing smirk he used as a mask in daily conversation, not the silly slant he offered teammates and staff. No, this was a real, big goofy smile. A smile he'd unconsciously tucked away for months, maybe even years. It almost felt foreign to smile this *big*.

He needed to call Shane.

Chapter Notes

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

Ilya keyed into his hotel room, stepping inside and letting the door softly click closed behind him. No roommate in sight — the team must still be out on the town.

Which was very convenient, because he desperately needed a moment alone to collect himself. Tonight had been a *lot*.

He slumped back against the door, and blew out a long, drawn-out sigh of relief.

Of peace. Of pure *joy*.

Finally, someone else knew about his relationship with Shane. Not just anyone — Svetlana. Someone whose opinion actually mattered to him, someone he trusted and valued dearly. There had been a nagging anxious voice in the back of his head prior to dinner, one that spouted baseless accusations, telling him that Svetlana would judge him harshly. Of course, he knew those thoughts were absurd. Svetlana was direct, sure, but never judgemental. She didn't look at him any differently. Didn't treat him like he was suddenly someone else after revealing his big secret to her.

He felt lighter. *Physically* lighter. How was that even possible? He hadn't realised, until that moment, that actively carrying and hiding his secret relationship had been so damn heavy. A weight had lifted from his chest, a tightness had melted from his shoulders — both so tangible, he almost felt like he could float.

It was the weirdest feeling.

He loved Shane Hollander. Shane Hollander loved him.

And now Svetlana knew. She fucking *knew*, and the world hadn't ended.

Alone in his room, Ilya smiled. Not the public-facing smirk he used as a mask in daily conversation, not the silly slant he offered teammates and staff. No, this was a real, big goofy smile. A smile he'd unconsciously tucked away for months, maybe even years. It almost felt foreign to smile this *big*.

For a fleeting moment, he felt invincible. Like he could skate onto the ice tomorrow and score five goals, just because he felt so...happy.

He needed to call Shane. Needed to see his face, needed to share this jubilant, giddy feeling before it inevitably faded.

He toed off his shoes and shrugged off his dress coat. He considered changing into something more comfortable, but decided against it. He loosened and slipped off his tie, tossing it into his open suitcase on the floor, then undid a few buttons of his dress shirt halfway down his sternum. Over the dusting of his curly chest hairs, his gold chain twinkled in the low light of the room.

No sense getting fully changed. He looked great. He *felt* great. Shane deserved to see it, too. Besides, Ilya loved showing off for Shane. Getting him flustered with just a sneak peek of his physique was always an added bonus.

With a pep in his step, he plopped himself on the hotel bed. The little bounce of the mattress reflected his happy, relaxed mood. Once he settled his back against the headboard, sitting up with his legs stretched out, he pulled out his phone and video-called Shane.

Two rings came and went, then onto the third. Weird. Shane usually picked up on the second ring like clockwork. Ilya was trying to recall if there had been a change of plans... No doubt Shane would already be in bed at this hour, anticipating Ilya to call him.

Then, after the *seventh* ring, Ilya's worry left him completely. Shane's adorably sleepy face filled his screen, and Ilya's heart did that stupid little flip it always did.

Shane's shoulder-length hair was tucked behind his right ear, rebel strands wisped over freckles on his left cheek. He blinked slowly, adjusting his thick-rimmed glasses as if he was bringing Ilya back into focus. A warm smile crinkled the corners of his tired brown eyes.

Ilya's smile grew impossibly wider. He could never get enough of his boyfriend's handsome face.

No, not boyfriend. Fiancé. Future *husband*. Over the soft material of his dress shirt, Ilya absentmindedly traced a finger around the outline of his wedding band that hung securely on his necklace. He gingerly pressed the ring into his skin, an indent of Shane's love over his heart.

"Hi," Ilya finally greeted.

"Hey yourself," Shane replied, his gaze flicking from Ilya's opened collar back up to his face. "You look...nice."



Ilya accepted the compliment with an appreciative hum, then tilted his head to the side as he studied Shane's face more carefully. The dark circles over his freckles, the droopy eyelids — Shane was exhausted.

"You look tired," he remarked gently. "Should we talk tomorrow instead?"

“No no, I’m good,” Shane insisted as he stifled a yawn. This man was so stubborn sometimes. “I wanna talk to you. How’d it go with Svetlana?”

“Good.” Then Ilya paused, considering. His word choice felt inadequate. Tonight had definitely been better than good. “*Great*,” he amended. “She is very smart. Guessed very quickly that it was you.”

Shane raised an eyebrow. “Really? How?”

“Well, yes and no,” Ilya started to explain, raking a hand through his curls. “After she figured out you were not a woman...”

“An important detail.”

“...I said your name was Shane. And that you play hockey.”

“I suppose that’s pretty easy to put together then.” Shane chuckled with a shake of his head. “Shit. Are we not being subtle enough?”

“I am.” Ilya placed a hand over his heart, like a boy scout making a lifelong pledge. Then he pointed at his screen, his fingertip hovering over the button of Shane’s nose. “*You*, maybe not. You’re very easy to read.”

Shane ignored the playful accusation with a snort. “So, she took it well then?”

“Mostly.” Ilya’s body slid down, pillows squished behind his shoulders now. “She was disappointed that we were not going to have sex.”

“Well, *duh*,” Shane replied, grinning. “You’re off the market.”

God, Ilya loved that smile. He loved being the reason *for* Shane’s smile. The sight of it was such an ego boost every damn time.

He smirked, all smug and proud. “Yes, but does not mean she can’t miss it. She called me a *fantastic* lay, Hollander.” Using his free hand, he tossed his hair back over his shoulder dramatically. “Am I not a *fantastic* lay?”

Shane rolled his eyes. “Is that all you two talked about? How amazing you are in bed?”

Ilya tapped a finger to his chin, pretending to search his memory. The truth was, he remembered every single word from his conversation with Svetlana, but teasing Shane was just too much fun. After a beat, he finally replied, “I told her a bit about you.”

“I thought you said she was a massive hockey fan. Wouldn’t she already know, like, everything about me?”

“She knows Shane Hollander, the famous athlete,” Ilya clarified. “She doesn’t know *you*.”

And that distinction was important to him. Everyone and their grandmother’s dog knew the Shane who scored beautiful goals, who captained his team to multiple Stanley Cup wins, who gave boy-next-door interview answers in perfect French and English. Ilya had to very reluctantly

share that Shane with the rest of the world. But only Ilya knew the Shane who snorted when he laughed too hard, who cutely wrinkled his nose in annoyance during playful banter, who moaned like a whore whenever Ilya fucked him senseless...

Okay, Svetlana didn't need to know that last bit. Maybe.

Shane's features softened under the glare of Ilya's phone screen. "What did you tell her about me?" His voice almost sounded timid.

"Lots of things!" Ilya's eyes widened excitedly. "That you are very boring, most of the time."

"Of course," Shane said flatly.

Ilya dismissed the sarcasm and continued. "That you are very easy to make laugh, that your freckles bunch up when you do..." His previously smug smile turned warm. "And that I am hopelessly in love with you."

Shane's cheeks pinked, and Ilya selfishly indulged that moment. He filed the mental picture away for safekeeping, along with the other countless times he'd made Shane blush. Over the years they'd spent together, it had become one of his favourite pastimes.

Shane sputtered out a giggle. "Christ, Ilya. Are you going to talk about me like that to all your friends?"

"Probably." Ilya shrugged nonchalantly, smile never wavering. "Yes."

A brief quietness settled between them before Ilya spoke again. He fiddled with the hem of his dress shirt, a little nervous about what he was going to say next.

"Is nice," he mumbled, glancing away from the screen momentarily. "To have a friend."

Ugh, that sounded so incredibly lame. Ilya inwardly winced. What a dumb thing to admit out loud.

"Ilya," Shane called out gently. "You have lots of friends."

Ilya huffed through his nose. "Yes, hockey friends. *Coworkers*." He met Shane's eyes again. "I know *you* are obsessed with hockey, but I want other friends. To talk to about other things."

Shane seemed taken aback by that. Hockey took up a good chunk of Ilya's life, true, but he needed more than that. He needed connections — *friendships* — that weren't tied to his career stats. And Ilya's words weren't accusatory in any way. He was simply stating a fact. A fact he really needed to get across to Shane.

"Like, to talk to about us..." Shane's voice trailed off. The words sounded uncertain, but Ilya could hear the note of understanding behind them.

Ilya nodded, feeling confident with that answer for now. "I invited Svetlana to visit us sometime. In Ottawa."

“Oh—uh, yeah,” Shane stammered with his telltale nervousness. “Obviously, yeah, that’d be great. I’d love to meet her.”

And while Shane’s words were unquestionably sincere, Ilya didn’t want this call to end awkwardly. Time to cut the tension with his signature snark. His lips twisted into a devilish grin.

“You can talk about how much you both love my dick.”

Shane groaned, exactly as Ilya had expected. “*Definitely* not doing that.”

“Tell her everything she is missing.”

“Nope. Absolutely not.”

“You can make her *jealooouuus*,” Ilya sing-songed.

“God, you’d love that, wouldn’t you,” Shane smirked.

Ilya didn’t even try to hide his satisfaction. “Very much, yes.”

Shane’s answering laugh was warm and genuine, then faded into an unconcealable yawn.

“You are sleepy,” Ilya said, his tone tender. “Sleep.”

Shane resigned with a slow nod, carding through his silky black hair. He tilted his head just a bit to the side, eyelids heavy behind his lenses. He always looked so adorable when he fought to stay awake. Ilya wished he could reach through the screen and hold him close until he surrendered to sleep.

“I’m really glad it went well tonight, Ilya,” Shane said, his voice soft around the edges.

Ilya hummed, contentment wrapping around him like a warm blanket. “Yes. Me too.”

“I love you.” Shane offered a drowsy smile.

Just then, Ilya heard his hotel room door beginning to click open. He swiftly switched to Russian and murmured, « Spokoynoy noch, lyubov’ moye. »

Goodnight, my love.

Shane kissed his fingers and pressed them to the screen before ending the call.

Ilya’s heart swelled in his chest at the familiar gesture, relishing the fuzzy feeling it always evoked. He quickly pocketed his phone as his roommate walked in, trying and failing to school his features. He couldn’t quite hide his smile completely. Or will away the subtle heat that had risen to his cheeks.

“Sooooo,” Dykstra drawled, hands planted on his hips. “Did you have a nice time with your *friend*?”

With his whispered goodnight to Shane still warm on his lips, Ilya simply nodded.

“Yes.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading Ilya's POV! Oh and hey, [yours truly](#) drew the fanart in this chapter and the next. 🎨 Kudos and comments are appreciated as always. 💖

Hit that 'Next Chapter' button to read Shane's POV, written by my wonderfully talented co-author 🥦🧀🍗

Chapter 2: Shane

Chapter by [broccolicheddarchicken](#)

Chapter Summary

With a sigh, Shane set his book on the nightstand. He couldn't focus on it at all, so he might at least *try* to sleep. After checking his phone—no texts from his fiancé—and turning off the light, he laid down to sleep.

About five minutes later, his phone rang.

Chapter Notes

thank you to my lovely co-author for inviting me to get in on this <3, and also for betaing the Shane POV version of this scene

as always: i hope you enjoy reading this at least half as much as I enjoyed writing it :))))

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

Shane was trying his best to stay awake, but it was so *late* . He'd never been one to stay out with his teammates into the early hours of the morning after a game. He had his routine, and he liked it, and part of that routine included an early bedtime. Plus, he had a morning practice tomorrow, and he hated to show up to work sleep-deprived.

Tonight, though, he really did want to stay up.

Because Ilya was in Boston. Ilya was going to talk to Svetlana. And Ilya said he'd call after if Shane was still awake.

So, there he was: showered, bedtime routine done, comfy under the blankets, re-reading a book about the 1972 series between Canada and the USSR. His phone was on "do not disturb," which meant that only calls from Ilya and his parents could come through.

The book was fascinating, even though he'd read it before. Shane was completely focused on it. He was *not* thinking about the conversation that was no doubt currently occurring in Boston.

Maybe he was thinking about it a little bit.

Ilya was telling a friend. It was great. It was lovely. A friend Shane didn't know. A friend Shane had never met and had no reason to trust.

Well, that wasn't fair. Ilya trusted her; that was reason enough. It had to be. Shane needed to be cool about this.

Ilya was telling a friend... he used to sleep with. Shane needed to be cool about *that*, too. He trusted Ilya, and had no doubt that Ilya had eyes only for him. Still, some base-level portion of his brain wanted to scratch his name into Ilya's forehead or something. *Mine*.

It was unnecessary. Ilya had already gotten a tattoo for him. How much more of a brand could Shane need?

With a sigh, Shane set his book on the nightstand. He couldn't focus on it at all, so he might at least *try* to get some rest. He checked his phone—no texts from his fiancé—and turned off the light, then laid down to sleep.

About five minutes later, his phone rang.

Shane bolted up, flicked on the light, tried to flip over his phone, and nearly threw it to the floor in his rush to answer Ilya's call. After a moment or two of fumbling, he managed to regain his grip and press the green *accept* button. While it connected, he grabbed his glasses from the nightstand and put them on. He blinked a few times, waiting for his vision to adjust to the light, and then Ilya came into focus.

A slow smile spread across his face. He couldn't help it—Ilya looked so radiantly *happy*, with a big, dumb grin. Shane hadn't seen him like that in so long.



“Hi,” Ilya said.

“Hey yourself,” Shane replied, before noticing the glint of Ilya’s chain and a peek of tattoo. Ilya’s collar was open. “You look...nice.” *Did he go to the restaurant like that?*

No. Ilya had said it was a nice place; he would've worn a tie. This view was just for Shane. And it was quite the view. How did Ilya manage to be so casually stunning, all the time? It was unfair.

Because he was somehow impossibly sexy *and* impossibly adorable, Ilya tilted his head to the side like a confused puppy. "You look tired. Should we talk tomorrow instead?"

"No no, I'm good," Shane said quickly, fighting back a yawn as he spoke. He hoped Ilya didn't notice. "I wanna talk to you. How'd it go with Svetlana?"

"Good." Ilya paused for a moment, then corrected himself. "*Great*. She is very smart. Guessed very quickly that it was you."

Panic rose in Shane's throat—he did his best to swallow it down. He hoped it was simply Svetlana's closeness with Ilya that made them so easy to figure out. "Really? How?"

"Well, yes and no," Ilya said, tugging a hand through his perfectly defined curls. He must've used a product in the showers after the game. "After she figured out you were not a woman..."

"An important detail."

"...I said your name was Shane. And that you play hockey."

Oh. The anxiety Shane had felt died on the vine. Did it count as 'figuring out' when you basically had the answer handed to you?

"I suppose that's pretty easy to put together, then." Shane shook his head, trying and failing to suppress his laughter. "Shit. Are we not being subtle enough?"

"I am." Ilya looked at Shane solemnly, then put his hand over his heart. "*You*, maybe not. You're very easy to read."

Shane snorted. Like Ilya didn't stare at him for half the game when they played each other. "So, she took it well then?"

"Mostly." The view behind Ilya changed—he seemed to be moving down in the bed. "She was disappointed that we were not going to have sex."

"Well, *duh*." Shane couldn't help his gigantic smile. Ilya was his, damn it. "You're off the market."

"Yes, but does not mean she can't miss it. She called me a *fantastic* lay, Hollander." Ilya flipped his hair over his shoulder, like a glamorous actress being interviewed. "Am I not a *fantastic* lay?"

Yes, Shane thought, but he wasn't going to feed even further into Ilya's ego. "Is that all you two talked about? How amazing you are in bed?"

With a gaze at the ceiling, Ilya tapped his chin, like remembering the conversation was a struggle. Then, finally: "I told her a bit about you."

“I thought you said she was a massive hockey fan. Wouldn’t she already know, like, everything about me?”

“She knows Shane Hollander, the famous athlete. She doesn’t know *you*.”

Right. Sometimes, Shane forgot there was a difference. Then again, what was there even *to* know about Shane, other than what he was capable of on the ice?

“What did you tell her about me?”

“Lots of things! That you are very boring, most of the time.”

“Of course,” Shane said. *Exactly*.

“That you are very easy to make laugh, that your freckles bunch up when you do.” Ilya’s eyes got soft then, in the way they always did when he went from teasing to sincere. “And that I am hopelessly in love with you.”

The heat on Shane’s cheeks was familiar, but the little giggle he half-sputtered out was not. It was impossible for Shane to control himself when his husband-to-be talked like that. “Christ, Ilya. Are you going to talk about me like that to all your friends?”

“Probably.” Ilya shrugged, still with that goofy smile on his face. “Yes,” he corrected.

Shane shook his head again—Ilya was ridiculous. He noticed Ilya had looked off screen, in the direction of the door. Maybe his roommate was back?

“Is nice,” Ilya said, still looking away. “To have a friend.”

Ilya’s voice was... almost timid, something that still caught Shane off guard. Even though Ilya was fairly comfortable being vulnerable with him now, Shane sometimes forgot that the impossibly confident Rozanov he’d gotten used to only existed at the surface-level.

Shane kept his own voice gentle. “Ilya, you have lots of friends.”

Ilya exhaled sharply. “Yes, hockey friends. *Coworkers*.” He turned back to the camera, and while there was nothing harsh in his gaze, it was decidedly firm. “I know *you* are obsessed with hockey, but I want other friends. To talk to about other things.”

Before Shane spoke, he had to shut down an instinct to get defensive. He pressed his lips in a thin line and thought about what his fiancé was really trying to express. Ilya loved hockey, but he didn’t have the best-friends level relationship among his teammates that Shane had in J.J. or Hayden. And even if he did have a good friendship with some people on the team, there was *one* thing he definitely couldn’t talk about with any of them.

“Like, to talk to about us,” Shane said. It was so hesitant that it almost came out as a question.

Ilya nodded. Another moment passed before he spoke. “I invited Svetlana to visit us sometime. In Ottawa.”

Oh, fuck. Shane took a second to reply, tripping over his words when he did. “Oh—uh, yeah.” He cleared his throat. “Obviously, yeah, that’d be great. I’d love to meet her.”

It was one thing to be happy that Ilya had someone to confide in. It was another thing entirely to shake hands with the woman who, in another life, would’ve married his future husband. Not that Svetlana was actual competition. She and Ilya were just friends now. Shane needed to calm down.

For some dumb reason, Ilya was grinning wickedly at him now. Wasn’t this supposed to be a serious conversation?

“You can talk about how much you both love my dick,” Ilya snickered.

Of course. Of *course* Ilya would make a joke about sex to defuse the tension.

Shane groaned. “*Definitely* not doing that.”

“Tell her everything she is missing.”

“Nope. Absolutely not.” *That’s all for me, thanks.*

“You can make her *jealooouuus*,” Ilya sing-songed.

“God, you’d love that, wouldn’t you?”

Ilya *would* love that, Shane was certain. A table of three, with two of them praising how *fantastic* he was with the thing between his legs. Shane wished they were in the same room so he could kick the smug satisfaction off of Ilya’s face.

“Very much, yes.”

Shane couldn’t even be annoyed anymore, not when Ilya was being so honest. He laughed again, although it turned into a bit more of a yawn at the end.

“You are sleepy,” Ilya observed. “Sleep.”

The conversation was mostly over, and while Shane wanted to stay up and keep talking to Ilya, he was exhausted. A few of the longer pieces of his hair tickled his nose; he pushed them back with a hand. This long hair was annoying. If Ilya didn’t love it so much, he would’ve cut it off by now.

Ilya *did* love it, though. Ilya loved him, and Shane loved him back. And despite the stupid jokes about his dick, Shane was happy that Ilya had gotten to do this. He knew how important it was to him. “I’m really glad it went well tonight, Ilya,”

“Yes. Me too.”

“I love you.” Shane gazed at Ilya on the screen. He wished he was with him so he could kiss his crooked nose.

Ilya looked away from the screen again. Shane heard the door click. His roommate really *was* back this time. “Goodnight, my love,” he whispered in Russian, undoubtedly so as not to be

understood.

Shane's grin nearly split his face. He didn't want to speak and get overheard, so he kissed his fingertips and pressed them to the screen. He was rewarded with a pink flush across Ilya's cheeks—an incredibly rare treat—and then he ended the call.

The cord to charge his phone was resting on the floor. Shane plugged it in, set it on the nightstand, and put his head on the pillow. He was still smiling, replaying Ilya's goodnight in his head a few times.

In just a few months, Shane was going to *marry* that man. He couldn't believe it. As he drifted to sleep, he wasn't thinking about Svetlana, or the 1972 Canada/Russia series, or next week's game against San José.

All Shane thought about was Ilya.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! Constructive criticism is always welcome. Every single kudos and comment is so so very appreciated :)

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