

pray to you my soul to keep

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by [yourinsomnia](#)

Summary

In the end, it takes so little to break Shane...A bad day, a bout of jealousy, and Ilya telling him to get on his knees.

Notes

Russian translation available [here](#).

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

Ilya's dimple-rich smile isn't rare, but it still does something to Shane—knocks a cog loose in a machine that otherwise runs smoothly.

This instance is particularly debilitating. It stalls Shane mid-breath, his fingers tensing to the point of digging painfully into his thighs. Not just because Ilya's smile is bright, infusing warmth into a room lit by the cold glow of the TV, or because it's paired with that wicked glint in his whiskey-colored eyes, but mostly because the smile isn't directed at Shane. Not one he can shamelessly drink in, stow away in memory, and keep just for himself.

Ilya isn't looking at him. Isn't even looking at the TV. He's grinning down at his phone, fingers tapping in lazy intervals.

It shouldn't matter. It shouldn't.

But Shane had a shit fucking day. Practice was terrible—a recurring motif lately, a pattern he can't seem to break. He keeps telling himself it's the pressure of being made captain. His attention is splintered between maintaining his own performance and tracking the stats and moods of everyone else on the team.

It might have been easier if one of those teammates didn't bask so gratuitously under that attention. If he didn't leap out of his skin to claim it all for himself. If he didn't take so much pleasure in it; pleasure that at times, seems to border on indulgent, obscene.

Shane finds himself trapped in a loop. A feedback cycle. An ouroboros: snake devouring its own tail.

The more Ilya grates on his nerves, the more Ilya seems to sense the power he holds, winking from behind the cage of his helmet when he gets close, eyes molten gold beneath the rink's harsh, ice-white lights. Watching as Shane fumbles a pass or hesitates for a fraction of a second. A second that, in a game, could cost him everything.

Then there's the way Ilya seeks out his gaze, only to toy with the hem of his jersey, lifting it to tease the hard line of abs beneath his compression shirt. Or the way he hovers afterward—always *too close*—in the locker room.

Close enough that Shane has to change with his eyes squeezed shut or risk letting his gaze wander to places it shouldn't. Close enough that he can feel Ilya and the heat of his body, palpable and ever-present. Like a second heartbeat hammering in Shane's ears.

He could escape the loop if he was only stronger. If only he wasn't so acutely aware of Ilya at every moment. Like Ilya is the only source of color in a monochrome world. The very glint of a blade in a dull room.

Maybe he could make it through unscathed if the danger stayed confined to the practice rink and the locker room. But of course, it doesn't. It follows him here, too—to the dorm room they've shared since last semester.

The administration must've thought they were being clever. Stirring the pot behind the scenes. The rumors were immediate and relentless, the talk of the campus and the college papers practically writing themselves: *What happens when you house the two most competitive players on the team together, who've been at each other's throats since day one?*

Who will bleed first?

The expectation was that they'd bring the walls down around them—a delicious scandal in the making. Or alternatively, that they would learn to get along and strengthen the team through forced proximity.

The reality, of course, found a way to be much worse. At least for Shane.

Because now his life is a waking nightmare filled with Ilya's dimples and ruffled hair, with morning stretches that flash slivers of golden skin, with half-lidded, cat-like eyes every time he returns from another tryst, wrapped in the scent of someone else.

It makes something hot and violent ignite at Shane's core. A volatile mixture of embarrassment—for even thinking about what Ilya gets up to—and rage at the fact that he *can't stop*.

The same rage simmers now, a roiling churn of complicated, unnameable emotions that threaten to cleave Shane open and leave him more vulnerable than he's ever allowed himself to be.

"You're missing it," Shane says, just to get Ilya's attention. He hates how fucking petulant he sounds the moment the words leave his mouth.

They're watching a show they've been sporadically catching up on. Sometimes it plays in the background while they attempt coursework at their desks, but mostly it's like this: sprawled together on the couch, a snowstorm howling outside their window, burying the campus under its bone-chill weight.

Ilya's smile freezes at the admonishment, like he's posing for the flash of an invisible camera, effortlessly photogenic with every breath. The dimples fade by degrees as he lifts his head, giving Shane a mildly affronted look.

"I'm not," he protests, flicking a glance at the screen. "This is a trap." He gestures toward the scene unfolding. "She's honey-trapping that guy."

"That guy?" Shane arches a brow. "You mean the head of MI5?"

"Yes," Ilya says, his smile flaring again with the quiet triumph of being understood. Then, just as quickly, he's back to his phone, and whatever riveting secrets it holds.

Shane bites down on his lip and turns back to the screen, trying—futilely—to care. But after a beat, his impatience overtakes him. He leans over, voice carefully casual.

"Who are you texting?"

The glimpse he gets is enough to make him lurch closer, instinctively reaching, almost grabbing the phone outright.

“Is that a—” Shane breaks off, stunned, watching as Ilya obligingly zooms in.

“A dick pic?” Ilya supplies, voice and smile equally unrepentant. “Yes. Nice dick, huh?”

Shane glares at him, refusing to so much as consider the aesthetics of some random cock, even if Ilya’s assessment seems, unfortunately, accurate. It’s sizable, with a thick blue vein running along the shaft, the skin a shy shade of pink that deepens at the tip.

Shane’s pretty sure his own dick is bigger, anyway.

He tears his gaze from the screen, shoving the strange, wild swirl of his emotions into a new direction.

“Are you actually sexting someone while we’re watching a show?” he asks, snatching the phone from Ilya’s grip and dropping it onto the floor.

It’s carpeted, so he’s counting on minimal damage, but enough dramatic flair to make a point.

Ilya’s brows furrow slightly as he tracks the phone’s trajectory. Whatever hint of consternation takes root in his expression vanishes when he looks back up at Shane and says, voice drenched in condescension, “Oh, Shane. I’m not responsible for what my adoring fans choose to send me.”

“Adoring fans,” Shane echoes, flatly. “Jesus Christ.”

“Oh, come on,” Ilya teases. “Tell me no one sends you nudes, *Hollander*.”

Shane ignores the use of his last name—another one of Ilya’s favorite weapons, always wielded when he wants to be especially provoking. And while Shane’s at it, he decides to ignore him entirely. He grabs the remote and cranks the volume, drowning the tension in the swelling score of a pivotal action sequence.

“Not even your girlfriend?” Ilya presses, shifting closer so he doesn’t have to raise his voice.

“We broke up, Rozanov,” Shane replies curly, with a sharp jerk of his head.

Despite the irritation in his tone, he’s aware that Ilya couldn’t have known. The breakup had happened weeks ago. Him and Rose ended things amicably, even stayed friends. She still drops by the dorm occasionally.

“Ah,” Ilya replies. “No wonder you’re...all pent up.” He pauses mid-sentence, sifting carefully through his vocabulary to settle on the precise phrase.

His English has improved by leaps and bounds after two years at uni, but sometimes Shane misses how it used to be. The thick accent, curling like briars around each word. The scant retorts. At least back then, Ilya talked less.

This isn't even the first time he's made this particular observation.

He'd taunted Shane earlier tonight, too—right after practice, when Shane stomped into the dorm room, unspooling like the storm outside with its edges dragging across the horizon, slamming the door behind him.

"*Jeeesus*, Hollander," Ilya had sing-songed mockingly, already perched on the arm of the couch, clearly amused. "Go get laid before you break something."

Shane had scowled, wordless and seething. Just like now.

He can't articulate what exactly makes him feel so pent up, what drives him out of his mind. His control is a noose around his neck: too tight, and still threadbare, the way it's going to leave him for dead.

Ilya meets his gaze evenly, the petal shape of his lips curving with a knowing smirk. The silence stretches between them, morphing into something charged, impossible to contain. The very space seems to conspire to pull them closer, a tide Shane is caught in no matter how hard he tries to fight it.

Ilya's phone pings again where it lies facedown on the floor. He glances toward it like he's about to retrieve it.

But Shane moves first.

His hand closes around Ilya's wrist, the bone slotting neatly against his palm, his pulse fluttering beneath Shane's fingers.

"Pay attention to me," Shane hears himself say.

Ilya tilts his head, eyes sharpening, pupils darkening, dilating. "Oh, I am now," he says, slipping his wrist free. "I like when you get like this."

His voice lands right at the shell of Shane's ear as he leans in, low and husky, more breath than sound, brushing him with a ripple of warm air.

"Like what?" Shane asks. His own voice drops to a murmur, betraying him with a hitch in his breath.

It doesn't go unnoticed. Ilya sighs, amused and content, then all but purrs his reply:

"Jealous."

"I'm not—" Shane begins, then trails off, realizing how weak the protest sounds.

There's no point. Ilya will see right through him.

And the unmasking of all lies and pretense begins here, with just this: Ilya closing the final inches between them, pressing his thigh, solid and warm, against Shane's.

Shane feels small by comparison. Every objection dies in his throat, drowned in the rush of sensation: Ilya's heat, his cologne, the sheer presence of him. Shane is pliant, reduced to a plaything strung between Ilya's fingers, manipulated without even being touched properly.

"No?" Ilya muses, unconvinced. He tuts softly, flexing his thigh again like a predator showing off his strength before the kill. "What's the other word then? Possessive?"

He pours it straight into Shane's ear.

Shane shivers. Goosebumps break over his skin. He can't help it.

Is it possessiveness that grips him when Ilya does this? Flirts with others? Glances at them, laughs into his phone?

Maybe.

Or maybe Shane just wants all of Ilya's attention. Maybe he's accepted his fate: he'll be consumed by it, and gladly.

"Love when you get angry," Ilya continues, voice velvet-warm and taunting, pleasure winding through every word. "It really makes your freckles...*pop*," he finishes, brushing the back of his knuckles along Shane's cheek. A slow, silky graze of nail over skin already set aflame, long before the first touch of fire.

"My freckles..." Shane repeats, disbelief lodged in his throat. Ilya noticed them. *Noticed* them. And worse, this might've been the exact reaction he wanted.

As if to confirm it, Ilya leans in and seizes Shane's earlobe with his lips. A brief, explosive contact. Given and severed in a single heartbeat.

Shane sucks in a breath when Ilya pulls away, the absence of his body and heat jarring. Like waking too fast from a dream.

"They're beautiful," Ilya says.

There's a teasing edge, but it does nothing to blunt the way the word shoots straight to Shane's cock, twitching, then hardening in his sweatpants.

Beautiful.

Ilya thinks they're *beautiful*.

The bulge tenting Shane's lap is obvious enough that Ilya observes, "Oh, you like that," his voice gleeful, almost sadistic. And Shane knows he's done for. This will be the wound that bleeds him dry.

"Yes," Shane says, through gritted teeth.

"A truth, for once?" Ilya hums, thoughtful. Then he laughs, sharp and clear, a single maddening note that zings down Shane's spine.

“Give me more,” he says suddenly, gaze snapping to Shane’s lap. “Show me.”

His voice drops an octave, turning thick and syrup-sticky, like honey left too long in the sun.

Shane’s jaw is tight. Tension clamps down his entire body. He struggles against it, fingers clumsy as he fumbles with the waistband of his sweats and boxers. Once he gets a decent grip, he yanks them down to his knees.

His cock springs free, hard and flushed, slapping against his stomach.

Ilya watches the motion with rapt attention. His mouth parts slightly. He curses in Russian, gaze molded to the thick line of Shane’s cock, nestled right against the dark trail of hair.

A bead of pre-cum gathers treacherously at the tip.

Shane has never felt more exposed in his life, and he’s stood naked in front of a dozen teammates, countless times.

“Ilya,” he pleads, asking in the only way he knows how. Just his name, spoken with what feels like Shane’s last breath. As though it alone might explain the sickness he’s been living with—how long he’s been unraveling.

“Tell me what you want,” Ilya coaxes. His voice is gentle, his gaze hungry. It rakes over Shane’s cock like a tongue.

None of it’s real. Not the sympathy, not the softness. This is a game to Ilya, and Shane is losing it—fast.

He thinks he’ll learn to enjoy losing. Would do anything, to feel Ilya’s mouth on him for more than a whisper or a tease.

But Shane doesn’t know how to put this much desire into words. Doesn’t know how to speak when it chokes him, when it tastes like desperation in the back of his throat.

What he does know is that he needs something. He needs Ilya to *do* something. To cut him open. To ruin him.

“You were right,” Shane says finally. His voice sounds rough and foreign, stronger than what he has left. “I’m pent up... I need to...”

He wraps a hand around his cock. Even his own touch feels sinful, tearing a moan from his throat that reverbrates around the room.

Ilya watches him for a beat, hazel eyes dark with victory, like he’s relishing the torment. His lashes shutter closed for a breath before he bursts them open again. “Okay,” he murmurs. “If you’re good, I’ll help you take care of it.”

He tugs Shane’s earlobe between his teeth—a quick, vicious bite—then drags his tongue down the slope of Shane’s throat in a wet stripe. “Now get on your knees, pretty boy.”

The contact breaks. Shane sways with the loss of it, disoriented by how quickly Ilya's taken control again. He bites the inside of his cheek, stifling a tremble at the pet name, at the way it slides under his skin and awakens something base and helpless inside him.

The command blazes through his bloodstream too, a drug that animates his limbs with the urge to obey.

He releases his cock. Sinks to his knees, pants still bunched around his thighs, inching forward until he's nestled between Ilya's legs.

Ilya spreads them wider—helpfully, leisurely. Like he's been waiting for this, and knows he won't be made to hurry.

Shane braces one hand against his thigh, the other curling in the fabric of Ilya's tank. He looks up.

Ilya's thumb hooks under his chin and holds it there, guiding rather than forcing. Then, with a one-handed tug, he sheds his pants.

He really loves wearing those stupid track pants around the dorm—like the walking cliché he is—but Shane forfeited the right to make fun of it the moment he started getting off on the image: Ilya in nothing but those pants, yanked low, fucking Shane into the mattress.

The real Ilya, not the phantom beast of fantasy, is still in his white tank, the small cross chain tucked beneath it. The bear tattoo spills over the shoulder strap—black ink against skin that's sun-kissed and star-speckled, even in deep winter.

And when Ilya's pants are finally gone, Shane's breath catches in his throat. *He's not wearing anything underneath.*

The realization tilts the earth beneath his feet. How long has Ilya been going commando around him? Every time they've hung out in the dorm like this? The thought electrifies Shane. A fresh tingle shoots through his cock, teasing another pulse of pre-cum.

Ilya takes himself in hand.

Shane has seen his cock before—of course he has, it's unavoidable in the communal showers—but never like this.

Not hard. Not up close.

Not thick and glistening, cradled in the sturdy spread of Ilya's own palm.

He angles it lower, presses the tip to Shane's parted lips.

Shane opens them, breath cascading out in a stuttered wave. He's ready. He wants to take him, swallow him whole, hold that power in his mouth.

But Ilya threads a hand through his hair and stills him with a low, breathless warning:

“Wait.”

Shane obeys, drawing a bracing breath before daring to look up. Then he drowns all over again in Ilya’s gaze.

It’s as devastating as he feared. Ilya’s eyes are half-lidded, scorching as they take in the sight of his cock pressed flush against Shane’s face. He looks intent. Committing every detail to memory.

His thumb drags across the hinge of Shane’s jaw, slow and reverent, before guiding his cock across Shane’s cheekbones, purposefully grazing the freckles he exalted just moments ago. Murmured praise erupts from his mouth, first in English, then sliding into sharp-edged Russian that Shane struggles to follow. He’s tried—off and on, all his life—to learn the language. Even before Ilya hurled into his world like meteor fire, Shane knew Russian was essential to his hockey career.

Still, his vocabulary is lacking. Except for one phrase that sinks like a knife into his chest: Ты невероятный. Я так давно тебя хотел.

Shane holds onto it, lets it echo. He’ll look it up later, commit it to permanent memory, tattoo it into the marrow of his skull if he has to.

For now, he repeats it soundlessly while Ilya’s voice becomes the only one in his head. Eviscerating everything else—the panic, the regret, the knowledge of how far they’re about to go. How far they might fall. How this will change everything.

By the time Ilya returns his cock to Shane’s mouth, Shane is shaking apart with the need.

“Please,” he moans, his breath washing over the tip, licking the bead of pre-cum that gathers at the slit, the taste of Ilya musky and intoxicating.

“Good,” Ilya praises, his voice reducing to a raspy growl. “You’re doing so well, now take it.” He slides his cock inside, and Shane does his best to accommodate it, relaxing against the sharp jolt of his gag reflex. It takes a few attempts, Ilya pumping his cock in and out, before Shane gets the hang of it, mastering the reflex enough to let him in deeper.

“Right there, Shane,” Ilya murmurs, his voice breathy, tinged with awe. The way he says Shane’s name makes Shane’s cock throb, spurring him on.

He’s never done this before, but he’s had it done enough to know how it works. He flattens his tongue, hollows his cheeks, and lets Ilya’s cock glide deeper, inch by inch, until it nudges the back of his throat with a pressure that’s both overwhelming and gratifying.

At some point, Ilya’s hand falls away from his own cock, fingers twitching uselessly against the cushions. He sinks deeper into them, surrendering fully—letting Shane take over, set the rhythm, push him toward the edge with every eager, wet stroke.

Shane bears down harder, letting spit string from his chin, sloppier now, more desperate. Ilya’s moans tumble freely from his parted lips, his thighs trembling on either side of Shane’s

flushed cheeks.

“Shane—” he gasps, drawing Shane’s gaze upward. His voice cracks on the name. “I’m gonna come.”

Maybe he’s giving Shane a chance to pull away, to not swallow, but Shane wants it all. He wants to taste Ilya, every part of him. He wants to please him, to show him just how good he can be. So he grips the base of Ilya’s cock, twisting his wrist with every pass of his mouth, sucking hungrily until he feels it—that telltale tension, the fingers digging hard into his scalp—followed by the hot, relentless pulse of cum flooding his throat.

Before he can swallow and savor every drop, Ilya hauls him upward by the collar and crashes their mouths together. The kiss is harsh, full of teeth and salt and spit. It tastes like Ilya—so purely and completely that Shane is ruined by it, knowing with sudden, terrible certainty that *this* is it. That he will never have enough, that nothing else will compare. That his undoing begins and ends with the man in front of him.

Shane moans into the kiss, the sound vibrating between their mouths as his swollen cock brushes against Ilya’s sweat-slick thigh. The contact alone nearly pushes him over. The need in his gut burns hotter than ever, reducing him to this single, brutal hunger—to chase Ilya to the brink, to follow him over it.

“So good for me,” Ilya breathes against his bruised lips, each kiss punctuated by a sharp nip—like he’s out for blood. For Shane’s blood. “Better than good. You’re perfect.”

His hand finds Shane’s cock, wrapping it in the searing heat of his palm.

Shane can only answer with a broken sound, hips jerking helplessly into Ilya’s rough grip. It takes barely a moment before he’s spilling over those carved knuckles, Ilya’s name crumbling into fractured syllables, then getting lost completely in a strangled moan.

Through it all, Ilya’s mouth holds him together, lips gentling as he coaxes him back down. One hand presses flat to Shane’s chest, right at the center of him. Like he’s pinning his soul in place.

Except the center is hollowed out. Nothing left, not even the fruitful core.

Shane breathes, shallow and erratic, while Ilya pulls back to cup his chin again. This time, it’s not just to hold him—it’s to make Shane look at him.

Shane doesn’t know what Ilya sees in his expression, what answers he’s searching for, or which ones might satisfy him. But at last, Ilya nods once and lets him go, a lazy smile unfurling on his mouth, red as a rain-soaked rose.

“I like you like this even more,” Ilya murmurs.

Shane closes his eyes, the darkness behind his lids a temporary reprieve. There are so many things Ilya could mean: sweaty, fucked out, covered in cum that dripped down Ilya’s hand, *still* needy.

But Shane doesn't ask for clarification. Instead, he says, "All I got from this"—the teasing rises out of his unsteady breath—"is that you like me."

He opens his eyes to meet Ilya's, bracing for reproach.

But there is none. Only the soft, singing firelight of acceptance.

End Notes

Translation for the Russian phrase Ilya tells Shane, “You’re unreal. I’ve wanted you for so long.”

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