

What they'll see they can't understand

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What they'll see they can't understand

by [mareastralis](#)

Summary

It... it was a joke, right? A weird prank? Hollander and Rozanov... It didn't make any sense. They hated each other! They had nothing in common! It couldn't be real. And even if it was, it couldn't be *love*, right?

Or: five times the world got a glimpse of how much Shane and Ilya love each other and one time they kept it to themselves

Notes

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

After living in the U.S, and then Canada, for over a decade, Ilya had come to terms with the fact that he would be constantly learning new words in English. It had been necessary at first, it felt unavoidable even now. There was always something he didn't know how to describe or what to name, especially since people seemed to love inventing new words every day. At least, now, Ilya knew that what he was doing was *doomscrolling*. He had been very confused the first time Shane had asked him to stop doomscrolling and start cleaning the kitchen instead. He had scrunched his nose in a face that Shane could now read easily, and so his fiancé had explained the term.

It was supposed to be a bad thing, a waste of time, something to avoid. But in that moment, Ilya just couldn't help it. He was anxious, and had nothing to do but think about that anxiousness, and that was a vicious circle he could avoid with mindless Instagram videos. Shane probably wouldn't be mad at him for it, especially since Shane was the reason he was struggling, and Ilya wouldn't be in this situation if Shane was here making his angry kitten face and Ilya could just kiss it off.

He checked the time. Barely five minutes had passed since he had checked last. He sighed. His discomfort was probably nothing compared to what Shane was going through. Ilya was just lying on his couch in Ottawa, Anya asleep at his feet, while Shane was in what probably was the worst meeting of his life. In a huge sad office, facing his coach, the various owners of the Montreal Voyageurs, and probably a few lawyers, discussing his future within the team. Ilya's stomach churned just thinking about it. He wished he could have been there with him. Now all he could do was wait for an update, probably a call, as soon as Shane walked out of that room. In the meantime, he was stuck doomscrolling to avoid spiraling (another word he had recently learned, but at least this one made sense in Russian too).

In his specific situation, he felt like it was a good thing that the internet was endless. There was always a new video to watch to chase away his darkest thoughts. Like this one compilation of Scott Hunter falling. He hearted it and moved on. The next video was of a little black and white kitten who had been woken up from his nap and looked pissed about it. 'Tag that friend who's just a grump sometimes' the caption said. Easy. That was just so Shane. He had the same lidded eyes and scrunched up nose. If Ilya tried hard enough, he could probably get Shane to hiss at him someday. He chuckled and went to send the video to his fiancé, just to give him something to smile about on his way home, when a thought occurred to him. Their interactions didn't have to stay hidden in private chats anymore. He could just tag him. Show everyone what Shane Hollander was truly like, and maybe get him to scrunch his nose at the fact that Ilya had done that.

He just had to imagine his face for a second to make his decision. A few taps later... there. Done. Now the world knew about Shane's angry kitten face. Ilya snorted as he kept scrolling. The very next video showed a baby deer jumping around a field of flowers. Again, that was *so* Shane. It seemed like Ilya's algorithm was also thinking about his boyfriend. He went to scroll down, but an idea started to form in his head. Shane had never had a huge social media presence, and it had only gotten worse in the few weeks since they had been outed. Every email, every text and DM was a potential loss, a potential insult, an unlimited source of

anxiety. Ilya liked the idea of Shane getting some positive notifications to look at when he walked out of that meeting.

Because there was no happy ending there, right? Option one, Shane was silently kicked out of the team he had fought so hard for while they believed he had betrayed them, chased from the city he had called home for a decade and had given his everything to. He would then have to face the most stressful time of his career, waiting for a team to show interest in him while knowing that maybe none would, just because he had dared to love Ilya. Option two, Montreal was aware that he was still one of the best players this sport had ever seen, they kept him on the team, over half of them wouldn't trust him anymore, he would lose his captaincy for the benefit of the group, he would be pushed aside and feel lonely in a town that had only written mean articles about him in the last few weeks, all because he had had the misfortune of loving Ilya.

Selfishly, Ilya wanted his contract not to get renewed. That way, there was a small chance of them living together in the very near future. There was an even better chance of them going through this complicated period of time together, and Ilya would be able to take care of him every step of the way. If Shane stayed in Montreal, Ilya wouldn't be able to protect him. But he also knew that Shane loved this city, loved his team despite everything that had recently happened, and didn't really want to get traded. He was the type to think of worst case scenarios, and therefore was terrified of having to put an early end to his career. So Ilya hadn't said anything about his preferences, and felt guilty about it in secret.

All that to say, he really needed to find a way to make Shane smile, even from afar, especially when Ilya's own wishes might hurt him. Maybe mindless Instagram videos could be a tool for that. He scrolled back up to the baby deer video and opened the comments.

@ShaneHollanderHockeyPlayer you

Posted. He scrolled down, again and again, until he found videos that he could tag Shane in, no matter how unrelated they might seem at first glance. Every cute animal was now an avatar of Shane Hollander. Every situation was something that Shane Hollander could be cute in.

A puppy running after a butterfly.

@ShaneHollanderHockeyPlayer you

A bunny slipping on ice, its paws going crazy trying to keep himself moving but making it run in circles.

@ShaneHollanderHockeyPlayer you

Two cats tangled into each other in a cozy basket, licking each other's faces.

@ShaneHollanderHockeyPlayer us

He kept up with this little game for long enough that he forgot to check the time every five seconds. It lasted long enough that some people noticed him in the comments of videos and

he started getting some notifications too. Good. Shane's would be flooded that way. He laughed at some of the reactions he was getting. Some people thought he had gotten hacked. That made it even better. If Shane really was mad about it, he would just say that his account had been compromised (he would still have to say that Shane had an angry kitten face, he couldn't lie about that part). He kept going until his phone started ringing in his hand. For a second he was scared that it would be Farah, begging him to stop being ridiculous and mushy for the whole world to see, but his heart jumped when he saw Shane's name.

"Hi!" he exclaimed as soon as he had picked up. The sound of Shane's sniffing answered him. "Sweetheart? What happened? Are you okay?" he sat up, ready to bolt and run all the way to Montreal if Shane needed him.

"It's fine, I just..." Shane's voice broke in a wet laugh. "*Ilya*."

"What? Tell me. Are you okay?" He was standing now, and started pacing the room.

"My phone is blowing up."

"Oh, sorry, sorry, I-"

"I forgot to turn it off before going in, and it kept going off and they were giving me these fucking looks." Shane was fully laughing now, but it sounded a little broken. He was also still crying. "I thought... I don't know. That someone had died. Or that we had leaked our nonexistent sex-tape. I scrambled to grab it and I was so anxious I couldn't get my hands to work, it took me forever, it was so awkward."

"I'm sorry." For once in his life, he really meant those words too.

"Don't be, oh god." He sniffed loudly. "I just saw your name over and over again. I didn't even... I couldn't open it yet and I knew it wasn't urgent because you wouldn't use Instagram for important things now, you know? And you knew I was busy but it just... It was like you found a way to be in that room... and remind me that I didn't have to do it alone." He took a second to breathe through what sounded like sobs. Ilya just gave him the time he needed. "Thank you."

"Of course. We're never alone now."

"Fuck yeah," Shane sniffed, and Ilya smiled, relieved.

"Where are you?"

"Bathroom stall."

"Mh."

"I needed a minute."

"It's okay."

They took a second just to breathe and feel the other's presence.

“After that,” Shane started again. “When I put my phone on silent, I mean. I put it back in my pocket and I looked up and it was like... I didn’t care anymore. I just looked at them, and I didn’t care. I didn’t respect them anymore, because they don’t... they don’t *know*. They don’t know who we are. They don’t know *how it feels*.”

Ilya knew exactly what he meant. “No, they don’t.”

He just listened to Shane catching his breath for a second, trying to breathe deeply and loudly enough to get him something to hold onto.

“The Montreal Voyageurs are not looking to renew my contract for another year,” Shane finally exhaled.

Ilya could hear all the hurt, all the pain and fear and betrayal, but he heard the relief too. “Okay,” he simply said, letting Shane process it.

“They wish me the best for what is sure to be an exciting new step.”

“Of course it will be,” Ilya started, anger filling his voice. “You’re the most exciting thing about this whole town.”

“Mh.”

Ilya could easily picture him, eyes closed, tears-stained cheeks, focusing on his breathing.

“I’m sorry мое солнышко little sun.”

“I know.”

“We’ll figure it out.”

“I know. I still... I’ll miss it.”

Ilya didn’t say anything, because he knew there was nothing he could say that Shane wanted to hear in that moment. *They should be ashamed. You deserve so much better. This city is only keeping you away from me.*

“I wanted to call you on the way out,” Shane started to explain. “I walked out of there trying to pretend that it didn’t affect me but I needed your voice to focus on, I needed not to be alone. And then I saw all of... that.”

Ilya winced. “I wanted to help.”

“You did, in a way. Fuck, Ilya, I burst out laughing in the middle of the hall. Their secretaries probably think I lost it.”

“Fuck them.”

“Yes. It’s just... I wished I could have had both. You and my team. You and hockey, for all that time.” He took a pause. “And I was so sad to leave, and ashamed, and mad that I was

ashamed but then I was so happy that you had tried to help me somehow because I know you're the only person in the world who understands what we went through and I just loved you so much in that instant because we're *absolutely* two cats licking each other's faces off," he giggled, "and I was so happy that we can post these things now and let people see us but it also scared me and... I felt like I was about to explode."

"I get it. Is a lot."

"So I hid in the bathroom and cried like a baby."

"I get it."

He could hear Shane's breath getting shaky again.

"I get it," he repeated. "You're the bravest person I know, Hollander."

"Coming from someone with a bear tattoo on their chest, it really means a lot," Shane laughed.

"You love my bear tattoo."

"Yeah. I love you."

"I love you," Ilya answered, easy as breathing. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah. I'll get out soon. I think."

"Okay. I can wait with you."

"Thanks," Shane exhaled like that was a relief, like Ilya wouldn't have blown up the whole city if that's what Shane had needed. They waited in silence until he was breathing normally.

"Nothing is holding you back there now," Ilya stated, and he meant this bathroom, this ice rink, this city.

"No. Nothing," Shane answered, to all of these.

"Then come home to me, my love."

"Yeah?"

"Why not?"

"Maybe I shouldn't drive right now."

"Do you want me to come to you?"

Shane hesitated. "You have practice tomorrow."

"Fuck practice."

“No. Don’t fuck practice. We’re a single-income household now.”

Ilya heard the real worry beyond the joke. Not about money, but about Shane having nothing to do with his life for the foreseeable future. “Is okay. I’ll take care of you.”

“Yeah?”

“Yes. Forever. Is what marriage is.”

“True...” Shane said and Ilya heard the smile behind it. “Okay. I’ll come out now,” he said and Ilya heard some rustling, a door. “I look terrible.”

“Impossible.”

Shane laughed. “You have to say that, you’re marrying me.” Another door, more rustling. “Yes, goodbye, thank you,” Shane told someone in the lobby. “I changed my mind.”

“About what?”

“Driving. I have to get out of here. It’ll be fine.”

“Okay. Be careful.”

“Ha! Look how the tables turned.”

“Don’t know what that means.”

“It means you’re a terrible driver,” Shane said and the sound changed as he was probably getting settled in his car.

Ilya gasped dramatically. “I’m cancelling the wedding.”

“Too late.”

“Okay,” Ilya relented with a smile.

“I think I’ll just... come straight home, yeah? Get my stuff some other day?”

“Yes. I’ll give you clothes and food and a toothbrush. Leave everything.”

“Okay. I’ll be home soon then.”

“Good. I’ll wait.”

“Send more videos in case I need to make a stop.”

“Okay. There is one with horses French kissing I think people will really like.”

“Maybe not that one,” Shane said, and Ilya could hear his disgusted kitten face.

“Don’t drive too carefully. I miss you.”

“I’ll do my best. See you soon.”

“Yeah. I love you.”

“I love you.”

They hung up, and Ilya let out a deep breath. Shane was okay. Shane was on his way, and then he’d be able to take care of him. He started to make a mental list. Dinner, a bath, a dumb movie, a couple blowjobs. He had this. He was an expert at taking care of Shane now. They would get through this, together. But first, he had to find the video of horses making out again.

In many ways, sports events were a ceremony. They were not religious, but they brought people together, they built bridges between communities. They held up ideals, values and were made of traditions. Some of these traditions carried gravitas, like when the whole stadium stood up to sing the national anthem, hope in their voices and goosebumps on their skins. Others... well others were just silly. Like kiss cams.

But something had to entertain the spectators who did not feel like buying an overpriced beer, and those who couldn’t text back when the place was packed enough for reception to become spotty. And so while the players got yelled at by their coaching staff, some bored camera operator was trying to make people stand up and dance or, depending on the intermission, kiss each other. From one uncomfortable bench to another, the camera tried to spot people who looked close enough to be dating, but not similar enough to be siblings. Still, it would happen, it always happened, it was almost part of the tradition now. Honestly, this job was boring enough that you almost hoped to embarrass a few people, otherwise it stayed pretty uneventful. Not everyone was lucky enough to pull a Coldplay.

Here, these ones already looked very chummy. Perfect. There? They looked like they should be talking but have been to enough of these games that they had nothing to say to each other anymore. Well, you could always kiss, rekindle the flame. Awesome, thanks. You, here. Look up from your phone. C’mon. Please. Look up. Yeah the guy hitting your shoulder is trying to help you here. Ah, a blush and a kiss. Superb.

It could have gone like any other day, like any other game, if the operator hadn’t decided to look up to the VIP sections. Truthfully, they had been looking for that one pop star who was definitely dating one of the players, we just didn’t know which one yet. But this might have been even better. The crowd went wild as the image got into focus. Of course they did, that was Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov. Any of their appearances was a cause for commotion, and that was even before their very public and scandalous coming out. Since then, they had made themselves pretty scarce outside of the games they played. On the ice, their talent made it impossible to look away from them. Outside of the rink, they had become

pretty much invisible. The camera operator was probably thinking that they might get a raise if they managed to get a kiss on the big screen.

That seemed unlikely. The two hockey stars hadn't noticed the screen yet. They hadn't even noticed the noise in the stadium, which was a feat in itself. Hollander was slouched in his seat, hoodie pulled up to cover his mouth, head on his husband's shoulder. Rozanov's whole frame was tilted to accommodate the intrusion, his arm lost behind his husband's back. They were looking at something on Rozanov's phone, Hollander taking his hand away from Rozanov's chest to point at something on the screen. The camera stayed there. The operator could totally get away with it for a few seconds. They'd say that the crowd loved seeing its heroes in the wild, that their presence deserved to be noticed, that maybe someone would elbow them and they'd look up and make out and the stadium would go viral everywhere overnight. Except, of course, no one impolite enough was close enough to reach them, so the chances were very slim.

Maybe the operator leaned in towards the screen when Hollander moved. Maybe they were disappointed when he only did it to sit up and look at Rozanov, smiling and talking animatedly. Ugh. Well, at least someone on TikTok would read his lips and maybe something interesting would come out of that. Oh! Wait! Rozanov's face! That was something! It was almost eerie to see it like this, all relaxed and smiling, not a smirk, not a grin, but a happy boyish smile. All his attention was on Hollander. It would have been messed up otherwise, because he had the biggest case of heart eyes this stadium had ever seen. He was radiating love, nodding absentmindedly at what Hollander was telling him (oh if only those TikTok lip readers worked live). He bit his lip before leaning in and... okay. A kiss on the temple. Swift and sweet. It was better than nothing. The operator had probably raised their hands all the way above their head so they wouldn't move anything by accident. If luck was on their side maybe Rozanov would reiterate his exploit. Honestly, the looks on their faces were probably enough to set the internet ablaze. It would be greedy to... wait! Hollander! Going in for the kiss! What a man! He had yet to disappoint this town anyway, so that was par for the course. Fuck, it looked like a good kiss too. Rozanov was retreating in his seat under the force of it. and now he was giving back as good as he got, grabbing Hollander's face to try and regain control of the situation. Wow. That got really heated really fast. Oh. There was definitely some tongue involved now and- oh wow did he really... Oh. Yes. Good call. The operator had moved back to showing the field. That was for the best anyway. Back to the... huh... second period? Of... the game. Sports! Let's focus back on sports!

Shane wasn't the clubbing type. He didn't hate it exactly, but he had to be in a very specific mood, and surrounded by very specific people to enjoy it. None of it came naturally to him. Tonight, he wasn't in the mood, which was why he was still seated at a booth, nursing a lukewarm beer, while his teammates were all jumping around on the dance floor. The thing that most people didn't get was that, even like this, he was having fun too. Every once in a while, one of the Ottawa Centaurs or their partners would crash next to him, in need of a

drink and a breather, and they would start a conversation. That way, Shane got to talk to each of them, actually share a moment, get to know them a little better in this new environment, absorb their enthusiasm and encourage them to get back out there. He loved it. They all left the table with a smile and a pep in their step. And in between those moments, alone and hidden in the dark, Shane got to indulge and watch Ilya dance.

He was mesmerizing. Even if Shane hadn't been a little buzzed, he would have thought so. Ilya just knew how to move, how to make it look like he was feeling the music in every part of his perfect body. The colorful lights glided on his sweating skin, making him look ethereal. It made Shane want to push him against a wall and touch, grab, kiss, suck, bite, lick. But there would be time for all of that later. For now, looking was enough, looking was an activity in itself, and Shane drank his fill of his beautiful husband.

His focus was broken when Wyatt and Bood came to sit on the other side of the booth they all shared. They looked a little delirious, exhausted, out of breath, but happy. That seemed a little extraordinary, but Ilya was extraordinary, so it made sense that he would have managed such a feat. The Centaurs had lost a game earlier in the day. It had been rough, and made even worse by the fact that it was part of a series of losses which was starting to make even their home fans doubt, as proven by the colorful insults they had all heard that afternoon. Sure, they were all great players, they were a great team, but even great teams lost sometimes. The energy in the locker room had been gloom, broken only by Ilya's voice as he announced: "Tonight, we go out, yes? As a team. Attendance mandatory." It had sounded insane at the time, but it seemed like it was working.

"Do you know which one is mine?" Bood yelled over the music, pointing at the various bottles and glasses on the table.

Shane made a grimace and gestured in the vague direction of where he had been sat last. Bood grabbed a half-full glass and shrugged. Shane could see his lips form the words "Fuck it" more than he heard him and couldn't react before he was chugging its content. He would probably be fine anyway.

"Not the dancing type, Hollander?" Wyatt hailed him.

He leaned in to answer. "Not really, no," he shrugged with an apologetic smile.

"I get it, I'm usually like that," Bood interjected, "but I need to get rid of something tonight," he explained as he shook his shoulders.

Wyatt nodded. "Yeah, same, fucking frustrating game."

Shane made a face he hoped was empathetic. It had been a really frustrating one. Nothing they had done had seemed to work, even when it should have. The other team had been hungry, aggressive, and they all had been slammed against the boards too many times not to be angry about it.

"We'll get them next time!" Bood exclaimed and raised his glass. They all drank to that. "I didn't want to come, but I'm glad we're here."

“Yeah, same! I thought I’d show my face for half an hour and go home but I’m having so much fun. It’s like an exorcism,” he laughed. “It was a good idea.”

Shane nodded enthusiastically. His remedy against a series of losses would have probably been to obsessively study his next opponent and try to carry his team to victory on his own through gritted teeth. This was much more enjoyable. (He would still work on strategy, but later, and probably with Ilya’s head on his chest, so it would be more enjoyable too.)

“Your boy is a great captain,” Wyatt said with a smile, noticing Shane’s whipped expression. He hoped the dimmed lights would cover his blush.

“He is,” he still affirmed, because it was true and it pleased him immensely to mention it.

“Speaking of the devil,” Bood said with a nod and Shane looked up to see his husband approaching the table, a dangerous look on his face.

“Is this the loser area?” he asked as he came to lean on the back of Shane’s seat.

“As soon as you walked up here it was yeah,” Wyatt said with a giggle indicating how intoxicated he was.

“You want to sit?” Shane asked as he started to slide further into the booth.

“No, I want you to get up.”

“What? Didn’t think you’d want to leave this early.”

“Not leaving. I want to dance with my beautiful husband,” Ilya said, seductively raising an eyebrow.

“Oh, I’m not really in the mood,” he looked away, a little ashamed.

“C’mon Hollander, be nice to him,” Bood encouraged.

“Yeah, he deserves it,” Wyatt nodded with a mischievous smile.

Shane looked up towards Ilya who was giving him his best attempt at an innocent pleading face. The thing was, Shane would love to dance with him. Feel all those muscles right against his body, put his hands all over him, feel his warmth, let himself be carried by his husband’s rhythm. But he was also, still, a little terrified of it. This was a very public club, not just a party with their team. After years of secrecy, his brain was wired to keep their relationship under wraps, and he was still very hesitant to show his affection in public. And things couldn’t be more public than here, where he had already seen several phones pointed at them throughout the night. In a very deep, dark corner of his brain, it still felt wrong. Hating the feeling didn’t make it any less true.

Before he could say anything, Wyatt had started chanting his name in encouragement. Bood joined in and Ilya started shimmying in rhythm. Not even the blue lights would hide Shane’s flaming face now. He felt torn, but rooted in place all the same. At least until Ilya put a knee

on his seat and leaned in to speak directly in his ear. His hand found its home on Shane's cheek to keep him from moving away.

"I'll make it fun, promise," Ilya said in a voice that made him shiver.

"No, Ilya, I know. It's just..." he started to shake his head in a negative answer.

"Do you know how long I've wanted this? Showing you off... Keeping you close enough to let people know they could only watch... Telling everyone that you're mine... Ever since..."

He trailed off, but Shane knew what he meant. He could recall that fateful night in every detail. He tried to look everywhere but at his two smirking teammates, embarrassment and excitement both probably very clear on his face. Ilya drove his point home by nipping on Shane's earlobe. There was nothing he could do now. He escaped his husband's grasp to put down his beer, more forcefully than what he had wanted.

"Okay, alright, just... one song."

"Sure, Hollander, one song," Ilya said with a beaming smile.

He grabbed Shane's hands and helped him stand up before starting to walk backwards, already moving to the music, pulling Shane along. Shane felt too warm, too stiff, too awkward, he barely remembered how to walk. But as soon as they had reached a place where they could really move, Ilya stopped and brought him flush against his chest. Shane let himself crash into him, arms rising on their own to sneak around Ilya's neck. Ilya's hands were on his hips immediately, gently guiding him as he started moving and encouraging Shane to do the same. Shane was immediately hypnotized. Ilya was even more beautiful up close, and the feel of his warm body against his own was everything Shane had dreamed of.

He let himself be carried into the music, fear melting under Ilya's hands. Hands which soon enough left his hips to run along his back. Ilya then put a leg between Shane's and started a slow grind. Shane could only go along with the plan. He was slowly forgetting about the people surrounding them, about phones and cameras and the internet. Nothing mattered but Ilya and the way he moved against him, the way his eyes darkened as he looked over Shane's chest. The world was reduced to each of their points of contact. It was almost worse when Ilya leaned back, forcing Shane to grab his shirt and let him almost sit on his thigh as he threw his head back. Fuck. He was the most beautiful thing Shane had ever seen. And he belonged to him. And the whole world would be aware of it. And he didn't fucking care, because he would die if he couldn't kiss him now.

He used his grip on Ilya's waist to help him back up, and crashed their lips together. Ilya melted into it, hands caressing Shane's back, hips still swaying to the mellow rhythm. It was probably too much, he would probably regret it when seeing videos online the next day, but for now Shane could only care about the way his husband's tongue danced in his mouth. He was grateful for the way Ilya's body was holding him up when they broke apart.

"So perfect for me..." Ilya said against his ear.

It would have been hot if he wasn't grinning like a child on Christmas morning. Now it was just endearing. Shane loved him more than words could explain, so he kissed him again. A little more chaste this time, but no less passionate. Why would he have to care after all? They were married! The whole world knew it! They might as well also know how deep Shane and Ilya's love ran.

Shane detached himself from his husband's lips as the one song he had promised melted into another one. Instead of going back to his table, he ran his hands on Ilya's chest, appreciative, possessive. Ilya's grin looked manic now. The new song was more upbeat and didn't really call for the indecent grind they had been indulging in. It wouldn't stop Shane from having fun with his husband. He took a step back and started to move in a more appropriate way. Ilya followed his lead, and things got less heated. It was just harmless freeing fun, and it went to Shane's head in the exact same way. How had they longed for small moments like this. For normalcy. For tenderness. Shane walked back into his husband's waiting arms and kissed him through a smile.

"I love you!" he shouted over the music.

"I love you, Shane Hollander! I really fucking love you!" Ilya answered in the same way, and they laughed without even knowing why.

Something came loose inside Shane's chest as they danced, some form of fear, some weight he had been carrying for years. It left him a little more with every move. He felt weightless, giddy in a way he probably hadn't been since he was a child. He was in love with the most perfect man on Earth, and he didn't care who could witness it. They'd get back on the ice, together, with their teammates who had become friends who were becoming family, and they would win games again. They would win the whole cup, actually, and Shane would give Ilya a kiss filthy enough to make Scott Hunter turn red. Knowing that practice made perfect, he grabbed Ilya's shirt to bring him back against him and start training for that world-changing kiss.

There were around fifty different videos of the moment. If you had that kind of time to lose, you could have edited a short film out of it. Of course, everyone had noticed the guy walking in the airport with a flower bouquet big enough to look complicated to carry and hide his entire head. The film could start here, and the one blurry photo of him struggling to get the flowers of his car could be a good poster. Giggles and swooning both had started way before people had realized this was hockey legend Ilya Rozanov. Several gasps and screeching noises from the various moments they did should have to be cut from the film, but honestly any kind of romantic music would do. Maybe just some piano to underline the mood, something evolving with the changing light from the giant windows as Rozanov made his way through the hall. The shot of him fighting to hold up the bouquet as he got his phone out of his coat pocket built good comedic suspense. Even though, honestly, there wasn't a lot of suspense there.

Everyone who cared about hockey knew the story. They could tell you about the brilliant international break, team Canada and team USA regaling their audiences with strong defenses and impressive goals. All in good spirits too, since Hunter and Hollander seemed to get along great, and their teams wanted to follow their captains' example. Real fans could tell you that Rozanov would have been on team Canada's side, for the first time in his life, if there hadn't been a last-minute paperwork emergency surrounding his citizenship. Some people would tell you it was good riddance, others would complain that it was ridiculous that Rozanov still wasn't a citizen since he had married a Canadian after all. Others would tell you that this whole marriage thing had actually been about the citizenship, about building a better hockey team, a scandalous scam.

Honestly, the bouquet was big enough that you might start to believe that crazy theory for a second. It was just showing off at this point, right? They had only been apart for a month, at best. This wasn't a month-long bouquet. There must have been... about a million flowers in it. Roses, of course, but pink ones, which could have passed for a less tacky choice, if it wasn't for all the lilies and chrysanthemums accompanying them. But also, it was well balanced, with enough foliage that it didn't feel like too much, and it was wrapped in black paper that made it seem classier.

Romance or ploy, it still made every head turn, and there were enough videos to follow Rozanov all the way as he went in search of the right place to wait for his husband. The film could end on a pretty long one-shot, as there was a good video taking the whole thing in, seemingly from someone sitting in a café right next to the landing area. Rozanov waited for a while, moving the flowers from one arm to another when he got tired. He kept looking around, somewhat reminiscent of a lost puppy, making sure not to miss anything, even though no one was coming out yet.

And finally, people started arriving. Most of them glanced at the tall hockey player looking like he had stepped out of a valentine's card. Some with a fond smile, others with a clear laugh. He didn't seem to notice any of them. Until he noticed the person he had been waiting for, his body standing straighter and his face lighting up. The camera shook a little here, and there was a screech to cut too, so maybe you could use another video after all. This one was taken much closer, and focused on Shane Hollander, captain of the Canadian national team, as he walked out the doors and noticed his husband. His expression went from serious, focused, tired, to melting, adoring, soft. He didn't stop for a second as he all but ran into Rozanov's arms. Contrary to everyone else in the entire building, it seemed like he hadn't even noticed the flowers.

He had dived straight for his husband's chest, and stayed hidden there for a few seconds. That's where the fake marriage theory crumbled, really. When he pulled back and they exchanged a look. That wasn't something you could fake. No matter the video you picked, no matter the point of view, adoration was written on both of their faces, and in the way Hollander was holding on to Rozanov's jacket, fists tight like he was afraid his husband would disappear if he let go. This was the kind of desperation you saw from people returning from war. It was a little ridiculous, probably, but then Rozanov leaned in to kiss Hollander's cheeks softly, and rubbed their noses together as they spoke. It was entirely too sweet and unnecessary for a fake marriage. This wasn't even about marriage, this was entirely about love, the kind most people didn't get to find in a lifetime, the kind that faded too fast we had

to call it a phase. Well, it seemed impossible, but they had found it and had kept it alive for years.

The film should end there, with a freeze frame and a voice over about airports and how they saw more love confessions than wedding chapels, if you wanted to try and get away with that. It felt unfair to steal more from them, to let people see more, even if they did, even if the videos are out there. Some for that kiss which brought Hollander on his tip toes as his husbands carried him closer and closer to his chest, some of his blushing face when he finally noticed the flowers and took them in, others capturing Rozanov's laugh when Hollander almost dropped the bouquet. Or maybe you could add one, just one, just a few seconds, of them walking out, Hollander hiding his flaming face behind the flowers, and Rozanov with a hand on the small of his back, carrying his bag, eyes never leaving his husband's face, even as he risked walking into people. That one was cute.

Montreal was the worst city in the entire world. Ilya wanted it erased from the map altogether. The only good thing it ever had was Shane, and Shane was in Ottawa now, so the whole city was useless. It wouldn't even be a big loss to the hockey world, seeing as all they had done since they kicked Shane out was lose and lose spectacularly. They were well on their way to another loss now, because the Ottawa Centaurs ruled and Ilya had sworn to himself that they would never lose another game against this stupid team. The issue was, they were taking it out on Shane.

They were well into the third period now, and Ilya sat on the bench, powerless and fuming as one of their defensemen roughly body checked Shane, who ended up hitting the boards with a loud bang. Ilya rose with the rest of his teammates to call for a penalty, but the referee was one of those lenient ones, and he didn't say anything. Shane was back on his skates in no time, and sent Ilya a quick nod. Still, Ilya didn't sit back down until coach Wiebe put a hand on his shoulder.

It made sense that a team would be mad at a former player who left and let the world realize how much they sucked without him. It happened all the time. And of course it was happening now, because Shane was the best player in three generations and Montreal barely deserved to be called a city. But this was more than that. Meaner. More dangerous too. It was a miracle that Shane was still up, with the way that the entire team played like they wanted to break him. Well, fine, maybe not the whole team, but enough of them that it was palpable.

The Ottawa fans were booing, the Ottawa players screamed at the refs and played more aggressively, Ilya wanted to bite someone's head off. But Shane didn't say anything, he just kept playing, stayed focused. It was infuriating. He didn't deserve to be treated that way because he had *tripped*. Deep down, Ilya knew that he was treated that way because he had chosen Ilya over the toxic culture of secrecy the commissioner had tried to impose on them, but he couldn't focus on that, or he would actually kill someone.

“Too bad they can’t hear you growling,” Bood told him from his seat next to him, “maybe they’d fucking stop if they did.”

“I am going to kill one. Next one who touches him, I’ll kill.”

“Yeah, I know buddy, but-”

Ilya never learned what Bood had been about to say, because Shane disappeared, once again, behind the huge frame of a Montreal defenseman and, just as every time he had touched the puck tonight, his body hit the boards in a thundering noise. Except, this time, he slipped down until he was sitting on the ice, and he didn’t get back up.

Ilya saw his whole life flash in front of him, and more specifically another game, years ago, in a different city, wearing different colors, scared to come closer to an unresponsive Shane while unable to step away. He didn’t have to hold back now. He was over the boards and across the ice in a matter of seconds. Everything blurred around him, the only clear thing was Shane. Ilya skated closer and kneeled before him. Eyes open, breathing, alive, Ilya’s eyes roamed over him.

“Моя любовьMy love, you okay? Did he... are you...”

Shane had a hand on his chest, his breathing a little erratic.

“T’sokay,” he mumbled, raising his second hand to put it on Ilya’s arm, like this ridiculous man was trying to help Ilya when he was the one hurt. “He just... I’m just winded.”

It looked like more than that. It looked bad, but maybe Ilya was panicking a little.

“You can stand, yes?” he asked, almost pleading.

Shane nodded with a reassuring smile, and Ilya hated that he put him in a position where he had to take care of his feelings. He put Shane’s arm around his neck, sneaked his own behind his back, and helped him stand.

“T’sokay, I can-”

“Don’t care,” Ilya cut him off so he could save his breath.

Feeling his husband’s warm body against his side helped him relax a little. He could stand, he could skate, he could talk, his head was fine. Ilya repeated this to himself like a mantra. He brought him back towards their bench, letting go against his will so Shane could go and sit for a minute. The team’s medics were on him in a second. Ilya looked over him until the game restarted. Shane was fine. Ilya would get revenge by humiliating Montreal and maybe kill that one defenseman once he was out of the penalty box. As Ilya got back on the ice, he skated straight towards it, and punched the glass in warning, eyes boring into those of the tall player who didn’t even look like he regretted it. Ilya would make him regret.

Ottawa won by a margin large enough that they now looked like the most dangerous team in the league. It helped that Ilya had been on fire for the end of the third period. He was, as Bood had put it, practically growling as he shook their hands at the end of the game. He only smiled at the tall defenseman who was now sporting a busted lip, but he hoped it was a smile the guy would see in his nightmares. No one else was talking, this was just a formality none of them wanted to drag. Until, of course, Hayden Pike held up Ilya.

"I'm sorry."

"Don't care," Ilya snarled, even though Pike looked miserable, even though none of this was his fault.

"I tried to tell them but... I didn't think..."

"Make them think before next game, or I'll do way worse."

Hayden nodded like he understood, like he agreed, and Ilya felt a very tiny spark of affection for him. He knew Hayden loved Shane, he knew he understood Ilya's panic. Maybe he would find a way to keep his team in check. Maybe he'd leave. Both good options. Ilya didn't think about it any more and rushed towards the exit, towards his team, towards Shane.

He was still on the bench where Ilya had left him, a medic at his side, and most of the team fussing around him. They all parted so Ilya could walk closer and drop to his knees in front of Shane.

"Are you okay?" was all he could ask.

Shane *giggled*. Ilya's eyebrows shot up. Was he concussed after all? Shane brought a hand up to play with a wayward curl on Ilya's forehead.

"We gave him a good dose of painkiller," Terry, their team doctor, said from somewhere over Ilya's shoulder. "Maybe... in the heat of things... maybe too big of a dose. But he'll be fine, I swear, just very, very bruised, and I'll want to look at his elbow tomorrow."

"Elbow?" Ilya asked, eyes still roaming Shane's face. He looked way too happy for it to be natural. He had the kind of elated and relaxed face Ilya only ever saw at the cottage, or when Ilya had thoroughly had his way with him. He hated that other people were seeing that face now. It belonged to them alone.

"It's probably not much, but I want to make sure of it after the adrenaline has worn off. Take it easy for now."

"Okay, easy," Ilya nodded. All he wanted was to get Shane away from there and in a warm bath before putting him to bed and holding him close all night long.

"Okay, you heard the man," coach Wiebe said, "Hollander is fine, everyone to the showers now."

Ilya was thankful for that. He decided to wait a little until the locker room was less crowded so he could help Shane change without everyone being witness to it. He knew his husband

wouldn't like to appear weak in front of them.

"Are you okay?" he asked again once they were relatively alone. There were still dozens of people in the stands, probably watching like hawks, and staff members walking around them.

"You're so pretty," Shane smiled, and Ilya couldn't help but mirror it.

Shane tried to lean down but Ilya stopped him. "Your ribs, моя любовьmy love, careful," he explained as he sat down beside Shane on the bench.

His husband immediately got his hands back on him, one on his nape and one on his thigh, trying to bring him even closer. Ilya grabbed the second one and took it away.

"There are people, Shane, look around."

Shane shook his head. "Don't care." He put a leg over Ilya's and brought his face up close to him, but his husband pulled away. "Kiss me," he ordered, frowning like he was offended.

It was adorable. Ilya wanted to ravish him, but he knew Shane wasn't big on PDA. He let Ilya get away with a lot, but he had strict rules about what they could do once at the rink. Groping Ilya's thigh and putting his tongue in his mouth were definitely forbidden.

"Are you hurt?"

"Yes," Shane answered before trying to come closer again.

"ДурашкаDummy, no, you are high, you don't want this," Ilya tried to reason with him, holding both of Shane's hands to keep them from wandering. "Where are you hurt?"

He saw the glimpse in his husband's eyes before he understood it. Shane's demeanor shifted and he slumped in his seat. He let his head fall on Ilya's shoulder.

"Everywhere. It hurts everywhere," Shane moaned.

"I'm sorry I couldn't protect you," Ilya said, realizing how much he meant it as the words escaped his mouth.

"You can kiss it better," Shane offered in a low voice, nuzzling against Ilya's neck.

Before Ilya could comprehend what was going on, Shane was dropping small kisses against his neck. He let go of his hands in shock, and Shane took the opportunity to bring them back up, caressing Ilya's hair and his cheek all at once to force him to look down. Ilya complied. Shane was looking up at him, pupils dilated, eyes wide and begging, biting his lip. He looked absolutely delicious, and Ilya couldn't help but gather him in his arms and bring him against his chest.

"Do you not love me anymore?" Shane asked in a small voice.

"What? Wh-"

“Why won’t you kiss me?”

“There are people looking at us.” There probably were, but Ilya wasn’t aware of them at the moment. He just sort of knew, in the small part of his brain not screaming Shane’s name, that people were definitely looking their way.

“But they know now, it’s okay,” Shane pleaded.

“You don’t like when people see us,” Ilya reminded him. “You always want me to stay good and keep my hands to myself,” he said like a practiced speech, because he had heard the words from Shane’s mouth a million times by now.

“Right now I want you more,” Shane countered with half a smile and lidded eyes.

And Ilya was only human, okay? There wasn’t much he could do against that. Maybe future Shane would regret it, but current Shane wanted to be comforted by his husband. As Ilya reasoned in that way, he realized that the game must have been rough mentally as well as physically. Those were Shane’s former teammates, people he had considered his friends for years, and who now didn’t care about hurting him. They were a manifestation of all that Shane had lost to be with Ilya. The one thing he could do was kiss it better.

Shane was pretty much hanging on his neck by that point, Ilya carrying most of his weight. He used it to his advantage, bringing him up, and Shane went willingly. He dropped a soft kiss at the corner of his lips, then on his cheekbone, then, since Shane had closed his eyes to enjoy the moment more, on his eyelid.

“Я люблю тебя I love you, you were amazing tonight.”

Shane mouthed something that sort of resembled the Russian syllables, and giggles again. Ilya repeated the process on the other side of his face. Eyelid, cheekbone, lip corner. And then his lips, just once, chastely.

“I’m so happy we get to play together now.”

His goal was to remind Shane of all the good that had come from their complicated coming-out. Shane hadn’t lost everything. He could still be happy. At least, Ilya hoped so. For now, Shane seemed too out of it for any kind of complicated feelings. That was probably for the best. He moved away from Ilya, swaying a little as he regained his balance, and started to take off his jersey.

“What are you doing?” Ilya helped when Shane got stuck in it.

“Too warm,” Shane explained as he tried to get rid of his shoulder pads.

Ilya took pity on him and helped him, while Shane went boneless against his side, letting himself be manhandled like a doll.

“Okay now?” he asked when Shane was done to his compression shirt, hoping for a yes because he didn’t want to undress his husband in front of prying eyes any more than that.

Thinking of it now, he was sort of itching to look under his shirt for bruises. He was debating if it was worth the risk and subsequent Shane wrath when he felt people coming up to them.

“Is he alright?”

An anxious JJ Boiziau and, at his side, a remorseful Hayden Pike. Ilya was so not in the mood to be nice to them right now. Lucky for him, his husband was the kindest man on Earth and turned towards them like a sunflower towards light, a huge grin on his face.

“Hey guys! How are you? You liked the game?”

“Huh, not really, buddy,” JJ answered while Hayden awkwardly leaned in to hug Shane who had grabbed him as soon as he had been within reach. “You got hurt and your boy here humiliated us.”

“Oh,” Shane frowned, suddenly concerned, “that’s not nice.”

“They deserved it, котёнокkitten, I promise,” Ilya said with a satisfied smirk.

“Oh okay,” Shane nodded, like it was that easy, like he would trust anything Ilya said, and Ilya’s heart did a backflip in his chest.

“Not disagreeing with you there,” JJ relented. “I’m so fucking tired of this bullshit man. It’s been months and they still think...”

“You thought it too,” Ilya pointed out in a cold voice. He knew Shane had forgiven him, but that didn’t mean Ilya had to.

“I know, and I’m still very sorry about it. But I would have never hurt him over it.”

He looked down at Shane who had put his head back on Ilya’s shoulder, his energy burst seemingly over. One of his hands was playing with the hem of Ilya’s jersey, and Ilya had to refrain from dropping a kiss in his hair.

“Good. I would have killed you.”

“I know...” JJ was silent for a second before he added: “I’m glad.”

“You’re glad Rozanov wants to kill you?” Pike chimed in from where he was sitting on Shane’s other side. Ilya noticed that Shane was holding his hand and tried not to be territorial about it. He was glad Shane had friends, he reminded himself.

“I’m glad Shane has someone to look after him,” JJ explained.

“Oh... yeah, same,” Pike nodded.

Ilya frowned at them. “You went soft. Is why you lose all your games.”

They both snorted, and Shane joined in, even though he didn’t look like he had followed the conversation at all. Fine, Ilya was really glad Shane had those friends, and he was even a

little happy that they seemed to approve of their relationship. He was always scared that one day Shane would listen to the people around them and realize that he could get a nicer, easier, friendlier guy. He could use the approval of his oldest friends, even if they were Voyageurs.

“Rozanov! Coast’s clear,” their coach’s voice broke the moment.

“Shane? We go shower, yes?” Ilya asked, raising Shane’s head with a careful hand.

“Okay,” Shane agreed easily.

Ilya helped him up.

“Take care of him, huh?” Pike had the nerve to say.

Ilya didn’t dignify that with an answer, just a scoff and a dirty look, but Pike was looking at Shane’s dopey smile as he rested all his weight against his husband, and therefore didn’t notice. Ilya put an arm around Shane’s waist and made his way towards the locker room, itching to get Shane back home. Shane didn’t seem in too much of a hurry, as he had an arm around Ilya’s neck and resisted the idea of walking ahead in favor of tracing Ilya’s nose with his free hand; Ilya almost carried him out. He ignored every look thrown at them on the way.

Shane made his way down the stairs with difficulty, rubbing his eyes to chase away the last remnants of sleep. Every single part of his body hurt, his head still felt fuzzy, and Ilya’s side of the bed had been cold when he woke up. All in all a terrible start to the day. The house was silent, and so he made his way to the kitchen, hoping that a glass of water would help his stomach settle. He remembered most of what had happened, he knew that he was just having a bad reaction to the pain killers he had been given and that his body was acclimating to all the bruises he had gained during the game. It still sucked.

“Shane?” he heard Ilya call from their living room.

He finished his glass and made his way there, craving the comfort of his husband’s warmth. Ilya dropped his phone and got up from the couch when Shane walked in. They met in the middle of the room, Shane’s arms going automatically around Ilya’s neck while Ilya put his hands on his waist. Shane melted in the embrace. Ilya let him enjoy it for a few seconds.

“How are you feeling?”

“Like I got run over by a bus.”

“Hm,” Ilya hummed, and Shane could guess his anger in this simple noise.

“It’s okay,” Shane said, brushing his nose against Ilya’s neck as a way to comfort them both.

“Is really not. Team of idiot bullies.”

“Yeah...”

“Come sit,” Ilya ordered and guided him back on the couch, making sure to keep him in his arms once they sat down. “Terry said we have to go see him if you feel very wrong. If not you can just take something for the pain.”

“I feel alright. I’m just sore. Nothing’s too bad.”

“We’ll see. We have time.”

“Oh right, what time is it? I feel like I slept for three days.”

“Almost noon.”

“Fuck,” Shane snorted and dragged a hand on his face. He couldn’t remember when the last time was that he had slept that late. “No wonder you’re already up and dressed.”

“I had to walk Anya, but I didn’t want to wake you, so I didn’t come back up.”

“You should have,” Shane whined and put his head on Ilya’s shoulder. “Come back and woke me, I mean.”

“You needed the rest.”

“I need to take advantage of the time we have together.”

“No, is okay,” Ilya reassured him and guided his face so Shane was looking at him. “We have a lot of time now.”

“Still never feels like enough,” Shane replied honestly before leaning in for a kiss. “What were you doing?” he asked, hoping to steer the subject away from his neediness.

“Just huh... looking at things.” He sounded bashful enough to make Shane immediately curious.

“What things?”

“Things,” Ilya shrugged, but it looked rehearsed.

Shane kissed him once more to distract him and dived in to grab and unlock Ilya’s phone.

“No, Shane, wait!” Ilya tried to grab it back, but Shane ignored the pain in his chest in order to escape his grasp.

“Jesus is it porn? Why are you so-” he cut himself off when he finally saw it.

On Ilya’s phone a video of the game played on loop. More exactly, the video showed every time Shane’s body had hit the wall, or the ice, or a Montreal player; in between the hits had

been edited Ilya's reactions to them, because of course he had been filmed almost every time Shane had been hurt. He looked pissed, even when he wasn't screaming at the refs.

"Why are you even watching this?" Shane asked, ignoring the pinch in his heart at the sight of his former friends trying to break him. He looked up when Ilya didn't answer. "Ilya? Why are you watching this?"

His husband didn't answer at first, too busy glowering at the screen. "I am making a list."

"A list?"

"Of those who hurt you. A kill list."

Shane was so surprised that he burst out laughing, stopping only because his ribs hurt too much. He brought his husband's face closer and stole a kiss. "You're ridiculous."

"I'm not. They hurt my best player, I need to watch out next game, is just good hockey, just being a good captain" he shrugged, and Shane snickered at the ridiculous excuse.

"It's fine. I'm fine. Just forget it," he tried.

The truth was, he was the one who needed to forget about it. He wasn't ready to confront everything that had happened the previous night. It had hurt him in more than his body. He scrolled down, as a way to cut the conversation, but ended up on another video of the game, this time when he had gotten the wind knocked out of him and had fallen on his ass. As expected, it looked a bit ridiculous, a bit like one of those videos of deer on ice that Ilya liked to tag him in, a bit like he was having a panic attack. He watched in silence as Ilya rushed to his side, ignoring every protocol. He watched everyone moving away to let him through. He watched him kneel before him while the Centaurs tried to give them space and the Voyageurs looked away in shame.

"You look worried," he commented.

"I was. I thought... I was afraid you had hurt your head."

Shane looked up and saw a ghost pass on Ilya's face, in the same way that he himself still had trouble with the idea of Ilya boarding planes on his own. He grabbed his husband's hand and let him play with his fingers.

"I'm okay."

"I know," Ilya answered

Shane smiled as he remembered something. "Coach asked me to stay on the bench last night." Ilya raised a questioning eyebrow. "The medics wanted me to get back to the locker room, get changed and check me away from the crowd... But coach said he was afraid you'd go nuclear if you couldn't see me anymore. So they just gave me enough meds to knock out a horse."

"Are you saying it's my fault if you got high?"

“Yes, exactly, you love me too much for it to be healthy,” Shane laughed, and Ilya joined in.

“I would have killed him, I think.”

“I know. I would have done the same.”

“Except you don’t fight.”

“I would fight for you.”

“Useless,” Ilya said with a wave of the hand. “You’re too small you can’t fight.”

“I’m trying to be cute here, you asshole.”

“Yes, yes, you are very cute,” Ilya said and leaned in for a kiss but Shane avoided him and went back to scrolling his phone, pretending to be very invested in it while Ilya laughed.

Ilya’s Instagram reels were all over the place, but soon enough they were back to hockey, and back to the game, or more precisely right after the game. Shane watched with some horror as he saw a version of himself he barely recognized hanging on Ilya’s neck and quite clearly beg for his attention while a mushy pop song played over the tiny speakers of the phone. He felt his cheeks heat up. Ilya put an arm around him and brought him against his chest to look over his shoulder.

“I look insane.”

“You do,” Ilya provided unhelpfully. “I usually have to do so much work to get you to that state. If I knew I just needed pills I would have gained so much time.”

Shane pinched him, but it only made Ilya laugh. He went to scroll again but Ilya stopped him.

“Wait I have to share it.”

“What?” he exclaimed in outrage, trying to keep the phone away from Ilya. “No you don’t. I think enough people have seen it.”

“No, never enough. It’s proof you love me, it’s good, people never believe it.”

It was unfortunately weirdly true, how many people still didn’t believe in their story. Shane privately thought that most people just couldn’t comprehend the feelings that he and Ilya shared. Speaking of the devil, he was now kissing down his neck to try and make him drop the phone. Shane let him go on for a second before pretending to let go. Ilya sat up with a victorious laugh. He started to tap on his phone but suddenly stopped himself and looked back at Shane, who was now lounging on the couch, his head on the armchair.

“You’re okay with it, yes? If I repost?”

“Yeah, it’s fine. Like you said, people already saw all of it.”

“I’m sorry I touched you so much,” Ilya said, frowning at the screen.

“I’m not. I needed it. Thank you for stopping it before I climbed you like a tree.”

“Yes, that they aren’t allowed to see,” Ilya nodded as he finished what he wanted to do and put the phone down. “It was difficult, because you really wanted me, but I know how to resist you,” he said with a smug smile.

Shane let his head fall to the side, looked at him through lidded eyes and opened his thighs. “No, you don’t.”

Ilya let his eyes roam over him and... “Okay, I don’t,” he relented before crawling to his rightful place between Shane’s legs, careful not to let any of his weight rest on him, and put a hand under his shirt as he came up to kiss him. It was languid, soft and slow, kissing just for the sake of it, because it was their favorite thing to do together, like they had all the time in the world. Which reminded Shane that they didn’t.

“Fuck, what time did you say it was? When do we have to leave?”

“No time, no leaving, no nothing,” Ilya answered unhelpfully and went right back to kissing Shane, but he broke the kiss again.

“No, Ilya, wait, the movie.”

“Who cares about a stupid movie?”

“Uh, you? You’ve been talking my ears off about this premiere ever since we were invited,” Shane scoffed.

“We’re not going.”

“Yes, we are.”

“I don’t want to go anymore,” Ilya said against Shane’s cheek, who felt the rumble of his husband’s voice against his chest.

“Okay, so that’s a lie,” Shane laughed, pushing a hand in Ilya’s curls. “You said you wanted us to go out and ‘show that Hollander is very taken’,” he said in a terrible imitation of Ilya’s accent.

“I changed my mind.”

“No, you’re right, we deserve to go, and have fun, and show the whole world how in love we are.”

“We already did. We do all the time, is not our fault they don’t know how to look.”

“But you hated being a secret. You deserve better than being stuck here all day.”

“Not a secret doesn’t mean we have to show everything. No one cares about what the others are doing with their wives. I deserve to have you back in good health and you deserve to rest so your body doesn’t hurt anymore.”

“I’m barely hurt,” Shane insisted, but Ilya poked his rib, right on a bruise like he had them memorized, and Shane yelped. “Fuck you. I can deal with that anyway.”

“I can’t. I want to stay here. Do you want to get into a tux and go get your picture taken and having to stand for hours with a cocktail, going around to say that you liked the movie when you didn’t?”

Shane sighed. “Not really.”

“Good, me neither. I want you all to myself all day. Fuck everyone else.”

“Well,” Shane started, a smile blooming on his face. “And here I was hoping you would only fuck me.”

“Oh, you got jokes Hollander, that’s cute.”

He leaned down again and swallowed Shane’s giggles with his lips. This time, Shane didn’t stop him for a long while, savoring the warmth and comfort of a quiet day made just for the two of them. Fuck everyone else.

End Notes

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