

Run to you

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Run to you

by [SatsumaSegments](#)

Summary

Lily: It is too dangerous to be alone with concussion. I will stay at your apartment like nurse.

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Shane goes to Montreal for the weekend during his concussion recovery. So does Ilya.

Notes

i sat down to write them having tender raw sex and somehow ended up with this, bon appetit

this follows on from canon, basically we're following ep 5 until the moment that boston lose the playoffs and then it diverges

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

May 2017 – Ottawa

Ilya hasn't texted much since the hospital visit.

Shane can't really blame him. As Ilya is always happy to remind him, Shane is a boring texter at the best of times, let alone at the moment. His brain is still mushy post-concussion and his mom is on a one-woman crusade to bring his screen time down to absolute zero, appearing behind him every time he so much as picks his phone up.

His stomach twists uncomfortably when the final buzzer goes and Boston are out of the playoffs. Part of it is because he's genuinely sad for Ilya, which is bad enough, but the real reason is even worse.

He's so close to it all being over. The sparse texts will surely dry up completely now.

Sometimes Shane thinks about texting Ilya all the things he can't say. Typing them out on his notes app so he can gather his thoughts without Ilya noticing that he's typing, then sending the message and trying not to chew all his fingernails off while he waits for a response.

He wants to tell him everything. How much he hated leaving Vegas without kissing him. How sorry he is for walking out in Boston, how much he wants to do it over again, to cuddle on the couch and watch hockey and eat tuna melts without fucking it up. How he couldn't take his eyes off Ilya and the woman he was with at the club, how much he wished that was his body pressed up against him, how he'd have given the world to be able to go home with Ilya and not with Rose, who always deserved so much better than a boyfriend who could never be in love with her. How he could feel Ilya's pain through the phone even though he didn't know what the words meant, how he came off the call and cried at the thought that Ilya was hurting on his own on the other side of the world.

He'd tell him how much he needs him. How he spends so much of each day thinking about him, how he's the first person that comes to mind when he needs to talk to someone or he wants to show somebody something. How the prospect of spending the summer in the cottage by himself is so miserable that he doesn't think he can bring himself to go alone. How his chest gets tighter when he thinks about the reality of the future: that they'll have to break up, and it'll be all over the news when Ilya starts seeing somebody else, and Shane will have to grin and bear it and play good hockey and film stupid advertisements and pretend that he's not fucking dying.

He's quick to mentally correct himself. *Break it off. Not break up. We're not together. We will never be together.*

He doesn't send the text, of course. He never even writes it out. What's the point? They both know that they can't be more. Not now, not ever, not in the industry they're in. Best case scenario, he sends it and Ilya says as much.

Worst case, Ilya tells him that he wouldn't be interested even if it was possible. That this is all he ever wants them to be. Temporary.

Shane's phone buzzes, distracting him before he can waste half the evening making himself miserable over the idea of Ilya Rozanov breaking his heart.

Lily: I FUCKING HATE SCOTT HUNTER

It is genuinely fucking embarrassing how quickly Shane's mood changes for the better.

Ilya can't have been off the ice for longer than a couple of minutes. He should be busy talking to reporters or debriefing with his team, or – the most likely option, realistically – yelling expletives in Russian or insulting the referee's mother or whatever else he does to process a bad game. And yet his first instinct was to reunite himself with his phone and text Shane.

Unless he sent it a while ago, and had such poor signal that it's only just come through. It's a text that would make sense coming from Ilya at literally any time between now and the day they met. But Shane chooses to err on the side of positivity.

Shane: My mom thinks he's gonna win the Cup

Lily: I think he's an asshole

Lily: And my ribs fucking hurt

Lily: FUCK

Shane: Do you want to swap? We can change it up a bit. I'll take the bruised ribs and you can have the concussion

Lily: Yes. Will be good to lose memory of Hunter's stupid fucking face

Shane smiles at his phone like an idiot. He's glad his memory loss was limited enough that he still recalls bits of the hospital visit. He doesn't need to remember getting hit or being stretchered off the ice in a neck brace. He *does* need to remember the way that Ilya rushed across the room to grasp his outstretched hand. The feeling of gentle fingertips caressing his cheek. The genuine worry in his voice when he said Shane had scared him.

He wants to remember everything about Ilya Rozanov. Because one day, that's all he'll be: a memory from long ago. Perhaps from a happier time.

The phone screen blurs. Shane tosses the phone to the other end of the couch, where it lands face down on a cushion with a soft *thump*.

His mom is right. He's not meant to be using his phone.

—

The texts don't dry up, much to Shane's relief. In fact, it's like a dam breaks.

They've fallen into a comfortable rhythm over the past few days. They're texting daily, often multiple times a day, and it's so...*nice*. A tiny crackle of excitement zings up Shane's spine

whenever his phone lights up. Ilya's texts make him laugh, and roll his eyes, and blush pink in a way that he hopes his parents don't notice when they're sitting together.

Shane texts first, most days. He resists the urge to send a simple *good morning*, worried that that's too close to acting like a couple. Which is a problem, because it means he has to try and dig up something interesting enough to write a text about. Unsurprisingly, hockey is his go-to topic – something notable from last night's playoff, or some dumb comment that Hunter has made in an interview that Ilya can pretend to seethe at. Occasionally he'll go for a photo of the view outside his parents' house, scraping the barrel for anything that isn't hockey-related in a futile attempt to combat the allegations of boringness.

It's easiest when Ilya texts first. And it makes him happy to know that Ilya was thinking of him.

Especially today, when he's comfy in bed after a short lie in, and he gets to wake up to a message waiting for him.

Lily: How's your head?

Shane glances at the time. It's been twenty eight minutes since the text was sent. He's surprised Ilya is even awake yet.

He bites his lip, his thumbs hovering over the phone keyboard. Maybe today is the day he'll be brave enough to be the one who says something flirty. Properly flirty, not just suggestive. Maybe he just has to go for it.

Shane: Good, I think. Never had a problem making you cum from it

He types the message quickly, then regrets it as soon as he hits send. He buries his face in his pillow and groans. *That was so dumb. Maybe he doesn't even know the euphemism. He's going to think I'm so—*

Lily: Now I am worried. You do not know how to sext like this. Did head injury knock boring out of you? Was your phone stolen? Am I texting imposter?

When he presses his face against his pillow for a second time, it's to hide from the stupid grin that's taken up residence on his face.

Shane: Shut up. My head's getting better. Mom's not keeping me under house arrest anymore. Heading back to Montreal for the weekend.

Shane: How are your ribs?

Ilya's reply arrives a split second after Shane sends the second text.

Lily: Montreal have been out since first round of playoffs, did nobody tell you?

Shane: Very funny. I'm going to a birthday party for Hayden's twins.

Lily: Wow. Big event. Mr Celebrity.

Shane: They're turning 4. It's gonna be crazy.

Shane: It's mostly an excuse to stay at my apartment for a night without my mom fussing over me.

Three bouncy dots in a little grey speech bubble appear at the bottom of the conversation, then disappear again. The cycle repeats a few times. Typing, deleting. Typing, deleting.

Shane really, really hopes that this isn't The Breakup Text.

Lily: I could visit you

Lily: If you are not partied out from children's birthday

Shane sits fully upright in bed. He rereads the messages a second, third, fourth time.

Shane: Visit?

Lily: Is when someone travels to your house to see you. You have heard of this

Shane: You want to come to Montreal to visit me? On two days' notice?

Lily: No. I want free place to stay while I am in the area. I have tickets

Lily: For choir concert at Basilica Notre Dame

Shane: Did you just Google "tourist attractions in Montreal"

Lily: No. Fuck off. It is too dangerous to be alone with concussion. I will stay at your apartment like nurse.

Fuck.

Shane: How noble of you.

Lily: Yes. I am wonderful.

Lily: 9 on Saturday?

Shane: OK

His thumbs shake slightly as he taps at his phone.

Shane: I've missed you.

Lily: Me too

Lily: Can't wait to see you

Lily: I will cancel my hotel. For choir concert.

Shane: Sure you will. Have fun at the Basilica.

Shane should be exhausted. He's still struggling with tiredness, although not as badly as he was a few weeks ago, and being around twenty screaming four-year-olds for a few hours is enough to wear anybody out. On any other day, he'd be eyeing up his hockey book and the comfort of his bed by now.

But not today. He can barely keep still, shifting in his seat and fidgeting with his sleeves, constantly tapping his phone to see if he's missed a text.

He needs to chill the fuck out. He's not going to miss anything. His phone is set to loud, and it's only 8:56, and Ilya is never early, and—

There's a loud, abrupt knock at the door. It's so sudden and so unexpected that Shane almost falls out of his chair.

It's Ilya. And of course it's Ilya, it was never going to be anyone except Ilya, but Shane stands in the doorway blinking at him anyway.

'I didn't think you'd remember the door code. I didn't text it to you.'

'What, you think I have goldfish memory? 1919 is easy to remember. Same as Scott Hunter's birth year.'

Shane laughs, and Ilya laughs too, and whatever thin hints of tension hung between them in the doorway melt away into nothing. Ilya steps into the apartment and immediately pulls Shane into a hug.

Ilya hugs the same way he kisses, the same way he fucks, starting soft and gentle before turning crushing and desperate. His arms envelop Shane's body, one hand cradling the back of Shane's head, and they simply hold each other for a long moment, breathing each other in, feeling the solidity of another body against their own.

'You scared me. When you got injury,' murmurs Ilya. 'Do it closer to end of game next time.'

'Tell that to Marleau.'

They both let out a quiet huff of laughter. There's something unspoken beneath the banter. Something genuine. Something pent-up, that seems to have twisted within Ilya for weeks and is only just beginning to depressurise now that this hug is acting as a release valve.

Ilya's hand traces idly up and down in the space between Shane's shoulder blades.

'It was nice of you to visit me in the hospital.'

'I am surprised you remember. You were so fucking high.'

‘I remember enough.’ Shane presses closer into Ilya’s neck, lips brushing skin when he murmurs the words. ‘I’m okay now.’

Ilya pulls back slightly, and suddenly Shane is pinned under his gaze, a rabbit captured in headlights beneath pale eyes and furrowed brows.

‘Mm. I’m not sure that is true.’

‘What?’

‘You look very sick. You should be in bed.’

Shane lets out an undignified yelp as he’s lifted off his feet, his legs instinctively coming up to wrap around Ilya’s waist, and *fuck*, he hopes this never loses its novelty. No matter how many years this has been going on for, no matter how many times they’ve finally been able to have each other after months apart – nothing can dull the feeling of bliss that takes over Shane’s body whenever Ilya finally gets his hands on him.

He’s the one who initiates the kiss, dipping his head to press his lips to Ilya’s, one hand sinking into soft blonde hair while the other rests against the warmth of Ilya’s cheek.

‘Only if you come with me,’ he murmurs against Ilya’s mouth.

‘Oh, we will both come, do not worry. Only question is how many times.’

Shane tenses slightly as they reach the bedroom, expecting to be thrown onto the bed. Instead, Ilya lies him down with surprising gentleness, his hands immediately slipping underneath Shane’s shirt.

‘Take this off,’ he breathes. He unbuttons Shane’s jeans and pushes them down his hips. ‘Off.’

Shane doesn’t even have time to fold his clothes before Ilya is tossing them onto the floor along with his own shirt and jacket. His pace is frantic even by their own standards – until Shane is naked, then he slows almost to a halt.

Kneeling between Shane’s thighs, Ilya leans back on his heels and casts his eyes up and down Shane’s body. He’s still clothed from the waist down.

It’s...unnerving.

‘Something wrong?’

‘No,’ Ilya responds quickly. ‘Nothing wrong. I want to take care of you.’ He presses a slow line of kisses up the centre of Shane’s sternum, flicking his tongue into the dip between his collarbones before his lips resume their journey up Shane’s neck and along his trapezius muscle towards his shoulder. ‘Want you to lie back and enjoy.’

‘I can—*fuck*.’ The words die in his throat as Ilya’s teeth nip against the sensitive skin of his left nipple, the brief sting immediately washed away by the subsequent lave of Ilya’s tongue.

‘Shh. I said I want you to lie back.’

Shane folds his arms behind his head and closes his eyes. Part of him aches to touch Ilya back, to suck kisses into his skin in turn, to urge him forwards until he’s straddling Shane’s chest and close enough for the head of his cock to be in reach of Shane’s desperate mouth. But it’s hard to concentrate on any of that while Ilya is all over him, an onslaught of hands and lips and tongue, all merging together to create a perfect storm that’s just on the right side of sensory overload. It’s like he wants to explore every contour of Shane’s body, taste every inch of skin, map out every spot that makes Shane swear under his breath when Ilya ghosts over it with his fingers or captures it between his teeth.

Well. Almost every inch.

Shane is panting now, squirming against the bedsheets, his body alight with want. Ilya is everywhere except for where he needs to be. Hands on his waist, lips at his neck, teeth grazing against his inner thighs – but not a single second of attention for Shane’s cock, lying heavy and neglected against his stomach.

‘Please.’ The plea comes out between bitten lips, his voice pitchy and desperate. His hips cant upwards of their own accord.

‘Not yet.’ Ilya’s breath is hot against his neck. He rolls one of Shane’s nipples between his thumb and forefinger, his touch both far too much and nowhere near enough. ‘Be patient.’

Shane has been patient. He’s pretty fucking patient every time he’s ever waited for Ilya to be pressed against him again, for however many weeks or months it takes. He doesn’t have much patience left in him, not with his cock aching like this.

His arms move out of instinct, the most primal part of his brain taking over, acting out of sheer desperation to fulfil an urgent need. His hand finds Ilya’s head and *pushes*.

It’s futile. Instead of being warm and wet around Shane’s cock like it should be, Ilya’s mouth is set in a smirk on his face, his hands no longer on Shane at all.

Shane is suddenly overcome with an odd feeling of disappointment in himself, as if he’s broken a rule despite knowing better.

‘*Hollander*,’ gasps Ilya in mock scandal. ‘Do not make me tie your hands.’

There’s a surge of heat in Shane’s stomach, and his cock visibly *jumps*. He groans and covers his face with his hands to hide the blush that has his face on fire.

‘Wow. So much still to learn about you.’

Shane doesn’t have to look at Ilya to know that he’s grinning. He can hear it in his voice as he climbs on top of Shane once again, his hands closing around Shane’s wrists and gently pinning them in place.

‘Do you want me to tie you up, Hollander?’ He rolls his hips, the rough denim of his jeans harsh against Shane’s sensitive cock. ‘Have you been waiting for me to tie you to the bed and

do whatever I want with you?’

Shane swallows. He forces himself to look Ilya in the eye as he nods.

‘What can I use?’

Shit.

‘Didn’t think that far ahead,’ Shane admits.

Ilya climbs off the bed and begins searching through the bedside table, frowning when the drawers reveal nothing but lube and tissues and a spare bookmark.

‘Where do you keep toys?’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Sex toys. Where?’

‘I don’t– the dildo is in a different drawer, we’re not–’

‘Oh my god.’ Ilya speaks quickly, his accent clipping the words as he unbuckles his belt. ‘Buy real restraints. And more toys. Your dildo is so lonely. Never had friends. Will grow up sad. Actually, has already grown up sad. Is old enough to be grandpa. Needs replacement.’

He pulls his belt free and loops it around Shane’s wrists. Shane’s breath hitches in his chest when he pulls it tight and his wrists are cinched together above his head.

‘Is this okay?’ Ilya asks, his voice suddenly much gentler. He leans down to place an agonisingly tender kiss on the tip of Shane’s nose.

‘Yeah. I want to. I trust you.’

‘Not too tight? You can move hands?’

Shane wiggles his fingers experimentally, putting both thumbs up as proof.

‘Good.’ Ilya stands back as if to admire his handiwork and finally strips off the rest of his clothes, his hand closing around his own flushed cock for a few languid strokes. Saliva floods Shane’s mouth.

He wonders if he’s ever been felt this needy before in his life. If he has, he doesn’t remember.

‘Are you going to fuck me now?’

‘Eh. Later.’

Shane lets out a whine. He knows he’s being petulant. He’s beyond caring.

‘You said you were gonna take care of me. This isn’t taking care of me, this is teasing. This is *torture*.’

‘Mm. Poor Hollander.’ Ilya mouths at Shane’s nipple yet again. Shane writhes below him, his bound wrists chafing against the belt with every flex of his arms.

‘You’re gonna leave a mark.’

‘Good.’

‘People will see—’

‘Who will see? Season is over.’

‘I don’t know. Anyone.’

Ilya lifts his head to look at Shane, holding his gaze for a moment. They both know that if Shane asked him to, Ilya would stop in an instant.

‘Tell them Rose Landry did it.’

‘Oh my god, you’re never getting over that, are you? You’re so jealous!’

‘Not jealous. Felt sorry for her,’ Ilya claims, punctuating the words by kissing softly along the line of Shane’s jaw. ‘And for you. She can’t give what you need.’

His breath is hot on the shell of Shane’s ear, his teeth teasing at the lobe.

‘*Fuck*. And you?’ Shane moans. ‘Can you give me what I need? Please?’

Ilya walks his fingertips excruciatingly slowly down Shane’s body, meandering between his pecs and across the plane of his stomach, lingering for a moment to scoop up some of the precome that has leaked onto his abdomen. When finally, after so much teasing, Ilya’s hand closes around Shane’s cock, it’s such a relief that tears begin to prickle at the backs of Shane’s eyes.

‘Soon. Promise. I want to make you come first.’

He lines his own cock up alongside Shane’s and wraps his hand around them both. He leans forward until their foreheads are touching and begins to rock his hips in tandem with the movement of his hand, pressing his lips to Shane’s in a filthy, open-mouthed kiss. It only takes a couple of thrusts before Shane is coming with a cry, his cock twitching against Ilya’s as he spills over Ilya’s fist.

Ilya holds him through the aftermath, curled into his side and kissing his neck while his fingertips circle the edge of Shane’s hole.

‘Still okay? Can stop if you want.’

The thought of stopping now is awful. Coming once took the edge off, but nowhere near enough to make up for all the teasing. And Shane needs to be fucked more than he’s ever needed anything. He feels so empty that it hurts.

‘No. Need you to—*fuck*.’

Two thick fingers slide into him with barely any resistance at all, aided by the post-orgasm pliantness of Shane’s body and the evidence of said orgasm that remains on Ilya’s hand. Ilya’s touch is purposeful, precise, his fingertips instantly finding Shane’s prostate after years of familiarity with each other’s bodies.

It’s only when Shane fully comes back to himself that he realises how ridiculous the situation is. He lets out a quiet hum of amusement that quickly becomes a groan as Ilya’s fingers move inside him.

‘What is funny?’ Ilya asks, not unkindly.

‘Nothing. Just—’

Ilya Rozanov came all the way to Montreal to see me, and I’m in love with him, and now I’m tied up with his belt while he fingers my own come into my ass.

‘I’m just happy.’

‘Are you admitting I make you happy, Shane Hollander?’

‘I think you already knew.’

Ilya’s nose brushes against Shane’s earlobe. Then, in a whisper so low that Shane has to hold his breath to hear it:

‘You make me happy too.’

The moment ends too abruptly for Shane to process it, the silence shattered by the sound of a drawer sliding open, the rustling of a condom wrapper.

‘Wait. Don’t. I want— I want to feel you. Properly,’ Shane says. ‘It’s okay if you don’t want to. But I haven’t— I mean, I don’t do this. With other people.’

He doesn’t dare look at Ilya’s face.

‘Me neither,’ admits Ilya. ‘Not anymore.’

This isn’t anything close to the right time to be talking about this.

Ilya flips the condom packet between his fingers absent-mindedly, then tosses it back into the drawer.

‘Hands still okay?’

Shane nods, then reconsiders. ‘Can you undo it?’

Ilya unfastens the belt, rubbing gentle circles into Shane’s wrists with his thumbs. ‘All okay?’

‘Yeah. Want to be able to touch you.’

Shane reaches for him, pulling Ilya down into a soft, cautious kiss. His hands slide down the length of Ilya's body until they come to rest on Ilya's ass, and he gently ushers his hips forward until the tip of his cock is nudging against Shane's entrance.

Ilya reaches for the lube bottle and slicks up his cock, leaving a small amount on his fingertips to rub against Shane's hole.

'You are sure?'

Shane should change his mind. Give Ilya the out, call it off, flip onto his stomach so they don't have to look at each other. They should fuck like they did at the start, hard and fast and reckless, and Ilya should press Shane's face into the mattress, and if they speak at all it should only be to curse and call each other by their last names.

They shouldn't cross this line. It means nothing, but it also means everything. *He's not going to be your boyfriend because you let him fuck you raw*, says the voice of reason in his brain. *It's just going to make you feel worse than you already do.*

But maybe, for a short while, it'll make everything better, interjects a different voice. It's not exactly wrong. The confusion and stress and heartbreak is already here. There's already more of it to come later. *Might as well do it with the memory of him fucking you as if he loves you.*

It's a bad idea. But what is this entire situation, if not one bad idea after another?

He reaches up to stroke his thumb against Ilya's cheekbone. Ilya leans into the touch, pressing a kiss to the centre of Shane's palm.

'Please, Ilya.'

Ilya closes his eyes, and they both cry out as he pushes inside. Shane clings to him, back arching off the bed, his forehead braced against Ilya's shoulder as his body adjusts to accommodating Ilya's length.

'Fuck, Shane. So fucking perfect.'

It's sincere, this time, devoid of all the teasing mockery that Ilya usually laces the word with. And Shane believes him. He feels perfect. They feel perfect together, bodies moving perfectly in tandem with each other, as if they're performing a dance they've choreographed together over eight years of secret meet-ups for ill-advised sex. Ilya feels perfect inside him, and his arms feel perfect now they're wrapping around Shane's waist and shoulders and practically lifting him off the bed, enveloping him completely until the world disappears. When he's here, against Ilya's chest, with Ilya slamming into him as he gasps Shane's name and repeats muttered phrases in Russian, nothing else matters. There is no hockey league to win, no fans to impress, no sponsors to placate. No family and friends and teammates to hide themselves from. There is just Shane and Ilya, Ilya and Shane, fitting together perfectly like two halves of one whole. Nothing separating them. Nothing to mark where Shane ends and Ilya begins.

Shane wraps his legs around Ilya's waist and crosses his ankles for good measure, holding him with such urgency and desperation that it's like they'll die if they let go of each other. A steady stream of nonsense falls from his lips, each thrust punching out more needy words, none of which are what he actually wants to say.

'Fuck, Ilya—' (*I love you.*)

'Feels so fucking good—' (*I love you.*)

'More, please, God—' (*I love you.*)

Ilya's hips stutter, and he tightens his grip on Shane's body.

'Shane, fuck, I'm going to—'

'Please. Come inside me, fuck, please—'

Ilya presses his lips to Shane's and falls apart, groaning into Shane's mouth as he comes. He reaches between them to take Shane in hand, but Shane is already over the edge, spilling onto his own stomach from nothing more than the pulsing of Ilya's cock inside him and the warmth spreading within his core.

They lie there together for what feels like hours, boneless and sweat-slick and panting for breath. When they finally separate, it's so that Ilya can grab a tissue from beside the bed and carefully clean up Shane's stomach, washing every trace of his release off his skin before dipping his head to kiss the softness of Shane's belly.

'Hey, that tickles,' Shane laughs quietly. Ilya's smile is subdued, almost sad, and the sight makes Shane's chest feel hollow.

He sits up and kisses Ilya gently on the mouth. 'I'll go finish cleaning up.'

'Okay. Come back soon.'

**

Ilya rolls onto his back in the centre of the bed and stares at the ceiling.

This was supposed to be the last time.

Every fucking time is supposed to be the last time.

He sighs and rubs his eyes with his fist.

There are three possibilities ahead of him.

One is the path he *should* take, the one he'd take if he had any fucking sense. It's the one he always tells himself he's going to follow. Like a liar. He'll stay the night, cook breakfast in the morning, something that somehow manages to simultaneously taste good and avoid deviating from Shane's weird joyless diet. They'll eat together, and Ilya will get dressed, and

then he'll quickly end things and be on his way back to Boston and pretend he hasn't just shattered both of their hearts.

One is the path he yearns for, the scenario he lets play out over and over again in his head. The one he tortures himself with. He doesn't just stay the night, he stays forever. He lets himself pour his whole heart out, says all those things he said in Russian on the phone, tells Shane the truth about how important he is and how happy he makes him and how much he loves him. How he loves him so much that it's absolutely fucking terrifying, because Ilya didn't even know he *could* feel love like this until he suddenly did. How hearing that Shane had broken up with Rose Landry felt like the weight of the entire world was being lifted off his shoulders, like he could see actual colours again instead of his vision being clouded with ugly green jealousy. He tells him how tears sprang to his eyes when he saw Shane hit the ice and just stay there, how badly he played for the rest of the game because his mind was full of what-ifs, how much he wanted to lose his shit at Marleau for hurting him. He makes some stupid joke about being scared that Shane would need surgery and they'd shave his stupid head and Ilya wouldn't be able to hold onto his hair anymore, because even in this imaginary dream, he's not ready to fully lay himself bare without the pretence of walking the sincerity back at the end.

And Shane nods, and laces their fingers together, and says that he feels the same way. He wants the same things. Ilya becomes Shane Hollander's boyfriend, his *partner*, and they go on dates and hold hands in public and do boring things like shopping for groceries and playfighting about Shane's miserable taste in house decor. They tell each other that they love each other. They fuck on every single surface of that beautiful Ottawa cottage that Ilya is dying to go to.

Ilya doesn't know what happens after that. He rewinds the fantasy back to the beginning when things start getting difficult. And things always do get difficult, because they're hockey players and rivals and their entire careers rest on nobody ever knowing that either of them are even into men. There is nowhere it can ever fucking go except down a shitty path that leads to hell.

As much as he likes to pretend otherwise, Ilya is not strong enough for that. And he's definitely not strong enough to see what it would do to Shane.

So the final path is the one that he's going to take. He knows that the decision is already made, and he's barely putting any effort into pretending otherwise. Shane will come back from the bathroom, and Ilya will hold him in his arms and try not to wish that they could have more than this. They'll sleep together – not fuck, but actually sleep together, curled up in the same bed with their bodies entwined, and Ilya will stay for as long as he can tomorrow. He'll drag out the time they have, probably until he's unwisely close to missing his flight. He'll text when he lands, because somebody cares about him enough to want to know that he's home safe, and then he'll count down the days until they can see each other again and try not to feel like he's dying when he tells himself that next time is definitely, *definitely* the last time.

The bathroom door opens, and Shane walks back to bed with a yawn and a stretch, a textbook picture of fucked-out sleepiness.

‘Sorry. I’m exhausted.’ He barely gets the words out before he’s yawning again. Ilya pats the bed beside him and Shane flops down with his head on Ilya’s shoulder, pulling the blankets up to tuck them both in.

’Night, Ilya.’

Ilya kisses Shane’s temple. He rests his hand in the centre of Shane’s chest, the rhythm of his heartbeat comforting and steady against the heel of his palm.

God, he’s so incredibly fucked.

‘Goodnight, Shane.’ *I love you. I love you. I love you.*

End Notes

thanks for reading i love you (especially if you're a canadian taxpayer)

my bsky is @blitzcranks and my tumblr is @rozanovx if you guys like this and jayvik and occasional posts where i Complain

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