

andante, andante (oh, please don't let me down)

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by [lovedays](#)

Summary

It's automatic, taking care of Anya like this. Despite the darkness in his head, and the pit resting in his ribs, Ilya manages to ground himself to her. Shane can be just as grounding, but it's Anya that allows him to let his mind smooth out and focus on just about nothing.

Because if Ilya thinks of Shane, the worst thoughts always return.

OR, Ilya's depression gets the better of him.

Notes

rated solely for the purpose of just how much suicide/suicidal thoughts are talked about throughout the fic.

hi. i wanted to talk more about ilya's passive suicidal ideation/thoughts because i just thought they weren't talked about enough, especially in his therapy session. and, idk, i just love ilya and i wanted to write about something we have deeply in common.

this was very cathartic for me, and it's honestly *really*; it talks about deep depression, suicide and passive suicidal/self-harm tendencies and it doesn't sugarcoat much. so please be careful when reading it.

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

Even with medication to help, there are days when Ilya's thoughts begin to be too much for him.

It starts small, at first. Tiny, minute things that shouldn't matter in the grand scheme of things—but they, somehow, end up meaning *everything* to Ilya's brain, which latches onto them and causes them to trickle. Slowly, slowly. Like the small, gentle stream of water running through a drain pipe to the ground.

Shane wakes up before him, because he has to—Harris wants to do some kind of social media photoshoot with him, or something, to help congratulate him on officially joining the Centaurs. Ilya is not *obligated* to go to this shoot, but he had been planning on going from the start. Troy will be there, and he'd been hoping to spend some time talking with him.

But Ilya's body feels like lead. Every limb, even just his *fingers*, feels a thousand times heavier than they had just the night before. Shane kisses just under his ear, murmuring a soft *good morning*, but it sounds a thousand miles away and Ilya just barely manages to make himself grunt in reaction. As Shane slides out of their bed, Ilya tries to move his fingers, his wrists, *anything*.

His fingers curl into his palm slowly, heavy like cinder blocks, and it almost hurts to be moving his body this way. When Ilya tries to push himself up, he feels *weak*—unable to even put enough pressure down on the bed to make himself budge. Ilya frowns deeply, eyebrows pinched together, and with great effort, somehow manages to roll himself over in the bed onto his back.

This action, somehow, makes it easier to begin moving the rest of his body. He squeezes his eyes shut, hard enough to make bright lights dance across the backs of his eyelids. They dissipate as he opens his eyes again, staring up at the ceiling of their bedroom. Dimly, he hears the shower running, and Ilya thinks he can almost hear Anya's gentle snoring from her dog bed. He's not sure how long he lies there, simply staring at the ceiling, until Shane is shuffling back into the bedroom and there's a gentle dip in the bed next to him.

Ilya manages to turn his head, gaze meeting Shane's. His eyes are warm, but concerned. Ilya hates making him concerned.

“Hey,” Shane whispers, reaching his hand up to cup Ilya’s cheek. “What’s wrong?”

Ilya opens his mouth to answer, but it’s like cotton had been shoved inside of it. His mouth is practically dry, and his tongue feels impossible to lift. Ilya shuts his mouth and swallows, attempting to wet the inside, just as Shane leans in and presses a warm, chaste kiss to his lips.

“Ilya,” Shane murmurs, stroking his thumb across his cheek. “Are you okay?”

He could lie. Ilya does this, sometimes, when he doesn’t think these moods are big enough to bother Shane with—and that’s something Galina would gently scold him for, reminding him that Shane *wants* to be bothered with things like this.

So Ilya doesn’t lie. He barely shakes his head, imperceptible if Shane weren’t already holding his cheek. He swallows again, and manages to croak out, “No.”

Shane’s gaze softens even more. His hair is still slightly damp and Ilya wants to touch it. With great effort, Ilya manages to pull his arm up from the bed, and lays his hand against Shane’s hand, fingertips lightly stroking over his hair.

Like a cat, Shane leans into the touch, but he doesn’t take his eyes off of Ilya for a second. “What can I do?” He asks in a whisper, dropping another kiss to his mouth.

Ilya shakes his head again, because he doesn’t know. He swallows around the lump in his throat and lets out a shaky, shuddering breath. He doesn’t *know*, so instead, he says the one thing he *does* know: “Love you.”

It comes out in mumbled Russian, making Shane’s mouth quirk up in the tiniest of smiles. His thumb runs over Ilya’s cheek again before it shifts down, gently resting at the corner of Ilya’s mouth.

“I love you, too,” Shane says back, in Russian, before leaning up to press a kiss to his temple. “Let me call Harris—tell him we need to schedule this for another day.”

Suddenly, the pit in Ilya's stomach grows bigger, *wider*, and that heavy sense of guilt falls hard on Ilya's chest. His hand drops from Shane's head and falls to his shoulder, which Ilya grips a bit tightly as he shakes his head, this time much more easily and a bit harder than before.

"No," Ilya says, still in Russian, before he clears his throat and slowly starts speaking again, this time in English. "No, you should—you should go. I can't..." He's struggling to find the words, in English.

Shane doesn't push him, sitting there and waiting until Ilya can push some more words out.

"I do not think I can do it, but I do not want you to... give up? I think, is word. Give up on this day with Harris and Troy."

Shane frowns a bit, his own eyebrows furrowing. "Are you sure? I don't... I don't want to leave you alone if—"

"Is not that," Ilya reassures him, even though he's partially lying to both himself and to Shane. "I just think... is better if I am alone, for a little while." Ilya pauses, before he slowly turns his head, nuzzling into Shane's palm. "Not too long, though."

Shane presses his palm a bit harder into Ilya's cheek, his frown turning up into another small smile. "Okay. Just for a few hours then. I'll tell Harris and Troy that you're..."

"Having bad day," Ilya says, nodding slightly. He sighs into Shane's palm. "Is fine. To tell them."

"Okay," Shane says, nodding himself. "I'll be back before lunch. It shouldn't take too long."

Ilya, with his strength somewhat restored thanks to his boyfriend, lifts his arm fully and pulls Shane down into a hug. It's slow and warm, and Ilya can feel Shane's heartbeat against his own. He would, really, love for Shane to stay here and lie in bed with him, but Ilya can't ask that of him. It would only make Ilya feel worse.

"I love you," Shane murmurs softly, pressing a kiss to Ilya's neck. "If you feel... anything, Ilya, please—"

"I will tell you," Ilya says seriously, pulling back to look at Shane. He nods, sure, and it helps Shane believe him. And he *should* believe Ilya on that. "I promise. If I feel worse, I will tell. I will call."

Shane breathes in slowly and nods in return. He watches Ilya with such affection-filled eyes. "Good. Okay. I'm gonna go get dressed, then go. Text me if you need *anything*, okay, Ilya?"

Ilya nods. "I will, *lyubov*. I will."

He knows that this is probably harder on Shane than it is on him, but Ilya needs the solitude—even if just for an hour or two. He needs to be able to clear his head without making himself think *only* about Shane. Even though he'll likely just be thinking about Shane, either way.

Shane kisses him one last time, a lingering one that *nearly* has Ilya asking him to stay, before he gets up from the bed and makes his way around their bedroom to get dressed. It takes Shane fifteen minutes to get ready, and in that time, Ilya has managed to lift himself up to sit, and Anya has woken up from her own slumber.

She pads over to Shane and nudges him with her snout, whining, probably needing to be taken out. He smiles down at her and crouches, grabbing her face to kiss her face between her eyes. "Keep your Papa lots of company today, okay?"

Whether Anya can understand him or not is unknown, but she licks Shane's face before she turns away from him and bounds over to the bed. She jumps up, immediately, and curls

herself up against Ilya, half on his lap. The weight of her is comforting and strong. Ilya pushes his fingers into her fur, breathing out deeply through his nose.

“I love you,” Shane says from the doorway. “I’ll be back soon.”

Ilya, somehow, manages to give him a small smile. “I love you,” he says, in Russian, and watches as Shane reluctantly pulls himself away from their bedroom to leave.

Time passes a lot more slowly after Shane leaves. Ilya stays propped up in their bed at an awkward angle, most likely bad for his back, and with Anya on his lap. He pets her slowly, until she’s getting up and pacing a few circles around the bed and giving a small whine.

That’s right, Ilya reminds himself, slowly pushing up. Anya needs me. She has to go out.

His usual routine for her is disrupted a little, because of Ilya’s mind, but Anya puts no pressure on him. Her tail wags as Ilya pulls on a plain tracksuit, tugging a beanie down over his head. Her paws tap happily on the floor when Ilya grabs her leash, her backside shaking back and forth a little from how happy she seems to be going out. It makes Ilya smile, even if it feels heavy on his face, and he’s glad that there’s still *something* for him to do in a state like this.

Anya is good for him. Ilya has loved dogs for as long as he can remember, but he had never been allowed to have one, for obvious reasons. His mother was a dog person, he remembers. Her sister had had one when he was a child, but he barely remembers what it had looked like. Owning a dog now helps Ilya more than he could have ever realized, and Galina tends to agree with him.

As soon as they’re out the door, Anya barks a greeting to the world, her tail wagging faster. Ilya doesn’t know if she can sense that he’s feeling off or not, but she doesn’t take off running like she usually does. Instead, Anya waits for Ilya to set the pace. Normally, it’d be a jog, both to help Ilya *and* Anya, but today, Ilya merely walks. Anya doesn’t seem to mind, happily walking beside Ilya, no matter how fast or slow he goes.

It's automatic, taking care of Anya like this. Despite the darkness in his head, and the pit resting in his ribs, Ilya manages to ground himself to her. Shane can be just as grounding, but it's Anya that allows him to let his mind smooth out and focus on just about nothing.

Because if Ilya thinks of Shane, the worst thoughts always return.

Ilya knows that Shane loves him, and that *he* loves *Shane*, but these feelings—this complicated, *annoying* disaster of a mental illness—in Ilya's brain likes to cause him problems. Seeds of doubt are always planted, no matter what Ilya does. No matter how much Shane helps.

"You're supposed to fix me." Ilya had told Galina, furious and raw and *terrified* at the time.

He's learned now that, unfortunately, depression is not always fixable. Sometimes it is genetic, and there's nothing to be done about that except to work *with* it, not against it. During his sessions with Galina, Ilya had come to find out that *his* depression is like that. Genetic. Inevitable. Incurable.

But that doesn't mean it's unstoppable. Ilya can put it on pause, and that's enough. *Pause* is all Ilya needs to be able to work through it. Bad days like these, like today, are far and few between, and they're something that Ilya is still learning to live with. He's trying to learn that it's okay to not be okay, no matter how badly he wishes he were *fine*.

The weight and feeling of the crucifix and ring against his chest helps Ilya feel as grounded as Anya does. He walks her along the property lines twice, then heads back to the house. He'd normally leave his house, walking Anya along the neighborhood sidewalk, but Ilya doesn't feel like facing people. Anya pants as she and Ilya enter the house again, and she pads into the kitchen where her food bowls are waiting for her.

Shane must have set her food out for him. Ilya's mouth twists up, as much of a smile as he can manage, before he stares out at the kitchen before him.

He ate dinner last night with Shane, but it's morning now. He should eat. He *needs* to eat. But Ilya doesn't feel hungry. He doesn't really feel *anything*, honestly, and that's perhaps the

most terrifying part of what his depression does to him. It makes him feel hollow inside, like there's nothing that can fill the void. And that's what frustrates Ilya the most.

He shouldn't feel this way. He's never been happier in his *entire* life.

Ilya is engaged to the love of his life. He finally owns a dog. His future husband has been signed to his own team; they're *finally* going to be able to play together, like they had before in the All-Star game. He finally has friends—*real* friends that he can confide in and talk to and hang out with. Ilya has absolutely everything he's ever wanted in life.

Yet Ilya is standing aimlessly in his kitchen, staring at the countertops. Yet he still feels like there's something *missing* and it makes him want to rip his hair out.

His feet are numb by the time Anya nudges against his legs, jolting him out of his reverie. Ilya looks down at her, his lips tilting up slightly. He reaches down and pets between her ears, scratching around the backs of them. He feels weak, all of a sudden, and a rush of air leaves him as he slowly sinks down onto the kitchen floor on his knees.

Ilya curls his arms around Anya and holds her close, burying his face into her fur. The tears come without his permission, wetting Anya's neck and Ilya's cheeks and making him feel even *more* frustrated with himself.

He's not too sure how long he kneels there on the floor, crying into Anya, but it's long enough for his legs to fall asleep and his feet to go numb again. His tears are mostly dry by the time he leans away from Anya, roughly rubbing under his eyes with the palm of his hand.

Ilya stares off, barely sniffing, and slowly pushes himself to stand up. Pin pricks tickle his legs as he makes himself walk to the fridge. Nothing sounds appealing, even as he opens the door and looks inside, seeing all the food. And these are foods he *likes*. But his stomach is numb, like the rest of him, and he feels that if he eats, he might just throw it back up.

Still, Ilya closes the fridge door and pulls open the pantry cabinet. Bread stares at him, and it's good enough. He drops two slices into the toaster and pushes it down, staring at the wall behind the machine as he waits. The *ding!* of the toaster going off doesn't even spook Ilya

like usual. He grabs both pieces of toast, not minding how hot they are, and bites into one immediately. It tastes like nothing—simply bread—but it settles well in Ilya’s stomach as he slowly makes his way back to the bedroom.

One piece of toast is gone by the time Ilya reaches the bed, his movements slow and lethargic. He climbs back into bed and rolls onto his side. He’ll get crumbs on the sheets, but it wouldn’t be the first time and he thinks Shane wouldn’t mind it too much, in the end.

Anya follows him, gently climbing onto the bed and curling up against Ilya’s stomach. Ilya rests his hand on her stomach, letting her breathing ground him again as he continues chewing on the second piece of toast.

When the second piece is gone, Ilya reaches around behind him and blindly gropes for his phone. He finds it and pulls it around to hold it more properly.

Ilya

I ate toast. Did not want to eat, but made myself.

Shane

That’s good, I’m glad you ate.

Are you feeling any better?

Ilya’s lower lip wobbles. He wants Shane back already. He swallows roughly and blinks carefully, trying not to cry again.

Ilya

No. It is...

He swallows again, unable to form the proper words in English, even in his mind, to try and tell Shane what he's feeling. Because it's *bad*. His thumbs hover over the keyboard, not hitting send.

Ilya, for the most part, doesn't want to hurt himself. Galina had said before, though, that he sometimes uses the fights he causes in hockey as a different form of self harm—and that had opened Ilya's eyes to the way he approaches hockey, in some ways. He still causes fights, but tries to go for less physical ones. He's always been better with his words.

But it is the passive thoughts that truly scares him. Every once in a while, Ilya will find himself thinking: *What if I died?*

He's not suicidal, not necessarily. Not in the outwardly sense. Ilya thinks, maybe, that he thinks that—*What if I died?*—because of his recent brush with a near death experience. But then he remembers his mother, and he thinks about all the children the Irina Foundation is trying to help, and he wonders, *Did they think the same, too?*

What *if* Ilya died? Would people mourn him for *him*? Or would they mourn the legacy that Ilya Rozanov was leaving behind with his only family in the entire world? Would people care about him beyond the hockey world?

Would he end up in the same place as his mother, or would he end up with his father?

The thought of being back with that man sickens Ilya, but he hasn't the mental ability to believe he has been a good enough man to be back with his mother.

The phone is ringing in Ilya's hand before he realizes it is. His eyes flicker to the screen—Shane's sent a few more texts, and Ilya hasn't responded to them in about ten minutes. Fuck.

Ilya answers the phone quickly, pressing it up to his ear as he rolls over onto his back.

"Shane," he says, voice rough.

“Ilya,” Shane says right back, almost sounding relieved. “Are you... are you okay?”

Ilya swallows slowly. “Fine. Am not hurt, if... if that is what you are worried about.”

Shane is quiet for a moment, before he slowly breathes out. “I was,” he admits softly, and Ilya’s heart *aches* at that. But it relieves him, too. “You didn’t respond and I just... I thought that—”

“No,” Ilya murmurs quietly, shaking his head slightly. “No, am not hurt. Just, ah... spaced out? I think. Was not intentional.”

“Okay. Good.” Shane stays quiet for a moment, before he speaks again. “Do you need me to come home?”

Ilya doesn’t even know what time it is. He’s too far away to look at his clock. He shouldn’t ask Shane to come back yet—he’s barely been gone—but Ilya wants to let himself be selfish, for once, now that he *can* be selfish.

In Russian, Ilya whispers, “Please.”

“Okay. I’ll tell Harris and Troy. We finished the pictures already—I’ll be home soon, Ilya.”

Ilya lets out a slow, shuddering sigh. “Я тебя люблю.”¹

He can hear Shane’s smile as he repeats it back, voice low and soft. “I’ll be home.”

They hang up, and Ilya lets his arm fall back to the bed. He lies there for a moment, Anya’s warmth seeping into his side, before he reaches for his dog. Anya lets Ilya move her without

any fuss; she's a good dog, always letting Ilya do as he pleases with her. She's endlessly sweet. Ilya loves her with all his heart.

He lays Anya down over his body as he breathes in, then breathes out slowly and deeply as his entire body relaxes under her weight. She's one of his own personal weighted blankets, keeping him pressed into the mattress. Anya shifts her head on his chest, a soft huff leaving her, and she gives Ilya's chin a gentle lick before resting her head on her paws.

Ilya closes his eyes and lets himself *feel* Anya's weight. He feels instantly better, and he lets himself doze in and out of resting.

He only jostles awake when Anya suddenly bolts up from his chest, paws pressing down on his ribs. Ilya groans as she dives off the bed and runs out of the bedroom, and that's when Ilya hears the front door shutting and Shane's voice flowing through the house as he greets Anya. Ilya sits up as he listens to Shane shuffling around the house, rubbing across his face.

Shane appears in the doorway of their room a minute or so later, and Ilya's entire world lights up again. Tears are dripping down his face before he can do a thing, and Shane rushes over to him with soft hushes.

"I'm here." Shane kisses Ilya, deep and full of love, holding Ilya's face in his hands. "Ilya, *lyubimiy moy*, I'm here. Shhh."

Ilya whimpers—a devastating sound, in and of itself—and Shane kisses him again. Ilya's arms curl around his body, pulling Shane close to him as his boyfriend moves to be propped up in his lap. Ilya makes another sort of noise, almost wounded like an animal, as he grips tightly at Shane's body, holding him tight.

"It's okay," Shane whispers against his mouth, repeatedly pressing kisses to Ilya's lips. "I'm right here."

Ilya mumbles something, probably Shane's name, and lets himself cry for the second time today. Shane holds him through it, cradling Ilya's head in his arms and against the crook of his neck, gently nuzzles into Ilya's curls as he presses slow kisses to his forehead. It takes a

while for Ilya to fully calm down, but Shane doesn't move from his position in Ilya's lap. He simply sways their bodies, slowly, from side to side as Ilya cries.

As his crying slowly tapers off, Shane carefully pulls Ilya's head back and leans down to kiss him, slow and sure, running his thumb over Ilya's tear-stained cheek.

Ilya swallows as he kisses back, sliding his hands up along Shane's back. He starts to lean back, wanting to lay down again, but Shane pulls away from him before Ilya can drag them both down. Ilya frowns, brows pinched together, but Shane simply smiles at him and gently pats Ilya's cheek.

"Turn around, lay on your stomach." Ilya stares at him, and Shane just briefly rolls his eyes. "We're not gonna have sex. Just do it, Rozanov."

Shane moves off of Ilya's lap, so Ilya does what he's told, turning around on the bed to lay on his stomach. He presses the side of his head into his pillow, waiting for Shane. Ilya nearly jumps when he feels a sudden weight over his back—then, just as quickly, he sighs deeply into his pillow as his body relaxes.

Ilya gets it now. Shane is *spooning* with him, only they're not on their sides. He feels Shane kiss the back of his neck, warm and chaste, and Ilya can feel himself melt. He shifts his arms up, curling them under the pillow beneath his head, just as Shane's arms wrap around him. One arm is around Ilya's waist, and the other is just under his ribs.

"Does this help?" Shane murmurs softly, his thumb slowly rubbing at Ilya's chest. He rests his head next to Ilya's, nose buried in his hair, and Ilya lets out another deep sigh.

Ilya nods, his eyes falling shut, as he lets Shane's body weight keep him steady in their bed. "Da. Is... is good."

"Good," Shane murmurs, pressing a kiss to Ilya's hair.

“I had Anya laying on me,” Ilya says slowly, his body already starting to feel weightless itself. Having Shane on top of him, like this, it helps—Ilya can focus on how Shane feels against him, how *loved* he feels under his touch. “She is good blanket, too. Feels heavier than you, somehow.”

Shane laughs quietly and smiles, letting his hand fan out against Ilya’s ribs. “Dogs always feel heavier,” he mumbles, his other hand stroking at Ilya’s hip.

Ilya is quiet for a minute, satiated by Shane laying on top of him, before he quietly asks, “Your arms okay?”

“Mm, they’ll be fine,” Shane says, nodding a bit.

They stay quiet for some time. Five minutes, fifteen minutes, maybe even longer—Ilya doesn’t know. He’s so content here, surrounded by Shane fully. His warmth, his scent, his presence. Everything. It doesn’t make Ilya’s head go fully quiet, but it does help. And maybe Shane can sense that.

“If you... *want* to talk,” Shane slowly starts, thumb running over Ilya’s hip. “I’m here. You can tell me.”

Slowly, Ilya breathes in, ribs feeling like they’re rattling when he does. He closes his eyes fully, squeezing them shut for a moment, before he opens them. Ilya knows he can talk to Shane. He’s been trying—with support from Galina, and even Troy and Wyatt—and some days, it works. But on a day like today, when Ilya’s mind has gone to the darkest corner with no reason to have gone there?

Ilya doesn’t want to scare Shane, but he knows he has to be honest.

“I do not wish to... hurt myself,” Ilya begins, almost muffled into his pillow. He swallows, forcing himself to continue. “Not on purpose. Is not something I try to do. And I... I do not want to...” He struggles to get the words out—to even just *entertain* the idea out loud, with Shane right against him.

Shane gently squeezes his body, and Ilya lets out a shuddering breath.

“I do not want to die,” Ilya says, voice shaking. “But sometimes, I... wonder. Is something I cannot control. And hurts, you know? Because I do not want that. I don’t. Would never, not when I have you, and Anya. But I—I *can’t*—”

Ilya’s voice cracks, and he can’t get the rest of the words out. There are tears in his eyes again, but he’s so *tired* of crying. He pulls his hand out and scrubs at his face, breathing in deeply and shakily. He shakes his head a bit, right as Shane’s hands grip onto Ilya tighter.

“You don’t want to *try*.” Shane finishes for him, his voice just barely above a whisper.

Ilya nods. “No,” he agrees, turning his face and pressing it into his pillow for a moment. He turns his head to the side again. “It is just there. The... the thoughts. Is not every day, though. Happens more often on... days like this.”

Shane remains quiet, but the air between them feels lighter, less complicated. Ilya *does* feel better, having said some of it out loud. It’s harder to explain these feelings in English. He’s going to need to talk about this episode with Galina, later.

“Do you want to turn around?” Shane asks, kissing just behind Ilya’s ear.

For once, Ilya is finally able to say the word, “Yes.”

Shane lifts himself up from Ilya’s body, and the loss of his heat and weight makes the hole start to return in Ilya’s chest, but he doesn’t feel it for too long. Shane helps him turn over, and as soon as Ilya is on his back, Shane is pushing him back down to the bed. He rests his body against Ilya’s once more, and being chest-to-chest, face-to-face with Shane has Ilya feeling even lighter than before.

Shane finds Ilya's hand and tangles their fingers together, resting them against Ilya's chest as he leans up and presses a slow kiss to Ilya's mouth.

"Thank you for telling me," Shane murmurs, laying his head down on the pillow by Ilya's. Ilya turns his head, their noses brushing and gently nudging together. "I can't say that... I understand completely, but I get it. I understand what you're telling me. And I know that it's... really hard, and probably scary, to talk about this stuff out loud."

Ilya watches Shane closely, studying the outline of his face, even though he's already got it memorized. Their eyes meet, and the pure love that Ilya sees in Shane's eyes starts to fill the void that's been in his chest all morning.

"I love you," Shane says softly, stroking Ilya's knuckles with his thumb. Ilya can't help himself, bringing their joined hands up and kissing the back of Shane's hand. Shane smiles at him, shifting his head a bit closer to his, just minutely. "I'll do anything I can to help, even if I don't fully understand what's wrong. But I'll try. I'll really try to understand where I can. Just... tell me, like you did today. I'll do whatever I can."

Ilya's tearing up again. He hates crying, he really does—it makes him feel vulnerable in the *worst* kind of way, but he can't help it. He loves Shane so fucking much. So *damned* much. Ilya truly doesn't know what he's done to deserve someone like Shane fucking Hollander—but he is going to keep him for as long as Shane wants to be kept.

Squeezing his hand, Ilya leans in and kisses Shane softly, their mouths moving together steadily. When he pulls away, Ilya presses their foreheads together, breathing in deeply.

"Ты — любовь всей моей жизни,"² Ilya says, bringing their hands up to his cheek, letting their combined weight rest against it. "Truly. I would not be here without you."

Shane's cheeks flush softly, cracking a grin as he nudges his nose against Ilya's, chuckling quietly. "Flattery will get you everywhere, Rozanov."

Somehow, Ilya manages to grin right back at him. It feels heavy, lifting his mouth in such a way, but it also feels *good*. Being with Shane, like this, feels *good*. Being alone, at first, had

helped Ilya sort through his thoughts and allow him to feel things on his own, and realize that he did actually need Shane by his side to get through this. Knowing when he needs the support is good for Ilya, in the long run.

They lapse into soft silence together, staring at each other and murmuring light conversation. As time passes, Ilya starts to feel better. Shane, he realizes, is just as good as his antidepressants. Only he can *kiss* Shane whenever he wants to, and it's a better hit than when he swallows his medicine in the mornings.

End Notes

translations:

¹ - i love you

² - you are the love of my life

i plan on making a second fic, sort of a companion piece to this, about shane where he, too, ends up going to therapy. because BY the fucking gods does that man *need* some fucking therapy. #getshanehollanderintherapy

someone. anyone. please talk to me about HR. i need to be insane about this show and these books with people.

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