

Walk Away

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Walk Away

by [multifaulty \(Ravenclaws_owl\)](#)

Summary

Shane dialed. It rang... and rang... and rang again. With each passing ring the pit gnawing its way through Shane's stomach was growing. Just as he felt like it was about to stop ringing and go to voicemail, it picked up. Shane breathed out a sigh of relief.

“Thank God, I was getting worried. Where are you?”

There was an unsettling beat of silence before someone answered, “Hollander?”

It was not Ilya’s voice. Shane’s stomach dropped. He did his best to keep his voice steady as he answered. “Yeah? Uh, who is this? Can you give Ilya back his phone please?”

Another beat of silence.

“Hollander... God, um, something’s happened-”

After the events of The Long Game, Shane and Ilya play their first All-Star Weekend. Things are going great, until they go truly and horribly sideways. Ilya is left hospitalized following an attack off the ice, and Shane is left to pick up the pieces and wonder why.

Notes

Hello everyone! I, like so many of you, have been possessed by a Canadian Tv Show about gay hockey players. I demolished the first 3 episodes and read Game Changer, Heated Rivalry, and The Long Game all in the span of 5 days. And now these gay hockey players won't leave me alone.

This work takes place after the events of Heated Rivalry the Long Game and will contain spoilers for both books, so be aware.

Trigger warning this first chapter contains homophobic slurs, a hate crime, and a brief reference to sexual assault so please protect yourselves accordingly.

Chapter 1: The Bar

Chapter Notes

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

NHL All-Star Weekend - Toronto

Ilya had been surprised when he'd received an invite to the NHL All-Star Weekend, he'd been even more surprised when Shane had received one too, for the same team. Not that they didn't both deserve it, they were still the best in the league much to Commissioner Crowell's dismay. Ilya had honestly figured that neither he or Shane would ever be returning to the All-Star weekend, they were a "distraction" after all. But clearly something had forced Crowell's hand or maybe it would be more distracting for them not to be there.

It had been a great weekend. Shane had signed them up for the shot-accuracy skills competition, which Ilya had won, of course. Shane had mumbled something about a fluke, and Ilya responded as tactfully as always. He couldn't help it, he loved to see his husband all worked up and angry when Ilya won.

Dallas Kent had also been in the shot-accuracy competition. After getting smoked by both Ilya and Shane, he'd skated past where they were sitting on the bench and spat out a few slurs mixed with other insults. Ilya hadn't heard most of it, but he'd gotten the gist. He'd stood to give Kent a piece of his mind, before Shane grabbed his wrist and shook his head. Ilya had sighed and sat down, knowing his husband was right.

But as it turned out Ilya didn't need to do anything at all, because after overhearing Kent, Cliff Marlow had jumped off his spot on the bench, chased Kent down and slammed him into the boards. Marley had been pulled off of Kent before he could do any actual damage, and since they weren't actually playing the ref had just given a stern warning and sent him back to the bench. Cliff smirked and shrugged at them as he sat back down, to which Ilya responded with a nod.

Ilya was grateful for a lot of things when it came to Cliff Marlow. They'd been good friends when Ilya had played for Boston, in fact Marley had probably been his best friend. They'd lost touch when Ilya had moved up to Ottawa, but were still friendly enough when they saw each other on the ice. At the last few All-Star Weekends they'd seen each other in between Ilya's time with Shane. When he and Shane had first been outed, Ilya wasn't sure how Marley would react. He'd always made fun of Ilya for being a "ladies man", and they'd often gone out to pick up women together. Ilya hadn't thought that Marley would be a bigot, but he'd figured there might be some distance between them now.

It had been a nice surprise when Cliff had approached him at the start of the weekend and invited him out, like he always did. He'd even made a comment that he liked that Ilya was married now, as it was "less competition" and Ilya could just focus on being his wingman.

So now Ilya found himself sitting in some packed Toronto bar after the last day of competition, pleasantly buzzed and watching as Cliff was trying to charm a woman into

dancing with him. His phone buzzed and he glanced down. It was Shane.

How much longer? I miss you. The text read.

Ilya smirked. Shane hadn't come out with them, he'd decided to have a quiet night in to read his book and rest from the weekend. Like a grandma. Shane also didn't drink on his diet, and he didn't really know Cliff, so he wasn't missing out on much. Ilya had almost stayed at the hotel with him, but Shane had been insistent that he get some time out with Cliff. But now it seemed that Shane was somewhat regretting his decision. Ilya smirked to himself.

I will leave now. You could have come, not my fault you are old and boring. Ilya responded, setting his phone back down on the bar.

Ilya wished he could see Shane's frown right now, it was probably very cute. If he was being honest, he was tired too. He was having a good time with Marley, but he wanted to get back to his bed, to his husband. Shane seemed to be infecting him with old and boring. He stood up from his stool and wandered over to Cliff, who had his eye on a new girl out on the dance floor. Ilya leaned in close so he could be heard over the music.

"I am going for a smoke and then I am going back," Ilya nearly yelled.

Cliff's face morphed into mock offense, "C'mon Roz, the night is young, we're just getting started."

It was well past midnight. Ilya was tired. He had no idea how Cliff was still able to drink and party like this after all these years.

"My boring husband is waiting for me to come tuck him into bed," Ilya smiled fondly.

Cliff just sighed dramatically. "Yeah, yeah, have fun being all domestic and shit," Cliff smiled. "Hey man, if I don't see you tomorrow, it was really good to see you this weekend. Don't be a stranger next time you're in Boston."

"Yes, it was good to see you too, Marley."

With that Cliff grabbed Ilya's hand and pulled him into a one-armed hug. The gesture meant more to Ilya than he could ever probably say. This whole weekend had been better than he'd thought. They'd gotten some stares and a little bit of hostility from some of the other players, but overall everyone had been... respectful. He knew Shane was struggling a bit more with seeing some of his former teammates, but Ilya knew he'd still had a good time.

Ilya took one of the side exits, stepping out into the alley next to the bar. He bit back a curse as a cold wind swept down the alley. He fumbled for the box of cigarettes in his pocket, and pulled one out placing it between his lips. He'd had a long weekend and he'd been craving one almost the entire time. But as he sucked on his unlit cigarette and fumbled for his lighter, he couldn't help but hear Shane's voice in his head talking about lung cancer and sounding disappointed when he smelled it on him. With a big sigh Ilya dramatically pushed the unlit cigarette back into the box, and tucked it back into his pocket.

“I hope you are proud, Hollander,” Ilya murmured, rolling his eyes.

As Ilya started down toward the main street he heard the door open behind him, the inside music getting louder for just a moment, before dulling once more. Probably just other smokers stepping out.

“Rozanov!” a voice called out from behind him.

Ilya steeled himself as he turned to look, the voice hadn’t sounded particularly inviting. Dallas Kent was standing in the alley behind him. Ilya just scoffed and turned to keep walking, he wasn’t in the mood for whatever this was.

“Hey I’m fucking talking to you, faggot.”

Ilya stopped cold, but didn’t turn. He really should keep walking, just ignore it, they were leaving tomorrow anyway. Against Shane’s voice in his head, Ilya looked back at Kent. The other man had taken a few steps forward, almost within reach of Ilya. It was clear even from a brief glance that the man was drunk. They locked eyes and just stared silently for a moment.

“What is it you want, Kent?” Ilya said coolly.

Kent leered like a predator that had cornered its prey.

“I want you and your other fucking queers to leave the fucking league.”

Ilya clenched his jaw breathing deeply, before smirking, “Aw, but then who would be around to make you a loser, Kent? Not that you need any help.”

Shane’s voice was in Ilya’s head now, screaming at him to just turn around and go home. He knew he shouldn’t be— what’s the word Shane had used? Antagonizing— He knew he shouldn’t be antagonizing Kent right now, but he couldn’t help it. Not when Kent was so thoroughly pissing him off. It looked like the feeling was mutual given the way the other man’s jaw was clenched.

“Leave. Nobody wants you here, it’s disgusting. All this new-age bullshit. What kind of man takes it up the ass? Fucking sick in the head perverts, all of you,” Kent sneered.

Ilya just scoffed. He had thought Kent actually might have something to say, but it turns out this idiot had really come all the way outside just to ramble at Ilya about nothing at all.

“Well maybe since you asked so nicely, Kent,” Ilya deadpanned, rolling his eyes. He really should turn and leave but couldn’t resist one final jab. “But you should try being a homo sometime, yeah? Big strong men, is fun. Oh, but wait, I forgot you only fuck people who can’t fight back.”

Ilya’s skin was crawling with anger, and he really didn’t want to hear what the stupid homophobe had to say next. He knew he had way more to lose by laying hands on Kent, as much as he may want to. He thought of Shane waiting for him at home, probably already worried even though Ilya was hardly even late yet. God, he could only imagine the

disappointment on Shane's face if he found out Ilya had gotten into a fight with an idiot Toronto player. He decided to make Shane proud tonight, because he turned on his heel and began walking out of the alley. Away from Kent.

Distantly he heard the other man rambling on behind him, probably throwing around a few more slurs and stamping his foot like an overgrown toddler. Ilya didn't care, he was thinking of Shane and all the things they were going to do when they got back home to Ottawa. He was thinking about Shane when suddenly a hand wrenched Ilya's shoulder back and a fist collided with his face.

He didn't have time to react. It was Shane he thought of as he crumpled to the cold concrete of the alley. Ilya's body wouldn't cooperate as he tried to protect himself. He thought of Shane as another blow came flying down into his cheek. And as the lights above him began to swirl and fade, Ilya worried not for himself, but for his husband sitting alone in a hotel room waiting for him to come back.

Chapter End Notes

Ugh thank you so much for reading!!! This first chapter is pretty short, but the next one is kind of a doozy.

The idea for this fic sprung from my mind like Athena from the crack in Zeus's skull, fully formed and unable to be ignored. So, I have spent every precious spare moment of mine for the past 2 days writing it out. It is fully written, but I will be posting the chapters over the next few days to give me some time to go back and edit.

Just some general notes as well:

I have not read Role Model yet, I intend to, but if there are events in here that do not align with that I apologize.

I am going to be taking a lot of liberties with the character of Cliff Marlow (Marleau in the show), as he is not mentioned that much in the book but seems to be taking on a slightly larger role in the show.

But otherwise, thanks for reading the fic that could not leave me alone until after finals week, I really should have been studying, but instead I am here. I have some WIPs for some other fandoms right now that I am hoping to give some more attention over winter break once I actually have the chance to sit down and think about them. Know that I read and appreciate every single comment and kudos I receive! Thanks again!

Chapter 2: The Call

Chapter Notes

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

Shane was starting to worry. Not that he didn't always worry just a little bit about everything. Ilya had texted that he was leaving the bar over 20 minutes ago. It was a four minute walk. Shane knew because he'd checked the route in both Apple and Google maps. He was trying to get himself to calm down.

Maybe Ilya just ended up talking to Cliff a little longer, maybe he was just walking extra slow, maybe he got a little turned around. There were a bunch of scenarios that Shane could come up with that weren't cause for worry, but he couldn't make himself believe any of them. He'd call Ilya, and his husband would pick up the phone and tell him to stop worrying and that he'd wanted a late night snack from the vending machines and he was already in the elevator on the way up.

Shane dialed. It rang... and rang... and rang again. With each passing ring the pit gnawing its way through Shane's stomach was growing. Just as he felt like it was about to stop ringing and go to voicemail, it picked up. Shane breathed out a sigh of relief.

"Thank God, I was getting worried. Where are you?"

There was an unsettling beat of silence before someone answered, "Hollander?"

It was not Ilya's voice. Shane's stomach dropped. He did his best to keep his voice steady as he answered. "Uh, yeah? Who is this? Can you give Ilya back his phone please?"

Another beat of silence.

"Hollander... God, um, something's happened-"

Shane was barely able to hear the rest of the call as he felt the floor fall out from underneath him.

Shane's memory was a little blurred. He was sitting in a waiting room chair with his knees tucked up to his chest, staring blankly at the nurses station waiting for any news at all. After Cliff Marlow had talked to him through Ilya's phone, Shane had somehow managed to stumble over to Hayden's room and pound on the door. Hayden had come out looking pissed and half asleep, but had almost immediately snapped into action after seeing the look on Shane's face.

Then Shane was climbing into the back of a car. Then Hayden was lightly shaking his elbow and telling him to call his parents. So Shane called his mom, who picked up surprisingly quickly for the dead of night. He told her what he knew, which was almost nothing, and she

told him they were on their way. And now Shane was here, sitting in a terribly uncomfortable chair for God knows how long.

He was sitting on the chair against the wall closest to the hallway where patients were being taken in and out, where doctors would come from to give updates. Hayden sat in the chair next to him, doing something on his phone. Cliff Marlow was sitting across from them, but Shane couldn't look at him right now. Not because he was angry, but because Marlow had blood on his sleeves. Ilya's blood. It wasn't a lot of blood, but it was enough to make Shane's stomach churn just looking at it.

If anything, Shane was grateful to Marlow. Ilya had left his phone at the bar, and Cliff had found it, rushed out to try to catch him before he left. But in the alley he found Ilya. On the ground. Beaten and unconscious. Shane was pretty sure he'd asked Marlow what happened more than three separate times, but his brain was refusing to process any of it. Shane also just kept asking the poor Boston player how bad it was.

By the fourth or fifth time Shane had asked, Marlow just fixed him with a sad smile and replied, "I really don't know, I'm sorry. But Roz is one tough motherfucker, and you probably know that better than anyone Hollander."

Shane did know that, and he appreciated Marlow for saying it. It seemed the large defenseman was smarter and kinder than Shane had ever given him credit for. But right now Shane was really tired of his husband having to be so tough all the time.

Marlow had also said he'd seen a man fleeing the alley when he got out there. Hayden asked if he'd gotten a good look at the attacker. Cliff just clenched his jaw and said the police would handle it, and they should worry about Rozanov right now. A small part of Shane worried that Marlow had chased the attacker down and killed him, and another small part of Shane secretly hoped that he had.

There were other hockey players waiting too, word had gotten out quickly. Shane knew JJ was here and he was pretty sure Luca Haas was too. There were at least 5 or 6 others waiting too, but Shane hadn't exactly been in a place to socialize and welcome them all. No one had tried to come up and talk to him either, or maybe they had and Hayden had shooed them off, he didn't know but he was glad either way.

"Shane?" A voice called to him from the hospital entrance.

Shane snapped his head up, his mom and dad were walking toward him. Suddenly Shane was on his feet clinging to his parents. For the first time that night tears welled up in his eyes. He buried his face between them as they held him. Then they were guiding him back to a chair. They sat on either side of him, each resting a hand on his back.

"Any updates?" His dad asked softly.

Shane just shook his head staring at the floor.

"Do you know any more about what happened?" Yuna asked evenly.

“I- um...” Shane swallowed trying and failing to get his mouth to cooperate.

“Excuse me, uh, I can probably help,” a voice came from across the aisle.

Shane looked up at Marlow, and just nodded. He saw his mom stiffen ever so slightly at the sight of Cliff Marlow, still remembering the time the man had laid Shane out cold on the ice. But as Cliff started telling them what he knew, she relaxed and nodded along, asking a few follow-up questions here and there.

“Well, thank you Cliff, for everything,” Yuna said gently, after Cliff finished talking.

The other man exhaled, “I should’ve...” But he trailed off, just shaking his head. Shane could tell Cliff was beating himself up about it, blaming himself, but there was nothing he could have done. No one blamed him.

If anything it was Shane’s fault. Ilya wasn’t even going to go out, but Shane had insisted. His husband needed a life and friends outside of Ottawa and Shane, so he’d been happy when Marlow had invited Ilya. If Shane hadn’t been so insistent, they would be in bed right now, fast asleep, safe. A voice shattered through Shane’s guilt spiral.

“Family of Ilya Rozanov?” a woman called.

Shane was on his feet in an instant, heart pounding in his ears as he stared at the doctor in front of him. His parents also stood on either side.

“Yes, I’m his husband,” Shane breathed.

The doctor looked at him, her expression agonizingly neutral. She nodded and looked down at the chart in her hands. “Your husband sustained trauma to the face and head, resulting in lacerations to his face, a complex zygomatic facial fracture, and a severe concussion, but as of right now he is recovering in his room. At this time I believe he is on track to make a full recovery, but we will know more once he is up and coherent. There is the possibility for some long-term side effects as he recovers, such as headaches, memory loss... minimal displacement...no current need for surgery...”

The doctor's voice was fading in and out as Shane sank back down into his chair and drew in his first full breath in what was probably hours. He knew he should probably listen to whatever else the doctor was saying, but he couldn’t focus right now. Ilya should be ok. He would recover. He had to.

Shane was grateful that his parents were both still listening to whatever was being said. They could fill him in after. The room had gone quiet, his parents and the doctor were looking at him, they’d probably asked him a question or something, but Shane only had one thing on his mind.

“Can I- um, can I see him, please?”

The doctor smiled gently, “yes, but he’s resting now. He’s been in and out of consciousness since we brought him in. With the concussion and the combination of painkillers he’s on, he’s

almost entirely unconscious. I can't say for sure when he'll be alert again, but optimistically it should be within the next 12 hours."

Shane nodded, standing to follow her. "Can my parents come?"

The doctor nodded, then glanced around the room. Shane followed her gaze. The small waiting room was nearly filled with hockey players. They were all just staring solemnly. The doctor raised her voice a little, "At this time it can only be immediate family, but visiting hours will start again at 8:00."

A few of the players nodded, and stood to stretch. Hayden walked over to Shane and his family.

"I'm gonna head to the hotel for a bit, I'll grab you some clothes and food, and I'll be back at 8, alright? Please text if you guys need anything at all," Hayden gently clapped Shane on the shoulder.

Shane wanted to smile and say thank you, but all he could do was nod. Luckily his mom was there.

"Thank you, Hayden, we'll let you know," Yuna smiled.

Hayden gave a stiff smile and walked towards the door. Shane saw Marlow still glued to his chair, staring at the floor. God, Shane knew the feeling. He should probably say something, get Marlow to take a break, but there was only one thing on Shane's mind right now. He turned back to the doctor who was waiting patiently.

"Ready?" She asked.

No. Not at all. Shane's mind replied.

Shane was not religious, but he decided if there was a hell it could not be worse than this. He wanted to feel angry or scared or sad, but nothingness filled his chest instead. He was empty. The man in the hospital bed was so far removed from the man Shane loved.

This Ilya was pale, unmoving, and devoid of sunshine and joy. He was sitting here waiting for Ilya to sit up, smirk stupidly, and make some asshole joke or jab about how awful Shane looked right now. And Shane would pretend to be mad, but secretly be more relieved than he'd ever felt in his life. Instead Ilya just lay there breathing steadily, hooked up to different kinds of IVs, with the entire left side of his beautiful face stitched and swollen beyond recognition.

There were exactly three things keeping Shane tethered to his body right now. The steady beep of Ilya's heart rate monitor, his mom's hand rubbing circles over his back, and his fingers awkwardly interlaced with his husband's. Someone knocked quietly at the door, Shane glanced up to see a nurse holding a large clear plastic bag. It was the stuff Ilya had come in with. His dad stood quickly to pick it up and put it into the cabinet out of Shane's

line of sight. But Shane had already seen the bloody shirt pressed against the bottom of the bag. Shane looked back at where his hand was holding Ilya's, he could hear his dad rustling through the bag.

His dad walked over and held a smaller bag out to Shane. Inside was Ilya's chain with his crucifix and wedding band still attached. Shane felt something almost like relief at the sight. He reluctantly uncurled his hand from Ilya's and took the bag and smiled at his dad, who smiled back.

Shane opened the bag and carefully poured the contents out into his hand, running his thumb over the ring and crucifix. Giving the items a small kiss, he stood up and very slowly threaded the chain behind Ilya's neck, doing his best not to disturb him. Shane clasped the chain and laid the ring and crucifix down in the center of Ilya's chest, their rightful place. He ran his hand gently over Ilya's chest and looked back up to his husband's face. Shane was probably imagining it, but Ilya's face looked more at peace than it had before.

Shane leaned up and pressed a whisper of a kiss to Ilya's un-bruised cheek.

"Ya tebya lyublyu," he whispered into Ilya's ear as he sat back down. *I love you.* God there was so much more that Shane wanted to say, but right now it was all he could manage.

Ilya shifted, and Shane was on his feet again in an instant. Distantly Shane had some stupid thought about true love's kiss and sleeping beauty but he quickly pushed that away. Ilya groaned and moved his head, barely cracking his unswollen eye, before it fell shut again. Shane set a hand on Ilya's shoulder.

"Ilya?" He asked gently.

Ilya groaned again and shifted his head in Shane's direction, but didn't open his eyes and went still once more. Shane sighed relaxing back into his chair, he knew it was probably a good sign that Ilya was moving, but that didn't save him from the disappointment that still crept in. Then Ilya opened his mouth and started muttering very faintly. The first few words were completely unintelligible, but they slowly got clearer. It was definitely Russian, but between the mumbled syllables and Shane's own lagging brain he couldn't make sense of it. Ilya went on for what felt like a long time, his words muffled and lagging at times, Shane thought he'd caught his own name at one point but he honestly couldn't be sure. He moved his hand up, and carded his fingers gently through Ilya's hair, who sighed and leaned into it.

Then Ilya spoke, clearer than anything before, *"ya skuchala po tebe, mama."*

I missed you, mama.

Shane froze. *Oh.* Ilya sighed and closed his mouth, his breathing evening out once more. And Shane couldn't move. He just stared at his husband. The weight of all the unfairness in Ilya's life came crashing down upon Shane's shoulders. Nothing had ever been fair for Ilya. Even during the happiest times of their lives, Ilya still could not catch a break. Shane wanted to throw something, to hit something, to scream until his lungs gave out. But mostly Shane just wanted his husband back.

“Shane, sweetheart, you need to breathe,” his mom’s hand was rubbing circles on his back again.

Shane took a shaky breath in, and let it out. There were tears flowing freely from his eyes now. He clutched Ilya’s hand once more and bowed down to place his forehead on top of their interlaced fingers. Then Shane was sobbing. Distantly he could hear his mom speaking softly into his ear, his dad had come over and placed a hand on his back as well now. And now for the first time since this had all started, Shane fell apart completely.

Shane didn’t remember falling asleep, but he woke up lying with his head down on Ilya’s bed, their fingers still interlaced. Someone, probably his mom, had placed a blanket around Shane’s shoulders. He sat up, seeing through the window that the sun had just risen. He didn’t feel rested at all, and now he was stiff and sore from the awkward angle at which he had slept. Shane very gently unlaced his fingers from Ilya’s and stretched in his chair, before standing stretching. His eyes lingered on Ilya, who still wasn’t awake, but seemed to be a bit less pale. Shane was feeling... better. There was still a crushing sadness and anxiety gripping his heart, but he felt less empty, and more optimistic. The shitty sleep seemed to have helped just enough.

He tore his eyes away from the bed and a quick glance told him his father had fallen asleep on the uncomfortable looking couch on the opposite side of the bed. He turned to see his mother in one of the chairs behind him, she was reading a newspaper. She put it down and smiled at him.

“Good morning,” was all she said.

“I can’t believe I fell asleep, how long was I out?” Shane groaned. *What if something had happened?*

“Don’t be hard on yourself, Shane, you were exhausted. You were only asleep for about 2 hours anyway. It’s already been a long weekend and now this. You were still here for him. You would have been here if anything had changed.” His mom always knew exactly what to say, like she could read his mind. Shane sighed. She was usually right too.

“Did you get any rest, mom?” He asked.

“A little here and there, your father and I took turns. But don’t you worry about me, alright? You have enough going on.”

Shane nodded, giving her his best smile.

His mom continued, “Hayden stuck his head in a little while ago, but we decided you should keep resting. Visiting hours have started, and I’m guessing he’s not the only one waiting out in that lobby. Do you want me to go get some of them?”

Shane glanced back toward the bed. Ilya hated being perceived as weak, and probably wouldn’t want his teammates to see him like this. Or maybe Ilya would be moved by their

support. Shane wasn't sure. But he knew that the guys out there were probably losing their minds like he had been.

"No, it's ok, Mom. I'll go get 'em," Shane sighed.

His mom gave him a smile, "good, I was going to force you to go for a walk or something soon anyway."

Shane slowly moved towards the door, but he cast one long look back at Ilya. From this angle Shane couldn't see as much of the left side of Ilya's face. Shane could almost pretend he was just sleeping peacefully, not in a concussion and drug induced stupor from being beaten in an alley. Anxiety began to rear up inside Shane, he couldn't leave the room. What if something happened while he was gone? What if Ilya woke up and Shane wasn't there? He took a small step back in, about to make a beeline for Ilya's hand once more.

His mom sighed loudly, looking at him. "Shane, go. He'll be fine, nothing's going to happen in the two minutes that you're gone. And somehow if it does, your father and I are here and we will find you right away, ok?"

His mom was right. As always. He just needed to step out for a minute. He sent a silent apologetic glance at Ilya, then tore his eyes away and headed into the hallway. It was nice to step out for a moment. The walls of the hospital room had started making him claustrophobic. The waiting room wasn't very far away, and when he got there he was surprised to see there were still quite a few hockey players taking up seats. Hayden saw him almost immediately and walked over to Shane.

"Is everything ok?" Hayden frowned.

"Oh, yeah it's fine, I just needed to step out of that room for a moment. And it's visiting hours now, so..." Shane trailed off, unsure of what to say.

"Alright, well, I brought you clothes and some food I'm pretty sure you can eat." Hayden held up one of Shane's backpacks.

Shane nodded, and stepped closer to Hayden, pulling him into a hug. "Thanks man, for everything."

Hayden was stiff at first, but relaxed, giving Shane a pat on the back before stepping back. "Of course man."

After a moment, Shane stepped back and glanced over Hayden's shoulder.

"Ok, uh, I think we can only have like two visitors at a time, the room is cramped as is, so... you and who else?" Shane was thinking out loud more than he was asking Hayden.

Shane looked closer at the group of people waiting. Cliff was staring at them, dark circles under his eyes and wearing the same clothes from the night before. Shane didn't even glance at who else was there, he knew that Cliff needed to see Ilya. If not solely for the fact that he might go home and rest after.

“Marlow,” Shane gestured for the man to join them.

Cliff’s shoulders sagged in relief as he walked over. He gave Shane a strained smile, and the three men headed down the hallway. It was silken at first between the three of them, then Cliff spoke quietly.

“How is he?”

Shane’s heart clenched at the tone. He then realized that the people in the waiting room probably hadn’t gotten any updates since the last one. Not that much had changed, but Shane should have come out and told them... something. He couldn’t imagine the agony of just sitting in that room and waiting more hours.

“He’s ok, all things considered. He’s still out of it from all the drugs and stuff, but the nurse said he probably wasn’t in a lot of pain. His face is... not good, but he won’t need surgery or anything,” Shane did his best to keep his voice steady, like he was talking about the weather, not his husband’s terrible injuries. “I’m sorry, I should’ve come and given an update or something, I just...” He looked over at Cliff.

Cliff shook his head, “It’s fine Hollander, really. You were a little preoccupied. I should’ve gone back to the hotel or something I just... I don’t know, I just couldn’t get myself to leave,” Cliff sighed deeply. “I should’ve done a lot of things.”

Shane knew that Cliff blamed himself, and he also knew there wasn’t a lot he could say to change that. “Marlow, this isn’t your fault.” *It’s mine.*

“I should’ve just left with him, it was already late and to be honest I wasn’t really having a lot of luck,” Cliff laughed lightly.

Another beat of silence passed as Shane tried to think of something to say. He was fighting a losing battle to change Marlow’s mind. “You couldn’t have known this would happen.”

Marlow stared at Shane intently, his eyes scanning for something in Shane’s face. It took all of Shane’s will power not to look away.

Finally Marlow blinked and looked back to the hallway, “You couldn’t have known either.”

Shane looked back at the hallway, too. He found himself unexpectedly grateful for Cliff Marlow once again.

They reached the room and Shane was quick to go back inside, sitting right back down in the chair next to Ilya’s bed. He couldn’t ignore the relief that was running through him, nothing had happened in the short time he’d been away. He stared at Ilya’s face, smiling softly as he picked up his hand again. God, this was a nightmare.

“Hello Hayden. Cliff,” Shane heard his mother say behind him.

“Hey, Mrs. Hollander,” Hayden responded.

Cliff was silent. Shane glanced back toward the door. The large defenseman was still standing in the doorway just staring. When he caught Shane’s gaze, he took a deep breath and finally

stepped into the room. He walked over to the side of the bed alongside Shane.

“Shit, Roz,” Cliff said quietly.

The air in the room was heavy for a long moment. Then Shane’s mom stood and dragged a chair to the bedside near Shane’s.

“Cliff, have a seat,” She said softly. Yuna Hollander always had a solution.

Cliff just nodded and sat down slowly. Shane glanced at his mom, giving her a small smile, which she returned as she leaned back in her own chair once more. The room fell back into silence once again broken only by the beeping of the heart monitor. Shane just stared at Ilya, wondering if he could just will him to wake up with his mind.

Shane was feeling... better. After some time had passed, Cliff stood up and decided to go back to the hotel for some rest. He promised to check back in later. After Cliff left, Shane finally stood and picked up the bag Hayden had brought for him. He stepped into the attached bathroom. He was surprised to find a bunch of things besides the clothes in the bag, like a toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, his glasses, and his book, alongside a bunch of the snacks that Shane had in the hotel room. He felt an overwhelming appreciation for Hayden at that moment.

After taking some time to refresh himself he stepped back into the room. He looked at where Hayden was sitting on the couch across from his father and gave him a small smile, “Thanks man.”

Hayden smirked sheepishly and rubbed the back of his neck, “I uh, called Jackie and she told me what you’d probably want. She sends her love by the way.”

“Well, thank her too,” Shane replied.

He walked back over to his chair, pressing a quick kiss to Ilya’s hair before he sat down again. Ilya had been stirring a bit more as time went on, and Shane was choosing to believe it was a good sign. Shane hadn’t eaten since dinner the night before, and had been feeling downright nauseous for a good amount of the time he’d spent here, but he finally felt up to eating something. He pulled out one of the snacks Hayden had brought, some healthy all-natural protein bar that Shane couldn’t even pretend didn’t test like cardboard. He found himself almost missing Ilya’s usual annoying jabs at Shane’s diet. He could practically hear it in his head.

Hollander, when you have finished with that I will find you some horse hay for dessert, yeah?

Shane rolled his eyes and smirked at the thought. He opened the bar, and tried not to think about how good a Snickers would taste right now. He managed to choke the bar down anyway.

A knock on the doorframe startled Shane from his thoughts. He turned, expecting another visitor. But instead, two police officers stood just outside the door. He froze. One of the officers, a tall man looking to be in his late forties, stepped into the room just slightly.

“Are you the family of Ilya Rozanov?” The man asked. The officer’s demeanor was not stern or unkind, but neutral in a way that still set Shane on edge.

Shane swallowed dryly and responded, “Yes, I’m his husband... um, he’s not awake yet, if you have questions or something-”

The officer gently held up his hand, and Shane trailed off.

“We understand, and we’re not here to talk to him just yet. When he wakes up any information he may remember could be helpful, but at this point we’re looking at a pretty open and shut case. We’re here to inform you, as the family, of the progress of our investigation, if you want that at this time.”

Shane’s mind was struggling through what the officer was saying. *Open and shut? Was that good or bad?* He must have taken too long to respond because suddenly his mom was standing and shaking the officers’ hands.

“Yes, that would be much appreciated, please come in. I’m Ilya’s mother-in-law Yuna, this is Shane, that’s my husband David, and our friend Hayden.”

Hayden shifted uncomfortably and stood, “I’m gonna step out, give you all some privacy. I’ll be back a little later.” Hayden scanned the room and his eyes landed on Shane, giving him a curt nod.

Shane returned the nod, and watched as Hayden stepped around the officers and disappeared into the hallway. The officer who hadn’t spoken, a younger looking man, closed the door softly behind him. The older officer spoke once more.

“Thank you ma’am. I’m Officer Cook, this is Officer Martin, we’re with the Toronto Police Service, and we’re handling Mr. Rozanov’s case,” Officer Cook reached into his pocket and pulled out a small notepad, glancing down at what was written. “As you likely know, we were dispatched to the scene of an assault at approximately 1:05 this morning. We arrived on scene to find one man, Mr. Rozanov, unconscious and receiving medical attention. We conducted a brief interview with Mr. Cliff Marlow who had discovered Mr. Rozanov. Mr. Marlow informed us that he had seen another man flee the scene at the time he had entered the alley, a man he believed to be Dallas Kent.”

Shane’s blood ran cold, but he took a deep breath and forced himself to focus as Officer Cook continued. “After Mr. Rozanov was transported by EMS, we did a preliminary survey of the scene, and found a security camera belonging to the bar adjacent to the alleyway. We were able to obtain and review the footage and get a tentative positive identification on Dallas Kent as the assailant. Based on the video evidence of the altercation, we have charged Mr. Kent with Aggravated Assault and were able to locate him at his home and detain him. He is currently being held in the jail, awaiting questioning upon counsel with his attorney.”

Officer Cook paused, glancing between everyone in the room. Shane's brain was working overtime as he tried to process everything that had been said. *Dallas fucking Kent*. Shane hadn't really spent time speculating about who or what could have happened, he'd been so wrought with emotion. But now his mind was spinning trying to put all the pieces together. It made sense in a fucked up kind of way, Kent was a hot-headed bigot who had just lost to Shane and Ilya in the skills competition, but this was a pretty extreme form of revenge.

Officer Cook inhaled loudly and looked directly at Shane as he continued, "If you are willing, Mr. Hollander, there is something that you could do for the investigation."

"What is it?" Shane asked. He would do anything to help, to see that Dallas Kent never saw the light of the sun ever again.

"It is our understanding that you are personally familiar with Dallas Kent, and could provide a positive identification of the suspect based on the surveillance video, on behalf of your spouse as his next of kin. Now this would require you to watch video evidence of your husband's attack, which could be upsetting and disturbing. We have other ways of obtaining positive identification if you would not be comfortable with this."

Shane thought for a long moment, looking back to Ilya, weighing the proposal in his mind. He tried to reason with himself, he had seen plenty of fights in his life, maybe this one would be no different. He'd watch, make the identification, and they could move on. Another part of him just needed to see what happened, maybe something would actually start to make sense about this whole ordeal. He must have been quiet for a long time, because his mom finally spoke up.

"Shane, you don't have to watch it if it would be too much."

Shane made up his mind, and shook his head. "No, um," he looked at Officer Cook, "I'll do it. Do I have to go to the station or something?"

"No, we can do it right now if you're comfortable with that."

Shane nodded, relieved that he wouldn't have to leave. He looked back to Ilya, whose head was turned towards Shane, exposing the horrible purple bruising and stitches on his left cheek bone. Shane picked up Ilya's hand once again.

Shane's father rose and walked around the bed, past the officers, and came to a stop behind Shane's chair. He placed his hand on Shane's shoulder, and gave it a squeeze. His mother followed suit, rubbing his opposite shoulder.

"We're here, ok?" His father spoke softly.

Shane placed his free hand on top of his father's and gave it a squeeze, the only thanks he could muster. Officer Martin approached his chair with a tablet, and Shane's heart began to pound. Was he really gonna do this? He has to. For Ilya. For himself. He inhaled deeply. It's just another fight, and he's seen plenty of fights.

The officer flipped the tablet to be facing Shane. The picture on the screen showed an alleyway with a door on one of the buildings and a row of trashcans on the other, the camera seemed to be placed on the back wall of the alley, facing out toward the main road.

The officer looked between Shane and his parents. “Are you ready to watch?”

“Yes,” Shane lied.

The officer nodded and pressed the center of the screen. For a moment, nothing happened, the alley looked like a picture, then the side door opened and a man stepped out. Ilya. Ilya looked up and down the alleyway, as he leaned himself back against the wall. He proceeded to pull out a small box, his cigarettes. Shane wanted to be mad, in the same way he always was when Ilya smoked. But right now the only thing Shane felt was dread. Shane was then surprised when Ilya tucked the entire box back in his pocket without lighting a single cigarette. His husband then began to walk down the alley towards the street. Shane frowned. Where was the fight? Ilya was three quarters of the way out to the street when the Bar door opened again, and another man stepped out. Dallas Kent.

Kent seemed to call out behind Ilya, but the footage was silent so Shane had no way of knowing what was being said. Ilya glanced back briefly, but just continued to walk. Kent began to follow, and Shane’s pulse sped up. Kent must have said something else because suddenly Ilya stopped short. Shane didn’t want to imagine what kind of garbage Kent was spewing. In the video Ilya turned towards Kent and said something.

Shane knew whatever Ilya was saying was probably just adding gasoline to a fire. *Please, just turn back around, Ilya.* Shane mentally pleaded, as though it somehow might change the outcome. Shane watched on, waiting for one of the men to lunge or strike as they seemed to continue to exchange words. He thought back to the skills competition where he’d had to prevent Ilya from jumping Kent right there on the ice, and he braced himself for the fight.

Then, Ilya turned his back and started walking away. *He was walking away.* Shane wanted to scream. He wanted to warn Ilya somehow of what Shane now knew was coming. *Ilya, run.* Shane went rigid in his chair as he watched Kent run up behind Ilya, cock his hand back and take a cheap shot from behind. *No.* Ilya crumpled almost immediately, hitting his head on the concrete as he went. *Get up, Ilya get up, please.* Ilya seemed to try to raise his arms, but Kent was on top of him quickly, landing more blows. *It wasn’t even fair.* The side door of the bar opened once again and Kent snapped his head up to look, then got up and sprinted out of the alley. Officer Martin paused the video and moved the tablet away just as Cliff Marlow reached Ilya’s side.

Shane had prepared himself to watch a fight. That was not a fight.

His mother’s hand was shaking him, “Shane?”

He blinked back tears and looked up from the floor. The police officers were staring at him expectantly. Officer Cook spoke, probably repeating himself.

“Mr. Hollander, can you please confirm the identities of the men you saw in the footage?”

Shane swallowed the lump in his throat and forced air into his lungs, “Ilya Rozanov and Dallas Kent.”

“Thank you, sir,” Officer Cook glanced between Shane and his parents. “Thank you for your cooperation, I know it can’t have been easy. If you need anything or have any questions, please give us a call or stop by the station.” He held out a business card.

“Thank you, we will,” His mom responded, grabbing the card. Her voice was steady and polite as ever, but her fingers were clutching Shane’s shoulder like a lifeline.

Shane wanted to thank the officers, to say something, but his mind was trapped in the dim back alley of a bar. The two men stepped out of the room, leaving the door open behind them. Shane was pretty sure his mom was talking, but right now Shane couldn’t listen. He needed to... He glanced at Ilya, at the bruises and broken skin. He could hear the sound of a fist hitting skin. Yeah, Shane was gonna-

He somehow managed to hunch over the toilet before the protein bar made its horrible reappearance. He coughed again as his body tried to purge itself of... everything. There were tears running down his face and he was gasping for air. He squeezed his eyes shut, but could not escape the alley. The image of Ilya being hit from behind, crumpling to the ground. All of it. His stomach was cramping in its emptiness, at least that pain was physical, at least he knew it would go away.

His mom had come in at some point, she was holding him, pulling his hair back in her fingers. “It’s ok, breathe Shane, it’s ok,” She murmured.

But it wasn’t ok. She knew that too. Shane pulled his head up slightly and rested his forehead on the arm he had braced across the toilet.

Shane’s chest was heaving as he choked around his words. “He- he walked away, mom. He walked-” Shane couldn’t finish the sentence through the next sob that wracked him. He wanted her to understand. He needed her to understand.

His mom leaned up and pressed her head against his, she inhaled shakily. “I know sweetheart... I know...”

He walked away.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading the next chapter! I thought about breaking it apart into 2, but it didn't really flow with me that way.

I’m not quite sure how I will carry on after episode 4! Oh the horrors! (On another note, how am I supposed to study for finals when Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie are running around looking like that??)

Once again I have taken a lot of liberties with Cliff Marlow, but he's a fun tool for this fic.

I have no idea how Canadian policing works, or really any policing for that matter, but I picked the most reasonable way in my mind for Shane to watch the surveillance footage because I was really going for that unending misery and suffering angle. The next chapter will in fact end the unending misery and suffering tho.

Thanks for reading!!!

Chapter 3: Not Good

Chapter Notes

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

Fuck. Was all Ilya could think. His eyes weren't even open yet but he could feel the light beaming down through them. He groaned. His head was pounding. Where was he right now? He had gone out with Marley. He must be back in the hotel. God, he couldn't remember anything. How had he gotten back? Did he really get blackout drunk? He certainly hadn't meant to. His brain felt floaty and strange, was he still drunk?

Shane was probably pissed. Ilya would make it up to him. But only if Shane turned off that horrible incessant beeping. *Fuck.* The left side of his face was throbbing, and Ilya's entire body was stiff and sore. He shifted and groaned again. There was something awkwardly pinning his hand to the bed, it was someone else's hand. He twitched his fingers around it, it felt like Shane's hand. Why wasn't Shane in bed with him?

"Ilya?" His husband's voice flooded his ear. It hurt his head. Why was Shane being so loud?

Ilya just groaned in response. He wanted to tell Shane to quiet down but his mouth wouldn't cooperate. He inhaled deeply and tried to pry his eyes open. Only his right one cracked open and was immediately speared by the bright lights. He snapped it back shut, and groaned once more.

"Shit, um, the lights," He heard Shane say.

Why are you telling me about lights Hollander? Why are you talking so loud? Ilya wanted to ask, but his throat felt dry as paper.

"Hey, the lights are off now... if you want to try again," His husband's voice was much softer now.

Slower this time, he managed to pry his right eye open. He blinked it a few times as everything came into focus. This was not a hotel room. *Shit.* He found Shane's face not far from his own, just watching him with an expression Ilya couldn't even begin to unpack. *Not good.*

"F'ck," Ilya groaned, coughing slightly as he did.

His narrow view stayed focused on Shane, who dropped his hand and disappeared out of Ilya's line of sight for a moment. Then he returned, sitting beside Ilya once more. One of Shane's hands came up and brushed through Ilya's hair while the other held a cup and straw up to his mouth. Ilya tried to lift one of his arms, to take the cup from Shane, but they both felt like they were made of concrete. He sighed, resigning himself to drinking from the straw his husband was holding out. He forced himself to focus on Shane as he drank, trying to remember anything at all about how he'd ended up in a hospital.

The water was helping, and eventually Shane pulled it away. God, the expression on his husband's face was horrible. Shane looked utterly exhausted, staring at Ilya almost in disbelief. Ilya's heart wrenched, being on the receiving end of the look on Shane's face was unsettling. Ilya needed Shane's face to stop looking like that.

Ilya cleared his throat and tried to smile at Shane, but the left side of his face felt like it was being ripped apart, so he settled for a lopsided smirk. His voice was still rough as he spoke. "You are a very sexy nurse."

This was apparently the wrong thing to say.

Shane's expression immediately shifted into downright horror. His eyebrows creased together, in a pleading look on his face. "Ilya..." Shane's voice shook. "Do you know who I am?"

Ilya would have laughed if Shane's face hadn't been fixed in such genuine dread. Unease began to build in Ilya, he knew something bad had happened. Ilya did his best to soften his expression, but he really wasn't sure he had any control over his face.

"Of course I do, *moy lyubimyy*. You are my husband. You are Shane Hollander."

Shane just exhaled, and buried his face into Ilya's shoulder. Ilya used all of his strength to drag a hand up to lay it in Shane's hair, moving his fingers gently through it.

Ilya exhaled lightly through his nose. "Can I laugh now?"

Shane looked up at him, still resting his head on Ilya's shoulder. The frown on Shane's face made Ilya's heart soar just a little.

"It really wasn't funny," Shane muttered.

"Mmm, it was a little funny."

Shane just scoffed and rolled his eyes. "God, you're impossible..."

"But you love me."

There was a brief pause, before Shane whispered, "Yeah, I do."

Ilya's heart cracked. He continued to slowly move his fingers through Shane's hair as silence fell again. Ilya then glanced around the room for the first time, trying to power through the dizziness that flooded his head every time he moved his eye. Yuna was sitting behind Shane, watching them. When she caught Ilya's eye she smiled softly, a little sadly. Ilya hoped he was smiling back. He then dragged his gaze over to the opposite side of the bed. David was there, smiling at him with a similar expression to his wife. Ilya tried to smile at him as well.

Finally Ilya brought his gaze back down to Shane, who was looking up at him once again.

"How are you feeling?" His husband asked softly.

Like someone bashed my head into the boards 20 times. “I’ve been better,” Ilya replied. “Is anyone else...” Ilya was searching for a word just out of his reach. Luckily, Shane seemed to understand what he was asking.

“Everyone else is fine. I think Cliff is a little shaken, but no one else is hurt. Do you remember anything?”

They both knew he didn’t. Playing professional hockey meant they were both somewhat familiar with head injuries. Judging by the way his skull was splitting in half right now, Ilya’s was probably bad.

“No, just...” *What was the last thing he remembered?* “Leaving the hotel. With Marley.”

Shane nodded, then swallowed hard. “I know you probably want to know what happened, but, um, right now I’m just really glad you’re awake, so can we just-” Shane’s voice cut out and Ilya could see the tears building in his eyes..

Ilya had to blink away the tears from his own eye. He let his hand fall out of Shane’s hair, and with great effort he started to shift over in the small bed.

Shane sat up, his expression concerned. “Ilya, what are you- stop you’re going to-”

“Come here.” Ilya patted the small amount of space he’d managed to create next to him on the bed, doing his best to ignore that even the small effort winded him and his head was spinning and throbbing much harder than before.

“There’s not enough room.”

“There is plenty of room, you lay on your side. *Come here.*” Ilya patted the bed a bit more forcefully.

Shane caved almost immediately, and very slowly climbed into the bed. Even as carefully Shane was moving, every small movement was jostling Ilya’s head. He squeezed his eye shut once more in the hope that it would help with the pain. It did not. Eventually Shane stopped moving, having settled himself on his side curled beneath Ilya’s right arm. Ilya peeled his eye back open. Shane was staring up at him with his brows knit in worry, Ilya just sighed and closed the short distance to place a small kiss on top of his head. Like magic, Shane relaxed.

Ilya took a deep breath in. “I don’t need to know what happened, but what is... wrong?”

Shane nodded against his chest, still looking up at him. “Well, you have a pretty bad concussion.”

“I do feel that, yes.”

Shane scoffed, shaking his head slightly, but continued “Your cheek bone is broken. The skin needed some stitches too.”

So that’s why he couldn’t open his left eye. His whole face was broken. Ilya reached up a hand to touch his left cheek, to feel the damage done, but Shane caught his wrist right before

he reached it.

“Well don’t poke it,” Shane said, exasperated.

“Ugh, fine.” Ilya relaxed his arm, maneuvering his hand to lace his fingers in with Shane’s. He laid their hands against his chest, running his thumb over Shane’s.

Shane snorted. “Wow, smooth.”

“Mmm yes, I have some moves,” Ilya tried to raise his eyebrows and had to bite back a hiss of pain. He really needed to stop trying to make expressions. He continued, “Am I still pretty? I only have one eye, should I get a patch like a pirate? Sexy pirate. It would look badass.”

Shane rolled his eyes, “Something like that.”

Ilya gasped in mock offense, “Hollander, you wound me.”

Shane just shook his head and sighed against Ilya’s chest. But then an expression crossed his face that Ilya couldn’t fully decipher. They just stared at each other for a long time, so many things hanging heavy in the air between them. Eventually Ilya couldn’t ignore the other thought building in the back of his mind.

“Am I going to be...” He trailed off.

Shane’s expression got a little sad, and Ilya’s heart dropped. Then Shane spoke softly, “Yeah, you’ll be fine. You just need to rest for quite a while. I’m gonna take the rest of the season off too.” Ilya opened his mouth to say something, to protest, but Shane just squeezed his hand. “I’ve made up my mind, ok? You are so much more important...I was thinking we could go up to the cottage, it’ll be peaceful, even quieter because of the snow, and we’ll be able to skate outside on the lake.”

It was beautiful. Ilya couldn’t find words in Russian or English to express just how beautiful it was. And then Shane’s hand was brushing tears off of Ilya’s right cheek. Ilya turned his head slightly to kiss the palm of Shane’s hand.

“*Ya tebya lyublyu*,” Ilya murmured softly, lowering his lips to press into Shane’s hair.

Shane smiled and sighed softly, “I love you too.”

Ilya woke up again. He kept doing that. Just waking up without remembering going under. He was getting a little fed up with this whole head trauma thing. Things were made slightly more bearable by his husband. As Ilya had drifted back in and out, Shane was still curled up against him.

Then he’d woken to find Shane snoring softly against his chest. Ilya could have melted, he spent a long time just looking down at Shane. He’d looked around the room, and found Yuna and David sitting next to each other at his bedside. They were each reading a book.

Eventually Yuna glanced up, catching his eye. She smiled as she glanced down at Shane, then gave Ilya a fond look.

“Hey, how are you feeling?” She whispered.

Ilya tilted his head, “Not the best.”

Yuna nodded, “I suppose that’s understandable. Do you need anything, are you hungry? Do you want water?”

“I am ok,” Ilya replied. Then he took a deep breath in. “Thank you.”

He looked between Yuna and David now, hoping they understood beyond the two words he managed to say. They both smiled so fondly at him. Ilya held back the tears threatening to well up in his eyes. His family. A long, peaceful moment passed.

Then David glanced down at Shane with a fond smile. “Sorry, I think he gets the snoring from me.”

Ilya huffed a small laugh. “Oh this isn’t even the worst it gets. Some nights is like, uh... *gazonokosilka*.”

Shane shifted and groaned. Without opening his eyes he muttered, “I heard that.”

God, Ilya loved when Shane’s voice was all scratchy after he woke up. Shane peeled his eyes open, and looked up at Ilya.

“Lawnmower. *Gazonokosilka* is lawnmower,” Shane supplied with a sigh.

Without missing a beat, Ilya turned back to David, “Yes, some nights is like sleeping next to a lawnmower.”

“Tell me about it,” Yuna rolled her eyes, shooting her husband a look. David just laughed.

Shane frowned, “You’re all banding together now, huh?”

Ilya’s husband really was very cute when he was angry.

“When it’s against you? Yes of course,” Ilya responded.

Shane grumbled something as he laid his head back against Ilya’s chest. Ilya laughed, and pressed his lips to Shane’s hair.

Ilya woke up to people talking quietly. He shifted a bit in bed. Shane wasn’t curled next to him anymore. Worry panged through Ilya’s chest. He cracked an eye open slowly, the lights were on so it took him longer to adjust. He felt relieved to find Shane sitting in the chair next to his bed. Shane hadn’t noticed that Ilya was awake, instead he was gazing across the room at something else.

Ilya followed Shane's gaze to find Hayden sitting in his own chair, talking quietly about something. "-hopefully by like next Thursday or something, Jackie hasn't decided yet..."

Hayden trailed off as he caught Ilya looking at him. The expression on Hayden's face was like a deer in headlights.

"Hello, Hayden." Ilya just let it hang in the air, watching as Hayden squirmed under his gaze. He knew that this whole situation must be terribly uncomfortable for Hayden, which Ilya found very entertaining.

"Uh- yeah, hey," Hayden managed.

Ilya heard Shane shift in his chair and then he leaned into Ilya's line of sight. Shane was looking at him with a bit of remorse. "Sorry, did we wake you?"

"I don't think so," Ilya answered.

Shane smiled softly and nodded. Ilya turned his gaze back to Hayden. Ilya wanted to make some jab or comment, but he knew it had probably been good for Shane to have Hayden during... this. Ilya remembered just how uncomfortable Hayden had gotten the last time he had complimented him, so he decided to try a new tactic for entertainment.

Ilya stared earnestly and unblinkingly into Hayden's eyes. When Ilya finally spoke it was quiet and serious. "Hayden, thank you for being here. For Shane. It means a lot to me."

Ilya's words had their desired effect. Hayden looked like he wanted to crawl out of his own skin under Ilya's earnest gaze. The man was physically squirming in his chair. Ilya had to put a lot of effort into not laughing. He could almost feel Shane glaring at him. In Ilya's defense, he had meant every word, he just had a bit of an ulterior motive for sharing them.

"Yeah... of course. I uh-" Hayden rubbed the back of his neck. He was probably trying to reciprocate Ilya's sentiment. "I'm glad you're... ok. I'll always be here for Shane. And what happened... I'm sorry it happened. And I hope Kent never sees the light of day again."

Ilya would have enjoyed Hayden's attempt at sincerity a lot more if he weren't so confused. His eyebrows knit together painfully. *Kent? Like Dallas Kent?* What was Hayden-

Ilya's thoughts were cut short as Shane let out a noise that seemed to be a mix of a sigh and a groan. His husband murmured something that sounded like 'Jesus Christ' and buried his face in his hands.

Ilya looked back at Hayden, hoping for some kind of explanation. Instead he found Hayden standing up with an expression on his face like a scolded child.

"Sorry- I'm gonna- Sorry. I didn't mean to- I'll be back in a bit," Hayden said quickly, as he inched towards the door.

Shane nodded with his head still in his hands, "It's fine... just- yeah, see you in a bit."

Hayden practically sprinted out of the room and disappeared down the hall. Ilya turned to look at Shane, who still hadn't looked up. It didn't take much for Ilya to connect a few dots, bits of a story coming together in his mind. It was silent for a long moment, before Ilya spoke.

"So... Dallas Kent?"

Shane finally pulled his face out of his hands, his mouth pulled back into a thin line.

"This really wasn't how I wanted to have this conversation, and I promise I was going to tell you. I just wanted to have some time to adjust."

Ilya did his best to give a reassuring smile. "It is ok, Shane. It is not Hayden's fault he is dense."

Shane ignored the jab and looked directly at Ilya. "Do you want to have this conversation now?"

Ilya thought for a moment.

"Yes, if you are ready, I would like to know."

"Ok," Shane breathed, voice shaking slightly.

Ilya reached for Shane's hand and gave it a strong squeeze that Shane reciprocated. Shane took another deep breath in.

"So you remember leaving the hotel, and then you had been hopping around to a few different bars with Cliff. It was getting late and you had texted me that you were on your way back, but then you were taking too long so I called you..."

Ilya put all his energy into focusing on Shane as he slowly explained everything that had happened from his perspective. Cliff picking up on Ilya's phone, and the little bit of information he'd gotten here and there. Shane talked about waiting, about his parents coming, seeing Ilya for the first time, more waiting.

Then Shane hesitated, Ilya gave him some time and another squeeze of his hand. Shane had taken another shaky inhale and started talking about the police showing up, telling him about Kent, and then... showing him the video. There was something so broken in Shane's eyes as he described what had happened in the footage. Ilya would have given anything to fix it..

Shane let out a long shaky breath after he'd finished describing the video. Silence filled the room once more. Ilya knew there wasn't anything he could say to fix this. He lifted his arms up.

"Come here, *moy lyubimyy*."

Then Shane was fully in his arms, burying his face into Ilya's neck. It was all Ilya could do to hold onto Shane as sobs wracked his husband's body. Ilya's mind was torn in two. He was

trying to process Dallas Kent attacking him in an alley. He was also stuck trying to pick up the pieces of what Shane had gone through.

“Shane, look at me.”

Shane pulled his head up, revealing a tearstained face. Shane was taking deep breaths in through his nose and letting them out slowly through his mouth.

“I am ok,” He pressed a kiss to Shane’s forehead. “I am here. We are ok.”

Shane seemed to calm down just a little bit before shaking his head. “God, I didn’t mean to... I’m sorry. You’re the one who got attacked. I should be the one comforting you.” Shane let out a bitter laugh and turned his head away from Ilya.

Ilya grabbed Shane’s chin and pulled his face back up.

“Shane Hollander... you listen to me. What happened was terrible. My head and face are hurting a lot. But I think I am the lucky one... I don’t remember any of it. I didn’t have to sit and wait and suffer. I didn’t have to watch my husband go through something awful... If I could take this all away from you I would. But we are ok now. I am ok. We will get out of here soon, go to the cottage. and there we will both take time to recover. Ok?”

Shane’s breathing had evened out, “Ok.”

They just stared at each other for a while, Shane's fingers were tightly clutching Ilya’s shoulders as though one of them may be ripped away at any moment. Ilya leaned a little closer and lowered his voice.

“And at the cottage, we will skate out on the lake, like you said. But when we come back inside we will have life changing sex next to the fireplace.” Ilya grinned lopsidedly as he ran his finger down Shane’s cheek.

Shane failed to stifle the snort that escaped him, “Fuck off.”

“What? It will be freezing. We will need to warm up. You want me to get hypothermia?”

Shane shook his head as he tried to hold back the smile creeping onto his face. “I should just smother you with a pillow.”

“You do not seem like a very good nurse.”

“At least I’m sexy.”

“Yeah you are... How long before Hayden comes back? Do you think this bed could handle a quick fuck?”

“You’re terrible.”

“And yet you married me.”

“Yeah, I did.”

Ilya had been here for a while. The doctor had come in and checked him out a while ago. She'd shone lights in his eyes, and been gentle as she prodded the left side of his face but it still forced Ilya to bite back a hiss of pain. She then talked to him, Shane, Yuna and David. She'd done her best to talk slowly, taking pauses to see that Ilya was understanding. Ilya had been doing his best, but through the medical English and his splitting headache he'd still missed a lot of it. He was glad his family could fill him in later.

The doctor told them about what was next, lots of rest until the headaches and light sensitivity went away and scheduling follow-up appointments for getting his stitches removed and checking other progress. She walked them through finding a doctor in Ottawa, and gave a few recommendations. Finally she told them she wanted to keep Ilya overnight for observation, but she could discharge him first thing tomorrow morning. Ilya had been beyond relieved. He hated it here. He was ready to get Shane out of here and sleep next to him in their bed for 3 days straight.

Ilya had been awake for a few hours now and it felt like a lifetime. He'd had plenty of visitors during that time, and Ilya felt bad that they were all starting to blur together, and he couldn't fully remember when they'd come in or what they'd talked about. He knew Hayden and JJ had come in and pretty much just talked to Shane, with Ilya making a few jabs or comments every now and then.

Every Centaurs player that had been at the All-Star Weekend had been in his hospital room at some point. Boodram had come in with Luca Haas. Luca had been pretty reserved, as Bood had done his best to tone down his booming voice for Ilya's sake. They'd stayed for a while, talking about hockey and other things that escaped Ilya's memory. Bood had told him that the rest of the team was pretty worried, so snapped a picture of Ilya giving a thumbs up to try to ease their minds. Troy Barrett had come in and told him that Harris sent well wishes and pictures of Chiron and Anya. Ilya had been devastated to find out he couldn't actually look at them because the screen had hurt his eyes too much.

At some other point, Cliff Marlow had come in. He'd looked almost as worn out as Shane. The man clearly hadn't rested much, if at all, since the... incident. Marlow had been quiet at first, awkwardly getting through the usual “how are you doing?” and “glad you're ok”. Then Marlow had looked Ilya deep in the eyes and apologized. It was an apology from someone who had done something terribly wrong. God, Ilya couldn't stand it. Based on the story Shane had told him, there was truly nothing Cliff could have done, in fact it probably would have been way worse if Cliff hadn't been there. But Ilya also knew that guilt was an illogical and unforgiving feeling, and there probably wasn't anything he could say to change Cliff's mind.

So Ilya had just pulled Cliff into a hug. It was strange at first. He'd hugged his teammates before, he'd hugged Marley before, but it was usually on the ice in celebration or a quick one armed “bro hug”. This was different, but it seemed to help just a little. When it ended, Ilya pretended not to notice the way Cliff wiped his eyes. Then Cliff stayed for a while, just talking with Ilya and Shane about nothing in particular. Ilya was glad Shane and Cliff

seemed to actually get along pretty well. Eventually Cliff had to go, his flight back to Boston was leaving soon.

Ilya knew it was later in the evening, but his sense of time was still off. David and Yuna had gone to get a hotel room and get some rest, but had promised to be back in time for Ilya's check out tomorrow morning. A nurse had brought him a tray of food for dinner. Ilya wasn't that hungry to begin with, and the food wasn't exactly a five-star meal, so he'd settled for picking away at a few of the different things on the tray. He was about halfway through eating the pudding cup, when he heard Shane sigh.

"What? You want some?" Ilya held it out to Shane.

Shane glowered at him. "No, I just think it's a little ridiculous that you hardly even touched the real food, but you're going to eat the entire pudding cup."

"Well, that is because the other food feels like rubber and tastes like nothing. The pudding is good, and it is good that I am eating. I should ask for another."

Shane just shook his head, and went back to reading his book, wearing his incredibly sexy glasses. Ilya just stared at his husband as he finished the pudding cup and set it aside. Shane seemed to be doing better, he'd relaxed enough to take a nap earlier in the afternoon, and now he was reading. But often he would still catch Shane with a far off look in his eye or worse, staring at Ilya with a deeply troubled expression.

Ilya sighed, "I am tired, I think I will try to sleep now."

"Sounds like a good idea."

Shane set his book down and leaned in to press a kiss to Ilya's lips. Then he sat back and began running his fingers through Ilya's hair. Ilya's eye almost immediately got heavier. Then Shane was looking at Ilya with an expression so soft and full of love, Ilya's heart did a little flutter.

"What?" Ilya whispered, trying to fight off sleep for just a little longer.

Shane lips upturned lightly. "I'm proud of you."

"For what?" Ilya frowned tenderly.

"Za vyso." For everything.

Ilya felt so many things all at once. He wanted to know more, to tell Shane he was proud too, but he was quickly losing his battle against sleep. There was nothing Ilya could do to ever come close to expressing the way he truly felt about Shane. But he could try, he would spend the rest of his life trying.

"Ya tebya lyublyu, I love you."

"I love you too."

Chapter End Notes

Heyyyy!!! Thanks for reading the update! This was fun and therapeutic to write after my last chapter and after episode 4.

Sorry it took just a bit longer to edit this chapter, but anyway here it is!

The end is a little crammed, but I just had so many ideas about visitors and more time spent at the hospital that I just had to concentrate it down.

There were some other bits and pieces that I wanted to include but couldn't find a good spot unfortunately, like the fact that Ilya kept introducing Shane as "Shawn" or other similar names as a joke to act like he'd forgotten, and Shane reacted about as well as you'd expect.

There is a small possibility that I could continue and add on to this fic with some of the aftermath and recovery, as well as things with Dallas Kent and how the NHL (MLH) reacts. We will see where the inspiration takes me when I have been freed from my academic restraints in just a few days 🙏.

But anyway, thank you thank you thank you for reading, all your kudos and comments mean the absolute world to me!

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