

Dialing You (Sorry, Darling You)

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Dialing You (Sorry, Darling You)

by [hollano_ov](#)

Summary

Shane works in IT.

Ilya's computer always seems to be fucked up.

Notes

my first time writing for hollanov MAMA IM SCARED. also it's an AU, like outside of hockey au. and also also i worked in an office like setting once many years ago. so this is not accurate at all. IT and office workers please look away or disregard all my bullshit. i just wanted to put these losers into a situation. that's all, please enjoy! **not edited pls ignore mistakes we all know what i meant when i said what i said**

title from my boys: Dar+ling - Seventeen

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



For the most part, Shane's job is pretty easy.

Computers have always been his thing—electronics in general, really—it all clicked seamlessly in his mind, always making sense in a way that would make his dad raise his eyebrows, impressed the first time Shane took his Game Boy apart only to put it back together with too much confidence for a child. From there, his knowledge only blossomed, watered by the endless support of his parents who were excited to see him interested in something for once.

Part of him knows they expected big things from him, maybe an inventor, the next pioneer of the technological world, but the world of IT was more appealing than anything. There's always a schedule to follow; wake up, hit the gym, have a quick breakfast before showering, head to the office, wait around for some tickets, fix whatever issues his coworkers were having for the day, and go home. He likes the simplicity of it all, the reassurance that tomorrow will be just like today, that today was just like yesterday. No surprises, no unnecessary pressure on his shoulders. It's nice, Shane enjoys it and he's happy with life even if it seems mundane to everyone else.

The morning passes as it normally does. Shane drives to the office with the music off, fingers tapping against the leather steering wheel as he waits for the light to turn green, the sound of his blinker a steady rhythm that he syncs his fidgeting to. He parks in his corner space, takes the elevator up to his floor, and gets himself settled before the first issue of the day comes up. It's usually the same issues: the WiFi won't connect, a computer restarted for an update and it won't move past 1%, a password that won't work and needs to be reset. Shane boots up his computer and keeps his eyes on his email and the phone, waiting for the first task of the day.

The silence is temporary as his coworker and closest (and some would say *only*) friend, Hayden, joins him, alerting probably the whole office of his arrival as he hurries in, dropping his backpack on the floor and nearly spilling his coffee down the already stained grey button up that is barely buttoned, exposing the undershirt beneath. Shane looks over his shoulder,

raising his eyebrows when Hayden says nothing, grumbling a string of curses under his breath as he kicks the backpack aside and leans over to log into his computer with one hand, the other dripping with the coffee still in his grasp.

"You good?" Shane tries, already knowing that the answer is probably *no*. It still feels like the right thing to ask.

Hayden startles like he didn't know there was someone else in there to begin with. "Huh? Oh—yeah, I'm good! Just having a morning, you know how it goes."

"Right," Shane nods, thinking of Hayden and his four children. Every morning looks like this for the poor guy. "What happened this time?"

"Ruby lost her pencil pouch," Hayden starts, wiping his coffee soaked hand on the side of his pants, uncaring of the stain it's sure to leave behind. "And Jade was hiding it inside her backpack but led us on a goose chase for, like, twenty minutes. Then the van didn't have any gas so I had to make a detour and the girls were late for school and *then* I got coffee and came here before I realized I still had Arthur in his car seat so I had to go all the back home and—yeah. Yeah. It's been..." He trails off, eyes empty as he stares at the wall.

Shane gives him the best sympathetic smile he can. "You still have that vasectomy scheduled?"

"Fuck yes," Hayden exhales, finally plopping down into his chair, the wheels rolling beneath him as he pulls himself to his desk. "This weekend, baby! Jackie and I are having a night in to celebrate so my mom will have the kids."

"You deserve it," Shane says before looking at the stains littered throughout Hayden's clothes. He jerks his thumb over his shoulder, toward his desk. "I, um. I have a few Tide-Pens if you need them."

Hayden looks down at himself, groaning when he sees the damage caused by another hectic morning. He reaches out, palm up. "Yeah, give me that shit."

Shane plucks it from one of the drawers of his desk, tossing it over just as the phone begins to ring. Hayden is quick to answer it, already pushing the plastic tip of the pen against the fabric of his shirt, a wet patch bleeding around the beige stain. "Hayden with IT, what can I do for you?" Shane turns around, loading up his screen and going through the few new emails waiting to be regarded. He's halfway through typing a response to the first one when he hears his name from Hayden. "Yeah—I'll go ahead and send Shane over."

"Password problems?" Shane guesses, ignoring the way Hayden is making the stain worse.

"Nah, you've gotta help the new guy set up his computer," Hayden tells him, chin practically pressed to his chest as he focuses all his attention on his shirt.

"Fuck," Shane sighs, getting up anyway. The last thing he wants to do is meet someone new, even if it's only for a few minutes. "What are the chances of you taking it instead?"

"Zero," Hayden answers without hesitation. "Go have fun. Fourteenth floor. Make another friend, dude. One that isn't a fucking mess."

Shane huffs out a laugh, shoving at Hayden's shoulder as he walks past even though he can't really argue with that. Luckily, the elevator is empty when Shane gets on, allowing him a few moments of silence as he tilts his head back against the cold wall behind, taking in the quietness and solitude before he has to force his way through a conversation, hoping that he isn't coming off as stiff as he knows he can be sometimes.

It's easy to spot the cubicle considering it had been empty for almost two months before today. There's a box of office supplies perched on the corner, the computer opened on the start-up screen, and the desk spotless from abandonment. When Shane rounds the corner, he finds the new guy already sitting in his chair, tossing what looks like a stress ball into the air, catching it right as he turns his head and makes eye contact with Shane.

Shane stills, taking in this person in front of him. Dirty blond hair, naturally curly, the pieces pushed out of his face to highlight the structure of his face—strong jawline, eyebrows naturally tense, full lips tight with a cupid's bow that dips. There are moles decorating his face, prominent on his cheek and side of his face. He's got a button up shirt, the sleeves pushed up to his elbows, and the grey fabric of his trousers stretched across his very toned legs. Handsome. Shane can admit that this guy is handsome, plucked straight from the cover of a fucking magazine or something.

For a moment, he nearly shrinks into himself, feeling small and stupid in his glasses as he stands there without saying a word. He only kicks into action when he realizes that neither of them have said anything yet, but finds it a beat too late as the guy talks first.

"Hello. Who are you?"

Shane blinks, taking in the thick accent. He remembers someone last week saying something about a Russian guy starting soon—he isn't sure why he didn't put two and two together until now. "Oh—sorry, I was just, um, making sure I had the right cubicle. I'm Shane," Shane introduces, sticking his hand out to greet the new guy. "I'm the head of the IT department—you'll probably see me running around. I'm here to help you set up your computer and stuff."

The new guy's eyes are a bit... intense. They drag down Shane's body before flicking back up to his face, the seconds stretching until the corner of his rosy lips starts to curve slowly. He stands, the chair beneath him rolling back a few inches, and Shane takes a step back, the lower part of his spine hitting the edge of the desk, the sound of a cup of pens clattering with the impact. Finally, the guy accepts the handshake. "Hello, Shane. I am Ilya."

Shane swallows, the heat of Ilya's hand bleeding against his palm. He clears his throat, mustering up the most polite and normal smile he can. "It's nice to meet you. Um. We can actually start setting up your computer when you're ready. If you're ready."

"I am ready," Ilya nods, hand still holding onto Shane's. A beat of stillness passes before he blinks, dropping Shane's hand quickly before smiling again. "What do you need from me, Mr. IT Man?"

"Just 'Shane' is fine," Shane tells him, already leaning down in front of the computer, grabbing the mouse to wake up the screen. "But for now you can sit back, I'm just gonna make sure you have all the software and apps needed as well as all the antivirus stuff."

"Okie," Ilya says, leaning back in his chair, raising an eyebrow when Shane looks over his shoulder for a fleeting moment, but saying nothing else after.

Shane works quickly, very much aware of the holes practically being burned into his back from the intensity of Ilya's unwavering stare. Admittedly, it's a bit hard to focus when he knows his ass is pretty much right there. Not that Ilya would be looking at it—there's no way. But Shane hates how much he kind of wants Ilya to take a peek, even if it's on accident. He works hard at the gym to have something worth regarding.

He's quick to shake his head to himself, pulling him back into his task instead of letting his mind wander on... *that*. He's being ridiculous.

Nothing is said as the antivirus software finishes installing. Shane works fast, fingers working swiftly against the keyboard, the clacking filling all the empty spaces as he logs into his own account to make Ilya a company email address, knowing that Hayden probably never got around to doing it yesterday.

When he's done, he straightens up, gesturing toward the monitor. "You can go ahead and come up with your password."

Ilya's eyes flicker to him, his expression still and stoic. For a moment Shane is sure he didn't hear, but he's proven wrong when Ilya plants his feet flat on the floor, rolling his chair closer to the desk. He doesn't have a chance to step away before one of Ilya's arm comes around Shane's waist to grab the mouse and the other bends at the elbow, perched on top of the desk, trapping him between Ilya and the surface. The blush that burns his cheeks sparks quickly, forcing him to look up at the ceiling and do his best to act nonchalant even though his hip is right against Ilya's forearm.

"So," Ilya says slowly, deep voice punching Shane's chest as he struggles to fucking *breathe*. Though, from this close he can smell the distant note of cigarettes. He holds onto that to keep himself from thinking about how stupidly hot this guy is. "I can put whatever for password?"

"Yep," Shane nods, eyes darting across the ceiling until finally he has the courage to look down at Ilya who is already staring up at him. Though, it's less... *intense*. More curious than anything, which is better than whatever the other one was. "As long as it's not 'password', you should be good."

Ilya pauses, mouth dropping open, eyes dancing across the computer monitor and then to Shane. "What about Password123?"

Shane laughs despite himself, the sound cracking out of his chest as he ducks his head down, hiding the smile splitting into his face with the back of his hand. "At least put some effort in there."

"Password," Ilya starts, a grin stretching on his face, words slow and nearly teasing, "1234."

"Well," Shane sighs, shoulders rising and falling with a lazy shrug. "That's certainly better than the first option."

Ilya's smile widens, his eyes locking on Shane's for a fleeting moment before he drops his hands, releasing Shane from where he was trapped. When Shane steps away from the desk, Ilya exhales and tilts his head toward the computer. "Okay. Is done. What now?"

"Well, that's up to whatever your supervisor has you doing for the day," Shane tells him, shoving his hands into his pocket, rocking on his heels for a few seconds. He takes another step back, ready to make his way back to his enclosure. "I'm, um. I'm all done here, so. You should be good."

There's pause as Ilya looks around, neck craning slightly. "So," he starts, legs spread in his chair, hands folded and perched right where his button-up shirt is tucked into his trousers. He tilts his head, a gold curl falling onto his forehead as he regards Shane. "I will see you around, yes?"

"Yeah, sure," Shane nods. He's usually everywhere all at once, so this definitely won't be the first time they'll interact. "Unless your computer is fucked, then you'll probably be seeing me a lot. But we actually got computer upgrades a few months ago, so hopefully that's not the case."

"Hopefully," Ilya repeats, still staring at Shane.

Shane pauses for a moment, waiting for any other questions or concerns Ilya may have. When nothing else is said, he takes it as his cue to go be productive. "Alright, well. You can submit a ticket if you're having any issues and it'll shoot me and Hayden an email so we can help you out. Oh, and extension to IT is labeled on the corner of your monitor if you absolutely need it. "

Ilya nods, the corner of his mouth tilting up again, like he knows something Shane doesn't. "Perfect. I will make use of it."

"Cool," Shane says, not taking a step back and out of the small cubicle. "Welcome to the company, Ilya."

"Thank you, Shane."



The next time Shane hears from Ilya is three days later, forty minutes after Shane arrives to the office. He nearly misses the trill of the phone as Hayden barrels into the space again, this time with what looks like a fresh bruise blooming on his cheekbone. Shane's confused and concerned expression must speak louder than any of his words could, because Hayden sighs, shoulders sagging as his backpack falls into the ground to be kicked and discarded for the both of them to trip on throughout the day.

"I was wrestling with Ruby," Hayden explains halfheartedly, pointing to the blemished skin. "She's a beast—it was my fault for thinking it was a game, really."

"Put some ice on that," Shane tells him and Hayden waves him off. "Seriously, dude. You look rough."

"Better answer that phone before someone files a complaint," Hayden says back, making Shane roll his eyes because he does have a point.

"This is Shane with IT."

"Ah. Hello, Shane."

It's easy to place the voice when it's accompanied by a thick accent. The memory of their first meeting flashes in Shane's mind as he says: "Hi, Ilya. How can I help you?"

"I am having computer issue," Ilya starts and in the background Shane can make out the frequent clicking of a mouse and what sounds like a hand flat-palming the keyboard. "I need help."

"You can go ahead and submit a ticket," Shane tells him, opening up his email to double check that he didn't miss anything, unsurprised to find no new messages. "And Hayden or I will get to it as soon as possible—"

"But you are already here."

Shane blinks, eyebrows furrowing. "What?"

"You are already on phone," Ilya says casually. "So, you can just come help me, yes?"

"I, um. I have to go in order based on the tickets submitted," Shane tries explaining through the confusion. "So when you submit your ticket, I'll go ahead—"

"I need you now, Shane."

Shane fumbles with the phone as the low words vibrate through the receiver and directly into his ear, short circuiting his brain and rendering him into a useless, *useless* idiot. He manages to catch the phone by the cord before it can tumble onto the floor, and from the corner of his eye he can see Hayden whip his head around curiously. Shane chooses to ignore it, instead focusing on taking a deep breath and pressing the phone back into his ear, squeezing his eyes shut and pushing his askew glasses back into place. "Yeah—I mean, I get that, um, this is important. Just... ticket. Submit one. Please."

There's a beat of silence quickly followed by the sound of a distant, annoyed groan. It's soon replaced by Ilya's voice. "Fine."

The call is ended immediately, and within ten seconds there's a new email in Shane's inbox.

NAME: Ilya Rozanov **EMAIL:** ilya.rozanov@outlook.com

REQUEST TYPE: Other

REQUEST INFORMATION: here is ticket. come help me.

Shane stares at the ticket, wondering if he's even allowed to respond to it considering it tells him fuck all about the problem. He's up before he can debate with himself for long, knowing that if he doesn't get to it then Hayden will, and Hayden has the tendency to be less kind about these things.

Ilya is sitting with his legs spread, spinning in his office chair and only coming to a halt when Shane stands in front of him awkwardly, hands shoved into the pockets of his pants. If he's dizzy at all, Ilya does a great job at hiding it. Instead, he grins, eyes dragging down Shane and back up with no words. Shane gives it a good ten seconds until he's the one to break the silence.

"So. What did you need?"

"You got my ticket," Ilya smiles, cocking his head.

"Well, yes," Shane says, eyebrows furrowing. "But you didn't specify exactly what was going on."

"It is weird," Ilya starts with a heavy sigh, wheeling back to sit in front of his computer, wiggling the mouse and beckoning Shane over with another tilt of his head. Shane complies, standing behind him with his arms crossed and watching as Ilya's cursor moves around on screen as he speaks. "Whenever I try to open program, the screen goes black. Look."

And sure enough, with two clicks of the mouse, the monitor goes black. Shane's eyebrows crease further as he leans forward, an intrigued hum sounding in his throat. "How long does it take for it to go back to normal?"

"I have to turn off computer," Ilya explains as he makes a show of holding the power button down on the tower, staring at Shane the whole time. When he turns it back on, he looks away to type his password.

Shane ignores the fact that he can see it's *PasswordFuckYou* and instead tries to think of what the issue could be. "That's so weird," he mumbles mostly to himself. "I've never seen that happen."

"Me neither," Ilya says unhelpfully. "But is not good, yes? Probably bad."

"Not necessarily," Shane says, gesturing for Ilya to give him some room so he can start figuring his way around the problem.

He's used to working in silence. Usually, the moment he has to hop on someone's computer to resolve an issue, they take it as an opportunity to get away from their desk and socialize, explore the dull hallways and have some sense of freedom even if it's for a fleeting moment. Which is why he's surprised when he hears Ilya's voice several minutes later.

"So... You like computers?"

Shane pauses, looking his over his shoulder, somewhat surprised to find Ilya looking at him and actually expecting a reply. "Um. Yeah, I guess."

Ilya raises an eyebrow. "You *guess*?"

"Well, I like technology," Shane explains the best he can. "Not *just* computers. I've always been a tech guy, so, yeah."

"Ah," Ilya says with a nod that Shane catches right before he turns back around. "But the, um, fixing computers. It is something you are good at?"

"Sure," Shane shrugs, pressing his lips together in thought before squatting down to get on the same level as the tower nestled in its space in the desk. He shuts it off before opening the case and looking inside, brain working quickly as he goes through his options.

"What are you doing?"

Shane blinks, again caught off guard by the reminded presence. "Trying to see if anything looks out of place."

"Ah," Ilya says again. "How will you know?"

"I don't know," Shane answers with a shrug. "I usually just... *know*."

"That is boring."

"Jesus," Shane mumbles, pressing his thumb to his inner eyebrow like that'll keep his mind from straying. He turns to look at Ilya again. "I'm really sorry, but it's sort of hard to focus if I'm talking."

Ilya's eyes widen in surprise, mouth falling open. "Oh. Sorry."

"That's okay," Shane mutters, feeling bad for having to be so blunt but also not knowing what else he could have said to get his point across. He takes the small win of silence and runs with it, losing himself in the motions. He's not sure how much time passes, if the minutes are nearing hours, but eventually he turns the computer back on, standing and leaning over the desk with one hand planted on the surface to brace himself and the other holding onto the mouse. He logs into Ilya's account, ignoring the confused sound Ilya makes when he gets the password right, and goes to open the program. The screen stays on. Shane smiles. "There you go. All fixed."

Ilya whistles, impressed. "Wow. You are genius."

"It's nothing, really," Shane brushes off, always uncomfortable with compliments no matter how small.

Ilya raises his eyebrows. "So you are calling me stupid?"

Shane gapes, taken aback by the sudden accusation. "What? No! No, I wouldn't—you're not stupid. I just meant it—it's my job—"

He's interrupted when Ilya breaks into a smile before laughing, head tilting back toward the ceiling before looking at Shane, shaking his head. "Ah—no, no—I am sorry. It was a joke. I know is your job."

Shane deflates with relief, shoulders dropping as he lets out a shaky exhale. "Oh."

"I am very impressed with your computer magic," Ilya continues.

"Thanks." The silence between them stretches until Shane thinks he might have a panic attack. "I... I should probably go."

Ilya presses his lips together before nodding. "Okay. See you, Shane."



It takes two weeks for Shane to see Ilya again.

Noon, right after Hayden comes back from his lunch break which doubled for taking the twins to their dentist appointments, Shane takes his lunch box into the break room, neatly unpacking his sandwich, ginger ale, apple slices, and granola bar onto the napkin laid out on the table. Luckily, there's no one else in the area—everyone tends to use their lunch break to get out of the office, enjoy the fresh air for a bit before they're forced to inhale the stale, dusty air. But Shane prefers it like this, having some silence to himself before he heads back and is subjected to one of Hayden's many rants or retold stories. Not that he minds them, but sometimes he'd like it if Hayden had nothing to say.

Four minutes later Ilya Rozanov walks in, making his way straight toward the microwave where he tosses his Tupperware in. No lunch box, Shane notes. Just an orange in his hand and the container rotating inside the microwave. When the timer runs out and it chimes, Shane looks away and down at his half-eaten sandwich, carefully shoving an apple slice in his mouth and trying to act oblivious when Ilya approaches him.

He practically towers over Shane, even if he's doing nothing more than standing at the side of the table. He points to the empty seat right beside him, amongst all the other lonesome and empty seats around. "Someone is sitting here?"

Shane chokes down his apple, ignoring the way it feels like a brick is sliding down his chest. "Um, no. No, it's free."

"Is okay?" Ilya asks after a few seconds, ducking his head down slightly to meet Shane's eyes. "If I sit?"

"Yeah, sure," Shane nods, clearing his throat and pressing the side of his knuckle to his upper lip as he swallows what's left in his mouth. "That's fine."

Ilya's eyes study Shane's face carefully. He shrugs, looking around the break room. "Is okay if you say no. I will fuck off, just say the word."

Shane shakes his head. He finds himself not really minding, especially since it seems like Ilya actually cares what he has to say. "No, really, I don't mind. You can sit."

Ilya hesitates, as if waiting for Shane to take the invitation back. When he doesn't, Ilya sets his things down and makes himself comfortable, peeling his orange with skilled hands. Shane watches intently, somewhat transfixed by the way the peel comes off in one piece instead of in small chunks. Ilya glances over at him, tongue in his cheek before he starts talking. "Is first time I see you in break room."

"I take my lunch early," Shane says. Hayden's family priorities sort of fucked with his schedule today, but he's willing to sit in the discomfort of a fucked up schedule if it means keeping a friend.

"So, around twelve?"

"Eleven," Shane corrects. "Gives me time to be hungry for dinner."

"Ah," Ilya nods with a smile, popping an orange wedge into his mouth. "You have a schedule, then?"

"Keeps me focused," Shane nods, taking a hefty bite of his sandwich.

They chew in unison, both of them looking at everything but each other. Finally, Ilya breaks the silence again. "You like apples?"

Shane blinks. "Uh. Yeah. They're alright."

Ilya nods again, gaze lingering on Shane before he looks back down at his food. Again, the silence settles between them. Shane waits for the next question, the next conversation starter, but is met with disappointment when Ilya's quietness continues to stretch. Shane tears the wrapper of his granola bar, fidgeting with the trash until the silence becomes unbearable. He doesn't want the conversation to end. Not like this, at least.

"So, are you... are you Russian?"

Ilya looks over at him suddenly, like he hadn't expected Shane to say anything. The surprise is replaced with an amused grin and a shrug that bumps Shane's shoulder slightly. "What gave it away? My hair?"

Shane laughs, glancing down at the table. "No, I just didn't want to assume. What part are you from?"

"Moscow," Ilya answers, clipped but not unkind.

"Is it nice there?" Shane asks, wondering if that's even a good question to ask.

Ilya shrugs, bottom lip jutting out as he stabs at his food with his fork. "Is okay. I didn't like it there, so I moved here for school. Became citizen, got boring job, became boring Canadian. Is okay."

Shane swallows down a dry bit of his sandwich. "Better than Russia?"

Ilya looks at him, eyes flickering from Shane's eyes down to his mouth. "Yes. Much better."

Shane finds himself smiling, a glimmer of light trickling from his chest down to his stomach. The silence that comes after is lighter this time.



Realistically, it shouldn't be a surprise when the phone rings only twenty minutes after Shane has sat down at his desk in the early morning.

Although the extension is familiar, he can't quite place it. Not until he's answering the call and met with the familiar, low drawl of accented English.

"Hello. I need help."

"Ilya," Shane says in something of a greeting.

"Shane," Ilya says back. "Can you come help me, please?"

Shane sighs. "You need to—"

Ilya tsks loudly. "Check your email, Shane Hollander. I sent ticket."

NAME: Ilya Rozanov **EMAIL:** ilya.rozanov@outlook.com

REQUEST TYPE: Other

REQUEST INFORMATION: another ticket. come help.

Shane rolls his eyes at the vagueness again. But if he's one thing, it's professional. "Alright, I see it. I'll be there in a second."

"See you," Ilya practically sings, hanging up before Shane can.

As Shane makes his way to Ilya's cubicle, he runs into Hayden coming out of the elevator. "You're late," he offers unhelpfully, smiling when Hayden almost trips.

"Fuck off," Hayden says, regaining his balance rather quickly. "Amber had a blowout in her car seat. It was a shit show—*literally*."

"That's..." Shane frowns, trying to clear the mental image from his head. "So gross. Jesus."

"The joy of kids, man," Hayden offers with a sigh. He pauses, tilting his head. "Where are you off to anyway?"

"The new guy's having computer problems," Shane says, knowing that Hayden will catch on about who he's speaking of.

"Again? Is he the unluckiest fucker in the office or something?"

"Seems like it," Shane huffs. "I'll make it quick. I'm pretty sure I saw another ticket request."

"I'll take care of it," Hayden says breezily, already treading toward their shared office. "Have fun!"

"You know I won't!"

He hurries into the elevator, punching the correct floor number and leaning back against the wall as it ascends. When he gets to Ilya's cubicle, Ilya is standing already, leaning back against the desk and playing with what looks like a stress-ball. His ankles are crossed, beat up Converse peeking out from the hem of his somewhat nicely tailored pants. His button up is half tucked in, like he hadn't bothered to regard it before leaving the house, and Shane finds himself tempted to go ahead and fix it.

Though, that thought is interrupted as Ilya says: "Good morning, Shane."

"Hi Ilya," Shane answers back. "What seems to be the problem?"

Ilya tosses the ball into the air, eyes tracking it until it lands in his hand. "I see someone with different picture on their computer," he starts explaining. "Martha, receptionist. Is picture of her ugly husband."

Shane listens to each word carefully, only to be more confused as the sentence continues. When Ilya doesn't follow up, Shane's eyebrows crease. "Okay...? What does that have to do with me?"

"Help me change my picture."

Shane blinks once and then twice. Even a third time for good measure when Ilya says nothing else. "You can't be serious."

Ilya stares at him with every ounce of seriousness he can possibly carry, unblinking. "I am very serious. I need help with computer, you are computer helper. That is why I call you here."

"Ilya," Shane starts slowly, pressing his hands together, the tips of his fingers pointed directly at Ilya. "I'm here to help with *real* problems."

"This is real problem!" Ilya argues, having the nerve to look offended.

Shane sighs, pinching the bridge of his nose. This is probably going to go by quicker if he just goes with it. "Okay, fine. Whatever. What picture do you want?"

"I have many options," Ilya starts, plopping down onto his chair, the wheels rolling beneath him as he scoots to his desk. He opens the photos, clicking on the first one of what looks like a photo of a bear, though the quality is terrible and it mostly looks like a big brown blur. "This is bear for Russia. Very cool." He clicks the arrow, sliding to the next photo of what looks like a mixed breed dog. "This is random dog I found on Google. Very cute."

The next photo is of Ilya. Ilya shirtless. A shirtless picture of Ilya flexing in the mirror of a bathroom—*his* bathroom probably. What doesn't help is that he's built like something out of Shane's wet dreams—defined pecs, round biceps, a sculpted abdomen littered with all sorts of angel kisses, defined lines leading down his pelvis, and the dark shadow of his happy trail leaving little to the imagination. To make it worse, there's an unlit cigarette hanging from between his full lips. Shane gapes, mouth clamping shut when he realizes he's *staring*. Ilya looks back over his shoulder, no hint of shame evident on his face. "Oops," he says very blandly. "How did that one get in there?"

Shane swallows, looking away and at the ceiling and then the walls and the floor to keep his dick from doing something very stupid. *Get a fucking grip*. "So," he says weakly. "Did you pick one or not?"

Ilya presses his lips together, humming in thought. "Hmm. No, not yet. Which one do you think?"

"The dog," Shane says quickly, already taking the mouse from Ilya and going back to the previous photo, setting the stupid picture as his wallpaper. "There. It's done."

"Wow, Mr. IT Man," Ilya teases, leaning back in his chair and looking up at Shane. "You are very good."

"Is that all?" Shane asks, sweat starting to bead at the collar of his shirt, skin ablaze beneath the attention of Ilya.

Ilya observes him carefully, eyes narrowed as they drag down Shane's being before flickering back to his face. "Yes, that is all. Thank you, Shane."

Shane nods clumsily, already backing up toward the hallway. "Anytime, Ilya."

He's turning on his heel and rushing to the elevators in a record amount of time. When the steel doors shut, he presses his forehead to the cool wall, willing his erection to go the fuck away.



Another issue arises with Ilya's computer only two days later. According to Ilya's two tickets submitted and three missed calls, it's urgent. Detrimental, even. And as much as Shane would love to go see what the fuck Ilya wants, he has a job to do, and right now that consists of staying on the line with someone who's most definitely about to get scammed via work email. So, he sends Hayden to go deal with the damage, trusting that he'll resolve whatever issue Ilya is having today.

It comes back to bite him in the ass when Hayden returns not even five minutes later. He does a double take when Hayden sits down. Shane mutes the call quickly. "What the hell? That was quick—"

"He said he wants you."

"What?" Shane nearly snaps, shaking his head. "No, I'm busy right now. Tell him that."

"I didn't even get the chance to say anything!" Hayden exclaims, throwing his hands up in exasperation. "He just looked at me and went, 'ah, no', and shooed me away. And then he said 'go get me Shane' and shushed me when I tried explaining that you were busy!"

Shane stares at him, jaw nearly unhinged. "This... this is ridiculous—I'm on a *call*."

"Here," Hayden offers, tilting his head toward his phone. "I can take care of it."

"Yeah but you shouldn't have to—"

"Listen, I'd rather that than deal with that Rozanov asshole again," Hayden tells him. When Shane presses his lips together in guilt, Hayden rolls his eyes. "Come on, transfer it over."

Shane obliges with a sigh, taking his glasses off to run his hand over his face, pushing his hair back and hurrying toward the elevator. When he gets to Ilya's space, Ilya is sitting in the chair, legs spread as usual, and a grin on his face. "Oh, there you are."

Shane tongues his cheek in annoyance. "You know, Hayden could have helped you, too."

"Yes but I do not want the little elf boy," Ilya says, waving a hand. "I want *you*."

Shane's knees buckle despite himself, but he shakes himself off, clearing his throat and doing his fucking job because he has to. "What seems to be the problem, then?"

"My computer," Ilya starts, pointing at the black screen. "Weirdest thing. It will not turn on anymore."

"Oh?" Shane says, tilting his head in curiosity and nearing the monitor. Sure enough, the tower won't turn on even with the power button. Neither will the monitor. "Did it restart at all?"

"No clue," Ilya sighs, arms behind his head as he leans back in his chair. It's a wonder that it doesn't flip. "Just... *boom*. Went black. Couldn't turn it on."

Shane hums, getting on his knees to examine the tower, hitting his head as he tries to get closer. He grumbles, ignoring the snort that comes from behind him. It's very easy to find the problem, mostly because it isn't even a problem to begin with.

Shane grabs a loose cord, straightening up and making sure to not hit his head on the desk this time. When he slowly turns to look at Ilya, he's met with an annoying smile. "Your computer is unplugged."

"What?" Ilya deadpans, not surprised in the slightest. "How this happened?"

Shane blinks at him, mouth opening in closing in an attempt to find something to say that isn't *are you fucking kidding me?* "Well, someone probably unplugged it."

"You can fix it, yes?" Ilya asks although it doesn't seem like much of a question, not when he leans back in his chair with a grin, eyes dragging down Shane's still kneeling body.

Shane plugs it back in before standing and blinking slowly at Ilya. "There. It's fixed."

"Always so quick," Ilya nearly purrs.

Shane's breath catches in his throat, face burning as he whips around, practically running back to the elevators where he sits in embarrassment and confusion that lingers for the rest of the day.



Another day brings the same routine Shane likes having—this time unaltered by Hayden and his family schedule, meaning he gets to have his lunch at eleven o'clock, exactly how it's meant to be. The only difference this time is that Ilya is in the break room when Shane arrives, his food already heated up and set up in front of him. He's sitting in the space place as the last time he was here and Shane hesitates for a moment before deciding that it really isn't a big deal and taking his usual seat, right beside Ilya.

"Hey," Shane says as he lets his lunch box down, unzipping it, the sound sudden in the empty space around them.

Ilya snaps his head up, looking somewhat surprised. "Hi," he says back, going back to peeling his orange, the citrus notes mixing with the bitterness of smoke that seems to linger on Ilya.

"Did you take your lunch early today?" Shane asks curiously, watching the perfectly intact peel drop from Ilya's fingers.

Ilya glances at him for a second before looking away. "What do you mean?"

"It's just... I never see you here this early," Shane explains. "Usually I'm by myself."

"Was hungry," Ilya shrugs, thumb pushing into the flesh of his orange, dislodging a seed.

Shane nods, taking out his lunch neatly. First his napkin, unfolded and placed like a mat. Then his sandwich, on his left. Apple slices in the middle, granola bar on the right. He pauses his task, looking up and over only to find Ilya smiling at him. It lingers for a moment before Ilya looks away, shoveling at the rice in his container.

"So," Shane starts through a bite of an apple slice. "Are you liking it here so far?"

It's been almost two months now, but Shane thinks that's a decent amount of time to form an opinion. Ilya shrugs after a few seconds of thinking. "I mean... Is nice. Boring but nice."

"It's not *that* boring," Shane tries, a smile teasing at his mouth.

Ilya looks over at him. "I like boring."

"Oh," Shane says, meeting Ilya's eyes. "That's good, then."

Ilya chews for a moment before pointing his fork at Shane. "You like to eat?"

Shane blinks at the sudden question, wondering if it's some sort of set up or not. "Yeah, why?"

"I want new places to try," Ilya explains nonchalantly. "But I hate going by myself. Is... nervous?"

"Nerve wracking?"

"Yes, is that," Ilya nods quickly. "But I do not know what places are worth going to. Or who to go with."

Shane thinks for a moment, trying to mentally list all the places he's been to in all of his life. "There's this Italian place downtown that my parents like."

"You go there a lot?" Ilya asks, straightening up in curiosity.

"No," Shane tells him, shaking his head. "I don't really like it."

Ilya pauses, eyebrows furrowing. "Well, where do you like?"

"I don't know," Shane replies, feeling a bit lame at his lack of expertise in local cuisine. "It depends."

Ilya's question is quick: "On what?"

"If I want to eat out."

Ilya stares at him with an unreadable expression. The silence passes by in steady beats until he finally says, "Okay. I will ask someone else, then."

Shane blinks again before looking down at his bruising apples, not liking the feeling of disappointment that sits with him.



Much to Shane's surprise, there are no computer problems for a couple of weeks that seem to stretch on for decades. It's weird not getting an annoyingly vague request for help. It's weird not hearing from or seeing Ilya at all. Admittedly, Shane feels sort of... bummed. He's found, through his absence, that he likes talking to Ilya a whole lot. He likes looking at him, too. Likes the sound of him laughing. The questions he asks. The stupid computer problems he has.

To distract himself from letting the realization that maybe, unfortunately, he cares a little too much about Ilya, Shane decides to try breaking out of his usual routine. Not by much—he isn't quite ready for that yet—but instead of taking his lunch in the break room, he goes outside to take a breather and walk around, destination unknown and steps ceaseless.

Eventually, he finds himself near the back of the building. Coincidentally, he finds Ilya there, too. Leaning against a wall with a No Smoking sign bolted to it. Shane's brain to mouth filter falters at the first sight of Ilya in weeks. "This is a no smoking area."

Ilya whips around, the cigarette hanging between his middle and pointer finger. He's wearing a denim jacket over his usual, neutral colored button up shirt (today it's grey), and his free hand is tucked into the pocket. He turns his face to blow the smoke away before coming back to regard Shane with a once over, glancing at the sign briefly. "Is stupid sign. I cannot read English."

Shane is smiling absentmindedly. "And you've managed to make it this far?"

Ilya shrugs, the corner of his mouth starting to tilt up before being replaced with an indifferent pout, his lower lip jutting out for a moment. "I am very skillful."

Shane laughs, the sound filling all the gaps in between them. He looks down and takes a step toward Ilya, doing his best to ignore the wretched smell of smoke because he wants to hang out with him, even if it's for a little bit. Just before he has to get back to work. "You know, smoking isn't good for you."

"Wow," Ilya deadpans. "That is first time I heard that. Thank you for telling me, I will quit tomorrow."

"Asshole," Shane says with no real bite.

This time, Ilya smiles, putting the cigarette between his lips. "What are you doing here? Is eleven. You should be eating lunch, no?"

Shane pauses, wondering when Ilya started paying so much attention to him. "Yeah, but I wanted to change it up and get some fresh air."

Ilya nods, the corners of his lips pulled down in thought as he looks around. "Air is very fresh."

"What are *you* doing out here?"

"Smoke break," Ilya answers simply. "Got bored sitting down."

Shane hums, tilting his head as Ilya stares at him. "I would have expected your computer to have an issue by now."

Ilya's stoic expression softens, his eyebrow raising slowly. "Oh?"

"I've been bored all day," Shane says, looking around at the trees swaying in the subtle breezes, rocking on his heels to feign indifference. "No tickets."

"No tickets," Ilya repeats, the corner of his mouth tilting up as he slots the cigarette between his lips again. "What a terrible thing."

The day passes with a spark reignited in Shane's chest. He tries not to think about what that means, how it seemed like time was dragging when he didn't have another interaction with Ilya to slot in his pocket and think of to pass the day. Now, he thinks of the smoke curling from Ilya's exhale, lost in the air above them. He thinks of Ilya's subtle smile, of the way they walked back inside together and shared an elevator ride before Ilya was the first to get off on his respected floor.

Soon, it's the end of the day, five minutes until he's good to head out. His computer chimes with a new email. A new ticket.

Hayden groans, his computer already shut off and his backpack already hanging off one shoulder. "What the hell? Why do these fuckers wait until we're about to leave to submit shit?"

Shane shoves the excitement down, waving Hayden off. "Go ahead, man. I'll deal with it.

"Are you sure?" Hayden asks like the good friend he is, even if he's already halfway out the door. "You really don't have to, I can stay a little longer—"

"Go," Shane insists. "I know the twins have their recital."

Hayden exhales in relief, perking back up to give his thanks. "You're a live saver, man. I'll tell Jackie to bake those cookies you like!"

Shane waves him off again, watching as Hayden practically sprints out and down the hall to the elevators.

When Shane opens the ticket, he smiles.

NAME: Ilya Rozanov **EMAIL:** ilya.rozanov@outlook.com

REQUEST TYPE: Other

REQUEST INFORMATION: saving you from boredom. come help.

The floor is empty, save for the few people who stand by in clusters to gossip, ignoring Shane as he walks right past and to Ilya's cubicle where he's still sitting, not in a rush to go home by any means. Shane hides his smile behind the back of his hand, straightening up and plastering the most serious and professional expression he can muster as he approaches Ilya.

"Hello, sir. I got your ticket."

A slow, syrupy grin melts onto Ilya's face. "Ah, did you? I thought maybe I was too late."

"Well, I would hate for you to go home with an unresolved issue," Shane says, proud of the way he doesn't stammer or blush his way through the sentence, even with Ilya staring at him so intensely. "What seems to be the problem now?"

"Is small problem," Ilya starts, holding his hand up to show Shane his pinched fingers, demonstrating how small the problem is. "All day, my head starts to hurt. Brightness on screen is killing me. Can you fix it?"

Shane pretends to think about it, looking up and taking a breath before tilting his head from side to side in deliberation. "I think maybe I get help you out. Can I take a look at your settings?"

"Whatever you want," Ilya says, voice quieter than before. He pushes back from his desk, giving Shane way to click around on the screen.

"So," Ilya starts, the word drawn out, his full lips pursed out into a circle. "I wanted to try that Italian place tonight. The one you said your parents like."

"Oh, really?" Shane asks, looking over his shoulder in time to find Ilya nodding. "That's cool. Hopefully you like it, my mom says they have great wine."

"Yes, but I have problem," Ilya starts with a long sigh following his trail of words. "Is just... I do not want to go alone, yes? And I was wondering—"

"Oh, they seat singles," Shane explains, having somewhat of an idea where Ilya is going with this. "There's a whole section for people that are eating alone, so it isn't weird, you know?"

Ilya blinks, mouth opening and closing in silence. "Oh, um. That is good to know, but... is not what I meant."

Shane lowers the brightness on the screen. "It's not?"

"No," Ilya says and then goes silent, the quietness passing for a few seconds. "Do you, ah... Have plans for dinner? Tonight?"

"Yeah. I meal prep every Sunday so I don't have to worry about dinner when I get home." Shane pauses, furrowing his eyebrows. "And it's Thursday. I try not to eat out on weekdays."

"Ah. Okay," Ilya says, following it up with nothing else.

Shane blinks, straightening up and looking between Ilya and the monitor. "I, um. Went ahead and lowered the brightness, so hopefully that helps out with your headaches."

"Thank you," Ilya says, standing up and grabbing his backpack shoved beneath his desk. Like this, he straightens up right in front of Shane, gaze flickering between Shane's eyes. "I should go."

"Yeah—yeah, me too," Shane nods, clearing his throat. "I need to get my stuff."

Ilya's eyes dance across his face before nodding, stepping away. "We can take elevator together."

Shane finds himself scrambling to follow as Ilya starts making his way toward the elevators. When the doors part and they step on, their shoulders touch between them. Ilya has already selected the button for Shane's floor and the main floor, and their bodies sway for a moment before stilling.

"I'll see you around?" Shane tries just before the doors open, stealing a glance at Ilya who is already looking at him.

Again, Ilya's stare tracks every feature on Shane's face. The corner of his mouth tilts up subtly as he hums. "Yes. Of course."

When Shane gets off, he makes sure to turn around and wave one last time before the steel doors shut and he's left with the memory of Ilya behind them.



Much to Shane's surprise, there are no tickets from Ilya on Friday. He doesn't complain, at least he does his best not to, but after keeping himself busy with what work they *do* have only to come back with no vague request asking Shane specifically to come, he starts to get a little agitated.

"Hey," he says to Hayden, disrupting him from whatever YouTube video playing at zero volume on his phone. "Did you get any tickets from Ilya at all?"

Hayden's face scrunches in confusion. "Ilya? Rozanov? The asshole that always insists that *you* help him?"

"Yeah," Shane nods. There's only one Ilya around here. "Has there been any tickets from him?"

"No," Hayden says slowly, turning in his chair to properly look at Shane. "Why?"

"No reason," Shane shrugs clumsily, going back to refresh his emails again. No new messages. "Just wondering."

He can feel Hayden staring right at the back of his head, but refuses to turn around and let *this*, whatever it may be, be acknowledged. Though, he doesn't have to regard Hayden for him to speak anyway. "Are you two fucking?"

Shane jumps, knee crashing into the bottom of the desk, sure to leave a bruise. He whips around, eyes wide, nearly bulging out of his head. "What?! No! What—why are you saying that?"

"Hey! I'm not judging," Hayden says, raising his hands in defense. "It's good if you are—you need to get laid, man. And if it's by fucking some annoying Russian with computer problems, go for it. It's your life, not mine."

"We're not—we haven't—" Shane sighs, closing his eyes and doing his best to get his breathing back to normal. It shouldn't be as intimidating as it is, but he knows it'll feel better getting it off his chest instead of letting it sit there, unnamed, unsaid. "I think... I like him."

"Oh shit," Hayden says, eyes widening. "Oh—you have, like, a crush on him."

"Crush is such a stupid word," Shane mumbles, hiding his blush by turning around to look at his computer instead. "But, um. Yeah. Yeah, I think so."

"Well, that's nice buddy!" Hayden encourages in the same voice he uses when talking to his kids. Shane hates it a little but also sort of desperately needs it right now, thanks. "What are you gonna do? Ask him out?"

"What? No," Shane says quickly. "I can't—I can't do that. What if I freak him out? I don't even know if—he likes me. God. What the fuck."

"Okay, calm down," Hayden says unhelpfully. "You're okay. You don't have to jump in right away, but maybe try easing into it! If he bothers you this much, he probably likes you a little."

As much as that reassures Shane, it also freaks him out. The thought of Ilya liking him back is terrifying within itself. He's everything Shane has wanted and been scared of. What if he tries, and Ilya is disappointed? What if Ilya finds out that Shane really isn't all that interesting?

"Someone submitted a ticket," Hayden informs him, cutting through all his racing thoughts. "And I think it's for you."

Sure enough, there it is.

NAME: Ilya Rozanov **EMAIL:** ilya.rozanov@outlook.com

REQUEST TYPE: Other

REQUEST INFORMATION: shane come here.

Even though he's made the journey more times than he can count, Shane's chest still flutters the closer he gets to Ilya. It shouldn't be a surprise to see him sitting there, a lopsided smile on his face as Shane stands in front of him, hands clasped together.

"I, um. I saw your ticket," Shane says, looking down to keep his smile from splitting his face.

"Yes," Ilya nods, standing up, the chair rolling away from him as he walks right in front of Shane, the tips of their shoes touching. "But I am liar."

"Liar?" Shane parrots, unable to simmer down his grin.

"Yes," Ilya nods with a playful sigh, pressing his lips together with a tsk. "Is computer problem, yes, but it is not *this* computer."

"Oh?" Shane asks, body swaying into Ilya's, a planet pulled into the orbit of a golden star. "Which computer is it, then?"

"The computer at my home," Ilya continues with an uncaring shrug. "It will not turn on and I do not know what to do. Is very tricky. I will need someone smart."

"Should I get Hayden?" Shane teases, hoping he can get something out of Ilya. What, he's not too sure, but he'll take anything.

"He cannot help me with this," Ilya says, voice so quiet it's nearly a whisper. He ducks his head to properly look at Shane's drifting eyes. "Only you, yes?"

Shane blinks, coming to the realization that he's being invited to Ilya's home. To fix a computer, sure, but nevertheless, he's *being invited to Ilya's home*. He'll take what he can fucking get. "I, um. I'm free tonight, if you need help."

Ilya's smile widens. He reaches into his own back pocket, pulling his phone out and nudging it into Shane's hand. "Give me your number. I will text you the address."

Shane is complying before Ilya has even finished his sentence. When numbers have been successfully exchanged, Shane wills himself to meet Ilya's eyes, instinctively mirroring his grin. "So, um," Shane starts, clearing his throat when his voice cracks. "I'll... I'll see you tonight, then?"

"You will," Ilya nods.

With that, Shane goes back to his desk, ignoring the curious but knowing glance Hayden sends his way.



Ilya's apartment complex is a newer one, built right where there used to be a run down fast food restaurant Shane would pass on his way to school when he was younger. When Shane gets there, he hovers by the door for several minutes, wondering if it's more appropriate to send a text or knock. Eventually, he settles for the knocking, knowing his mom would probably chastise him if she ever, somehow, found out he showed up to his crush's house and shot a *here* text instead of knocking. So, he raises his fist to the door, three knocks landing on the surface and cutting through the silence around his nervous swallows and breathing.

Ilya answers the door after only a handful of seconds. Freshly showered if his damp curls are any indication, the hair pushed away from his face. There's a plain white t-shirt hugging every curve and muscle of his torso, and his legs are clad in loose, grey sweatpants. He looks comfortable, *relaxed*. A different version of himself compared to the one Shane only sees at work. Somehow, he looks even better like this.

"Come in," Ilya tells him when Shane forgets to say something, opening the door further and moving aside to let Shane step over the threshold. Shane gives him what he hopes is a polite smile, noting that Ilya is wearing only socks, no shoes.

"Do you want me to take my shoes off?"

"If that's okay," Ilya says, tilting his chin toward a shoe rack tucked against the wall of the entryway. "You can leave them right there. No shoes in the house—Russian rule."

Shane is quick to oblige, toeing his sneakers off and tucking them into the empty space beside Ilya's dirty Converse. When he's done, he straightens up, rubbing his sweaty hands on the his thighs, the rough material of his jeans giving him something to focus on other than the fact that he's in Ilya's apartment. It's clean, not fully decorated but still nice. An open layout, the living room in view even from where Shane is standing. A simple blue sectional right in front of a mounted television with a Netflix show paused on its title screen.

He kicks into motion when Ilya gestures at him to follow, heading straight into the kitchen and rummaging through his fridge while Shane hovers by the island awkwardly, unsure if it would be polite to sit. Ilya takes out a green can, holding out, offering it. "Ginger ale," he says. "Do you want some?"

"Oh, yeah," Shane says easily, shortening the distance to accept the offering, cracking it open and taking a lengthy sip, eyes watering at the carbonation. "Thank you."

"Is good? Cold enough?" Ilya asks, taking a Coke out for himself, leaning against the island and studying Shane carefully.

"It's great," Shane nods, pausing when he notes the pots and pans on the stove. "Are you cooking something?"

"Made myself dinner," Ilya explains with a shrug. "But I have not eaten yet. Have you?"

"No, actually," Shane admits. Between panicking about coming over and trying to look somewhat presentable, he hadn't touched the meal prepped dinner in his freezer.

"I make enough for two," Ilya tells him with a shrug, already opening one of the cabinets and taking two plates out. "Is garlic chicken, rice, green beans. Is okay?"

Shane nods, stomach rumbling at the smell that curls out from the pan Ilya uncovers. "It sounds good, yeah."

Ilya works on plating their food, lips puckered in concentration while Shane watches him carefully, endeared by the precision and the way Ilya makes sure each food has their respective section on the plate, not overlapping in the slightest. When he's done, he claps his hands and rubs his palms quickly, like he's trying to start another fire in Shane's chest. "So," Ilya starts pointing to the living room and then the dining table. "We can eat in living room or at table. I do not mind, is your choice."

Shane considers each option. The dining table is at an awkward place, tucked into the corner of an open area, but the view of the TV is blocked. But if he drops any crumb in the living room, he might start to spiral. But the silence in the dining room might kill him. "What were you watching?" he asks instead, tilting his chin toward the TV.

Ilya looks back at the screen like he had forgotten that it was on. "Oh, is show I found. *Love, Death, Robots*. I don't know, I think... Maybe you will like it? It says 'robots' and you like that sort of thing, no?"

"Robots are cool," Shane says with a small laugh, sort of surprised that Ilya went through such a thought process. "We can watch it, it sounds cool."

"We eat in living room then," Ilya says, making the choice for them, making Shane's shoulders sag in relief.

They sit a good distance from each other, Shane doing his best to take up as little space as possible while Ilya widens his legs, gets comfortable just like he does at work, eyes focused on the television before sliding back to Shane. He gives him a small, reassuring smile that Shane absentmindedly returns, the tension in his body softening, even if only a bit.

The show is interesting. Good animation, interesting plot lines, but it's most definitely not *about* robots. There are robots here and there, sure, but to say that it's the main premise would be a lie. It seems as if Ilya realizes the same thing around the same time, face scrunched into confusion, mouth hanging open as the third episode plays. "The fuck is this?" he says to no one in particular, hand raised, palm up, toward the TV. "He finds tiny people in freezer? Why?"

"I think, like, his freezer contains a rapidly growing civilization," Shane explains with a laugh. Their plates are empty, sitting on the coffee table, forgotten as the show takes up most of their attention now.

"Yes, but *why*?" Ilya stresses, eyes widening when a small explosion happens on screen. "What the fuck. Where are the robots?"

This time, Shane lets himself laugh, head leaning against the back of the sofa as he looks at Ilya, intrigued by his expressions. "I feel like the whole *robots* thing is probably going to be, like, a fraction of the show."

"First episode had robots," Ilya tries arguing before failing with an exasperated click of his tongue, hand waving in dismissal. "Whatever. I'm sorry."

"What? Why?" Shane blinks, sitting up properly. "It's a good show. I might start watching it at home."

The tension on Ilya's face melts, replaced by a smile. "Well. If you like it, I will keep it on."

Shane smiles back, glancing down until the guilt starts to chip away at him. He's here to *help* Ilya, not to take advantage of his kindness. But he lets the comfortable silence settle for several more episodes. Before he knows it, it's late and his eyes are heavier each second. Ilya is closer now, his knee bent and pressed to Shane's thigh, one of his hands beneath his t-shirt, resting on his bare stomach as he continues to ask Shane if he knows what's going on in this particular episode. Shane lets a breath flutter out of his mouth, wanting so desperately to be selfish but unable to help how terrible he feels for overstaying his welcome and not even doing what he came to do.

"Hey, um. I can take a look at your computer now."

Ilya blinks, eyebrow furrowing in confusion "What computer?" When Shane stares at him, unsure of what to say, Ilya's eyes widen in realization, mouth opening as he says, "Ah! Oh, yes. Let me go grab it."

This time, it's Shane's turn to be confused, wondering why Ilya can't just show him where he has the tower and monitor set up so he can make his way there instead of forcing Ilya to move it all out here. But soon, Ilya comes back holding an off-white, large and boxy computer screen, setting it down on the table with a loud thump. Shane stands, inching toward the absolute dinosaur of an electronic that is staring back at him.

"Do you have a tower for this?"

Ilya's eyebrows crease as he frowns. "Why would I need building for?"

"A computer tower," Shane explains, making a gesture with his hands of what he hopes replicates the size and shape of what he's talking about. "You know, the rectangular thing that goes under your desk. It has a power button on it. It's how you turn the monitor on."

Ilya snaps his fingers loudly, face lighting up. "Ah! That is what that is! Yes, hold on. Let me get it."

Again, he disappears and Shane is left standing there awkwardly. Ilya repeats his motions, coming out of the room with an off-white tower and placing it on the table, gesturing toward it grandly. "Alright," Shane starts slowly, fingers running over the dusty top of the monitor. "So, what's the problem you're having with this?"

"It will not turn on," Ilya tells him. "I plug it in and nothing. Not even sound or light."

"Yeah, okay," Shane nods slowly, eyes flickering from the tower to the computer, already knowing that this is sort of lost cause at the moment. There's no way he's going to be able to fix this thing with what knowledge he has. There's not even a mouse or keyboard, for fucks sake. Not for the first time in his life, he feels fucking useless. He sighs, closing his eyes. "Ilya, I'm so sorry."

"What?" Ilya says quickly, suddenly in Shane's space, hands on Shane's shoulders to steady the way he starts to sway. "Sorry? Why are you sorry?"

"I can't..." Shane takes other breath, opening his eyes and finding Ilya's concerned ones staring back at him patiently. "I can't fix this. Not right now at least—it's... Well, it's old as fuck. I probably need to replace some parts that I'd have to order—if I can even *find* them."

"Is okay," Ilya says without missing a beat, his thumbs tracing circles in the sleeves of Shane's shirt. "No big deal—"

"It's *not* okay," Shane insists, really feeling like shit now. "You invited me here to fix your computer and I—I couldn't even do that. I'm really sorry."

"Is *okay*," Ilya says again, stressing the word and ducking his head to look at Shane properly. "Listen, I don't care. We had dinner together, that's good enough for me. You had fun?"

Shane doesn't have to think twice about it. He *did* have fun. "Yeah, actually."

Ilya smiles, dropping his hands from Shane's shoulders, the warmth disappearing with the touch. "Good. I will probably throw computer away anyway."

As much as Shane wants to argue that it's worth saving, he knows Ilya probably doesn't care about it all too much. Was probably some junk passed down from an elder in his life who can't differentiate trash from treasure. "How long have you had it?"

"Two days," Ilya replies instantly, shrugging.

"But," Shane starts, eyebrows furrowing, "it's... it's so old."

Ilya nods. "Yes."

"Do you even know what kind it is?"

"Old one, I think."

"You don't know?" Shane tries again, searching for an answer that will make him make sense of this.

Again, Ilya shrugs, indifferent. "Not really."

Shane blinks, looking at the dark screen of the ancient device still on the dining table. He points to it. "Is this even your computer?"

There's a pause as Ilya tilts his head side to side, like he's in an internal battle with himself that lasts for several seconds.

"Ah, no," Ilya finally admits with a subtle shake of his head. "My real one is in my room—this one I buy from eBay. Cheap and broken, the guy promised me."

Shane rolls the words over in his head, matches them up with the events of the night, and finally, it clicks. "You bought a broken computer just so I'd come over?"

For a moment, it seems like Ilya may be blushing. He looks down, bashful for the first time since they met, and his hand rubs at the golden curls at the nape of his neck. "You are very difficult to ask on date. I wanted to try something... different." He pauses, looking up at Shane. "Is okay?"

Shane is nodding before he realizes what he's doing. "It's okay," he finds himself saying and meaning it.

"Yes?" Ilya asks again, stepping forward. "You are not... upset?"

"You lured me into a date," Shane points out, smile starting to split his face.

Ilya flinches, looking down at the floor. "I am sorry—"

"And I... I liked it."

Ilya's eyes shoot up, hopeful. "You did?"

Shane nods, pressing his lips together as he gathers his words carefully. "And I... I like you. More than I should, probably."

Ilya says nothing, staring at him very intensely. He takes a step, hands hovering over Shane's waist, but not touching. Not yet. His tongue darts out, wetting his lower lip as he looks down and back up. "Can I kiss you?"

"Kiss me?" Shane repeats, partially unsure if this is even real, if he's trapped in one of those dreams that sticks with him for months, years, replayed every night before he goes to sleep.

But Ilya is here, dropping his forehead against Shane's in something close to desperation. "Please, Shane," he whispers. "I might die. I have... wanted this since you first told me your name."

Shane can barely nod before Ilya is fully in his space, mouth slotting against Shane's like it was always meant to fit there. He's gentle but firm, parting Shane's lips with his own, licking into his mouth with precision and purpose. Shane melts into it, hands clutching at the back of Ilya's head to keep him there, keep him like this. Ilya's hands are ceaseless, framing Shane's face, sliding down to touch his neck, press his fingertips to the pulse, trailing down to palm at his pecs and down his stomach.

Every inch of Shane is doused in a heat only possible from a star as bright as Ilya. He's pulled into him, trapped in his orbit, happy to start the journey of *this*, whatever it may be, whatever it may turn into.

Above all Shane wants more.

He's quick to drop to his knees, uncaring of the potential bruises that will mark the tender skin of his knees when they make contact with the floor as he hears Ilya gasp, a *wow* punched out of his lungs in surprise. He fumbles at the waistband of Ilya's sweats, pushes up at his shirt, attention pried away by Ilya's hand on his chin, forcing his head to tilt up to meet his eye.

"Shane," Ilya says, chest heaving, thumb pressing into Shane's swollen lips. "You do not have to—"

"I want to," Shane says easily, eyes fluttering shut as he drops his head forward, nosing at the bulge straining in Ilya's sweatpants, letting his mouth drop open, lips drag across the fabric earning a shuddering sound from Ilya above him. "Please. Let me."

Ilya nods clumsily, a lock of his curls falling across his forehead as his jaw drops, tongue twitching against his teeth as he watches Shane with pure focus before pulling his shirt off, letting it drop onto the floor.

If Shane can't fix Ilya's computer tonight, he can, at the very least, give him a good blowjob.

He curls his fingers between the waistband and Ilya's bare skin, pulling the sweatpants down enough for the erection to bounce out, thick and well sized and leaking. Shane lets his tongue fall from his mouth, making sure to look up at Ilya as he flattens his tongue, licking from the base of the shaft all the way up to the head, circling for a moment to catch the drop beading out. Ilya curses, hand finding its way to the back of Shane's head, fingers threading through his hair and tugging slightly. Shane takes the message, taking the cock into his mouth.

A groan leaves his own throat, eyes fluttering shut as he lets the weight of it sit in his mouth, waiting until it twitches before he starts loving. He hollows his cheeks, makes sure his tongue pressed right beneath the head, and bobs his head, falling into the motion easily. Above him, Ilya's breathing quickens, a string of curse words falling from his tongue.

"*Da*," he moans, fingers tightening in Shane's black hair. "Just like that, Shane. So good, sweetheart. So good."

Both the slip of language and endearment only add fuel to the fire rising in Shane's belly. He uses a free hand to wrap around what his mouth cannot reach, jerking Ilya off and licked around and on the head of Ilya's cock, losing himself in the praises spilling from Ilya's mouth.

Then, Ilya's body tenses up. His hand falls from the back of Shane's head, moving to hold his face instead. "I'm going to—Shane, I'm close—"

Shane quickens his pace, pushing himself further onto Ilya's cock to let him know that it's okay. He wants this.

Ilya comes with a gasp through gritted teeth, spilling into Shane's mouth with several words foreign to Shane's eager ears. When he finishes, he pulls Shane up, holding him by the chin to lick into his mouth, tasting all that remains of himself.

Shane is light on his feet, in his body, falling into Ilya's mouth easily until he's being picked up, Ilya's hands beneath the back of his thighs like he weighs nothing. He moans into the kiss, mouth slack giving way for Ilya to lick down his neck and nip at the skin there. When Ilya deposited him onto the sofa, Shane blinks.

"You don't have to—"

Ilya hushes him, pulling off Shane's shirt and sitting on his lap, hands palming at his chest and arms. He leans forward, the entirety of his body pressed to Shane's. Their noses brush together, Shane's eyes dancing between Ilya's as he speaks. "I would not leave you like this," he whispers, palm pressing against Shane's erection straining against the fabric of his jeans. "You are too good for that."

Shane is entranced, everything coated in a hazy, dream-like filter. Ilya presses soft kisses to each of Shane's cheeks, at his jaw, right where his neck stretches, seeking out the affection.

"You are so beautiful," Ilya mumbles into his skin, pulling back to look at him, letting his thumb trace beneath Shane's eye, where his freckles are creating endless constellations. Then, he kisses the skin there, replacing the pressure of his thumb for a fleeting moment until his

lips wander down a different path. Down Shane's neck, his chest, down his stomach before finally licking at the tip of his cock, swallowing him down without any hesitance.

Shane tosses his head back in pleasure, a moan fluttering past his lips as he holds the back of Ilya's neck with one hand and clutches at the fabric of the sofa with the other. "Oh my god, Ilya," he manages to choke eye, squeezing his eyes shut as his orgasm embarrassingly nears. "Oh my *god*—I'm gonna—you're gonna make me come."

It only seems to fuel Ilya, his head moving quickly, his tongue pressed firmly against the underside of Shane's cock and up to the head, one of his hands coming up to grope at Shane's chest before his fingers are pressing to Shane's lower lip, just barely breaching the soft skin and touching his teeth.

Shane comes with the ghost of Ilya's fingers in his mouth, undone by the sheer idea of it, the fact that it almost happened. He swears for a moment he blacks out, only coming to when he realizes Ilya is pressing light kisses to the inside of his thighs, making his way up, up, up until he's giving Shane a quick kiss on the mouth, lips pouted as he does so, planting the affection with a punctuated *mwah*.

He drops onto Shane's chest, their legs intertwined as they lay in the comfortable silence that follows. Shane twists at Ilya's curls, scratches his scalp from time to time earning something close to a purr as Ilya nestles further into him, his hand cupping Shane's face. In the quietness and with the nonexistent space between them, Shane comes to a realization.

"Hey," he says, voice gravely. "You don't smell like cigarettes."

Ilya cracks one eye open, knuckles grazing Shane's cheek. "Yes," he answers, his voice rough as well, so deep that Shane can feel it vibrate even in his own chest. "I had to quit."

Shane picks his head up slightly, just enough to get a good look at Ilya's face. "You did?"

"My boyfriend does not like it," Ilya explains nonchalantly, like he's talking about some mundane task he had to complete at some point in his day. "Says is bad for me."

Shane can't help the way his heart stutters, the smile that starts to curve on his lips. "Boyfriend?"

"Yes," Ilya says matter of factly. "I do not suck dick for free, Shane."

"Of course not," Shane laughs, brushing at Ilya's hair again, making him tilt his face up. "You really like me?"

Ilya's expression softens, fondness coating every inch of him. His eyes flicker around Shane's face as he nods. "I do. Don't ask me why, even I do not know."

Again, Shane finds himself laughing, pushing at Ilya's head until Ilya follows his amusement. When it feels like he may fall asleep like this, sticky with sweat and limbs heavy with exhaustion, Ilya shifts, sitting up. "Do you want to spend the night?"

Shane blinks, wondering if he heard wrong. "Spend... the night?"

"Da," Ilya nods. "Or the weekend. I don't mind. Whatever I can get."

He leans down, kissing Shane once and then twice before pulling away, searching for an answer. The way Ilya looks at him makes Shane consider even though he knows he'll have to shift some things around in the mental schedule he follows on weekends, which he considers his lazier days. It's not like he has much to do anyway.

"Okay," he says eventually, watching as Ilya lets out a relieved breath. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad to shift his schedule around a bit. Not when it feels this nice to be wanted.



"Goddamn it," Hayden hisses as soon as he walks into the office. Shane doesn't have to look up to know that he most definitely spilled his coffee—he can smell even the creamer from here. "Hey, buddy, do you have any more of those Tide-Pens?"

Shane sighs, still keeping an eye on his monitor as he reaches blindly into the drawer of his desk, tossing the orange object over his shoulder. "That's my last one. I might start charging you, dude."

"Rozanov is the one who keeps stealing them!" Hayden accuses, and although Shane knows he's right, he doesn't let him know it. "I still don't know what you see in him, man. It can't be *that* serious—"

"You said that six months ago, Hayden," Shane reminds him, tone bland and bored because they've had this conversation several times, thanks, and most of the time, right in front of a very smug Ilya. "And it's still really serious. Come on, even Jackie likes him."

"Jackie likes everyone," Hayden grumbles, rubbing at the coffee stain on his shirt aggressively. "Even Russian assholes who steal Tide-Pens and my best friend."

Shane rolls his eyes, nearly missing the pinging notification. Unfortunately, Hayden beats him to it.

"Speaking of Russian assholes," Hayden starts, tossing the pen back onto Shane's desk, "tell your boyfriend I can see the tickets he sends in, too."

"Oh Jesus Christ," Shane mumbles, unable to help the smile plastered on his face.

When he reads it, he's already halfway out of his chair.

NAME: Ilya Rozanov **EMAIL:** ilya.rozanov@outlook.com

REQUEST TYPE: Other

REQUEST INFORMATION: you are so beautiful and i miss you. come here so we can kiss.

End Notes

thank you for taking the time to read if you did! kudos + comments appreciated. i feel like this won't be the last thing i write for them hehe <3

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!