

## my only shining star

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# my only shining star

by [writingcap](#)

## Summary

Shane can't think of a better way to wake up than this:

The sun is casting rays from the big window, spilling all over their white bedsheets, blanketing them in luminosity and warmth. The big comforter is haphazardly thrown around them, half of it on the floor, and there is a glow, a light that he can't even begin to explain, *everywhere*.

If he raises his head just slightly from the warmth of Ilya's—*his husband's*—back he can see the river, and make out the blue sky.

He chooses not to raise his head and instead bury the growing smile on his face to Ilya's back. *His husband*.

Or: their first morning as husbands spent dancing to an old Japanese song and saying vows in Russian.

## Notes

I realised in the middle of writing this that Shane and Ilya won't get the quiet I was writing because of Anya, so just for this, we'll pretend Yuna and David got Anya for the night because they wanted Shane and Ilya to have as much privacy as they wanted as their first night as husbands. Okay? Okay. (I do feel bad. We miss you already, Anya.)

(title is from this japanese song that features in the fic [you're my only shining star](#))

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

Shane can't think of a better way to wake up than this:

The sun is casting rays from the big window, spilling all over their white bedsheets, blanketing them in luminosity and warmth and something else that takes root at his core. The big comforter is haphazardly thrown around them, half of it on the floor, and there is a glow, a light that he can't even begin to explain, *everywhere*. Shane swears it starts from the strands of his hair, and he thinks there is no end to it. It would be impossible to find the end for it.

If he raises his head just slightly from the warmth of Ilya's—*his husband's*—back he can see the river, make out the blue sky, and still see some remnants of yesterday in their backyard.

He chooses not to raise his head and instead bury the growing smile on his face to Ilya's back. *His husband*.

Ilya makes a sound that vibrates off his back as he pushes himself back more to Shane and he accepts it, tightening his hold on him and sprinkling feather light kisses on wherever his mouth could reach without moving too much. It was still too early, and they slept too late. *Way too late*. He knew Ilya would need a few more hours of sleep before he could be fully awake, so he'd enjoy this moment by himself for now.

He'd also indulge a few more minutes staying in this warmth, reminding himself that yesterday was real. It did happen.

Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov got married.

They are married.

They signed all their papers, and everybody they loved and deemed important were there, and there were declarations of love, and shouts for celebration and new beginnings, and so much joy that it was just everywhere. It was there in the corners of the home they're building together, the frames that unabashedly showed their life through the years, on Anya that ran and jumped on all of their friends and family, in all the spaces he never even thought *this* could exist. That happiness with Ilya this loud, this unashamed, this open, this free could exist.

Whenever Ilya touched him, or looked at him, or smiled at him, or laughed. Pure unadulterated joy.

Shane knew he was exactly where he was meant to be.

He didn't feel anything close to tolerance, or apprehension, or forgiveness, there were no such things because everybody had their arms wide open for him and Ilya. They celebrated their love with them.

A year ago, this was a far away dream. This was an impossibility. Not for the near future. Not for at least ten years. Shane denied it for himself, denied it for Ilya, denied it for the life and love they've been trying to protect all these years.

But it's their reality now. It's the life Shane has always been scared to admit he wanted *now*, terrified that if he ever showed how desperately he desired it, he might not just get it.

He still felt it last night, the almost intrinsic feeling of unease that still lingers when they're around a lot of people, but the way his husband's smile melts it away was immediate and easy. The way Ilya would pull him close as if saying *Is okay. This is okay. Our family is here. Our friends are here. Your husband is here. We're okay here.*

And he sees it now, the way Ilya's eyes glimmered yesterday.

He knows they can't get married in Russia, and thinks Ilya won't probably like that anyway. Everybody he loves was right there last night with them, but his heart hurts when he thinks about how far Ilya is to the country he's called home growing up. He denies it at times, but Shane knew how important he still held all of it to his heart.

He feels it when Ilya talks about things Shane can only really imagine through his words, and when they talk about his Mom which they have been doing a lot for the past months.

If anything, that's what ties Ilya's heart the strongest to Russia, and Shane's happy to hear and see it, even if he can never truly understand it.

And he felt it most when they met up with Svetlana. There's a different kind of understanding with people who speak the same language, a certain cadence in the way they interact with each other, an appreciation for the other person who grew up with the same cultures and values and traditions that anybody outside could never truly relate with.

Shane wasn't jealous, but he was sad that he could never be that for Ilya when he knows the other man gets sad about it sometimes.

Svetlana is kind and amazing, she looked at Shane like she knew what Ilya saw in him. Something that he wasn't even entirely sure of sometimes. She was respectful to try to keep the conversation in English during their whole dinner, but Shane would hear the tail ends of their conversation in Russian when he'd return from the toilet, rushed and almost incomprehensible for someone just trying to learn it. He assured her it was fine, and would even chime in sometimes. Ilya looked proud every time. Maybe that's why he kept on wanting to engage both of them in Russian.

And maybe that's why, when Ilya went to the toilet, Shane asked her what they could do in the wedding to make it feel more like *home* for Ilya.

Svetlana smiled like he'd lost his mind for a minute, "You are what home is for him, Shane. I doubt he thinks about Russia as home for a while now."

He didn't want to say *I know* because that sounds a bit too conceited, but somehow he did know what Svetlana was saying was true. It's a testament to what Ilya has made him feel, safe and sure and loved.

Instead he says, "I just, want it to feel like, you know," he pauses trying to find the right word, "traditional? No? No, um. Something that might feel true to him, or important in a

wedding that he never mentioned.”

“Well there are some things he might like.”

And Ilya did.

Before they got dressed for the wedding, Shane asked his parents if they could buy a big round loaf of bread. He wasn’t sure if they could have found korovai, but he did search and send some bakeries to his Mom where they could possibly find some.

His parents came in before anybody else, just after Ilya and him had breakfast. They were in shirts and shorts, all giddy and excited when Yuna and David came in with the bread wrapped in a white cloth his Mom probably had at home.

Ilya looked at him confused, but with a little smile on his face. He stood up to greet them and saw the little ceramic bowl in the middle of the bread filled with salt. He looked at Shane with more than just a little smile now, there’s some disbelief there, too, then looked back again to his parents.

“I’m sure your Mom would have loved to be here today,” Yuna tells him, Shane has called her all about khleb da sol’.

“I’m sure she would have,” Ilya chokes out, holding his hand for him to take. “You didn’t need to—”

“We did,” Shane cuts in with a smile of his own, “what are you waiting for?”

“We approve of this marriage, if that wasn’t clear enough,” David adds before Ilya is laughing and tearing a piece off the bread and dipping it in the salt. Shane follows after him.

He would have let Ilya take the bigger bite, he probably should have because he eats the whole piece he tore off with the biggest shit eating grin on his face, triumphant, but daring him to take an even bigger bite of the bigger piece he got for Shane.

So, he tries to fit it in his mouth and laughs when it literally couldn’t fit, and feels the quick kiss Ilya quickly rewards his cheek with as he laughs at him. Svetlana already warned him about it.

When his parents both usher them to get ready after that, Ilya steals another quick kiss from him before going to separate rooms to get ready. Yuna Hallonder’s orders.

“Head of household,” he jokes, referring to the bigger bite he took. He shakes his head.

“I think we both know who’s in charge here.”

“Uh,” Ilya pretends to think for a second, “head of household, captain of Ottawa Centaurs—*your captain?* Yeah, I think we know.”

“Asshole,” he tells him, but there’s a giddiness that shoots through him with the reminder that they’re on the same team now. No more distance, no more rivalry, no more hiding.

“Showering!” Yuna yells from downstairs.

Ilya looks at him and laughs, pulling him closer again. This time he kisses him longer, and Shane lets him because it’s their wedding day, and because he loves Ilya, and because he can feel the joy he’s radiating off the kiss, and the silent thank you that he doesn’t even need to say.

Later in the reception, it was Svetlana that shouted it first, and some of them knew what they had to do. Ilya was grinning when he turned to Shane like he couldn’t wait to tell him about it, but he was already leaning in.

“Gorko!” More people chimed in, and started counting.

Shane knows they’re probably both grinning more than they’re kissing, especially when they started hearing the guests count.

“One! Two! Three…”

“Kiss me, Rozanov,” he heard himself say through his smile, because Ilya was still beaming against his lips, but he was barely moving. Shane doesn’t really like a lot of public displays of affection, but if he can’t kiss his husband on their wedding day, what really would be the point of it all?

Besides, Svetlana said the longer it lasts, the stronger their love is for each other. And he won’t back down from any challenge—not that it is but it sure feels like one with everyone counting—especially if it’s the easiest thing in the world for him: kissing Ilya.

“I,” Ilya moved his lips a bit, but pulled away and the guests stopped counting, but they were all still cheering them on.

“Come on, Rozanov! You call that a kiss?” Somebody shouts and he thinks it might be Bood or Wyatt. But after another moment passes and they barely move from their spot, nobody misses a beat and goes back to partying with each other.

“What?” He asks him, soft and innocent like he doesn’t know why his husband is looking at him like that. He reaches a hand on his cheeks and Ilya nuzzles his head to his palm.

“You know?”

“Svetlana told me,” he grinned at him, “I asked her something you’d do in a Russian wedding, and—”

Ilya kisses him before he’s done, deeper and longer than the one they just had with all of their friends and family looking at them. But still too short that Shane falls forward a bit when Ilya pulls away.

“Shane,” he shakes his head, “you really didn’t need to. Bread and this. I don’t need it.”

“The kissing?” He smirks at him, “You sure you don’t need it?”

There's something complicated that passes Ilya's face and it settles into small tears that gather in the corner of his eyes, and Shane extends his thumb there, wipes it away. Ilya holds his wrist and brings it to his lips, kisses the exact thumb he used to wipe at him.

"I love you," he says, then, "Ya lyublyu tebya."

Ilya nods, and repeats it back to him with the exact same feeling he says it with every time.

He jumps back a bit when Ilya disentangles himself from him, and puts two hands around his mouth as he shouts, "Okay! Again!"

It was Harris who grinned and shouted, raising a glass, "Gorko!"

He hears Ilya's sweet laugh before his hands are all over him, and his mouth on his with a different warmth and zest to him now that Shane's cheeks immediately redden as he feels his husband slip a tongue in his mouth, and the guests hoot and laugh as they pause their counting.

He thinks they count till thirty two before he pushes Ilya off him. The latter's eyes shining under the moonlight, his lips red and glistening from kissing Shane too much, his cheeks just a touch pink.

"We could have gone longer," Ilya tells him.

"Believe me, I know," he places his hands on his shoulders as he looks around at everybody who surprisingly mirrored the smiles they probably had on their faces—well, most of them, anyway. He smiled before he ducked his face away under Ilya's chest.

*So much for challenges, huh, Hollander.*

Shane's not entirely sure if it was Svetlana, or Ilya, or if everybody just got into it after that because he swore everybody just said it after. But everytime somebody would, Ilya would get this ridiculous smile on his face before he leaned in to kiss Shane.

Every time it was worth it even with the blush that rushed to his cheeks after.

He disentangles himself now from Ilya, careful not to wake him up as he puts on a folded shirt from the chair near their bed, not entirely sure if it was his or Ilya's. Not that it mattered anymore, really. They're married.

Not that it ever mattered, if he was being honest. Ever since they became honest with themselves, with what they felt, it was harder to determine which was his, or which was Ilya's—where both of them began and ended.

Shane found that he liked it that way.

He found himself cleaning around the kitchen, and the living room. It wasn't messy because Yuna hired some cleaners to help them last night, but he liked fixing things around their home. Liked the specific way he wanted the frames to go, the glasses to be put, and even the plates in the cupboards.

He found himself in the big glass doors that faced their backyard and smiled at the image of them dancing in the middle of it last night.

Shane lied. He lied through his teeth when he pretended to forget about the first dance, or that he didn't know about it in the first place. He knew, of course he knew. It is, in its own way, a right of passage, a requirement somewhat to newly wedded couples.

He's watched enough movies to know. He's attended enough weddings to witness it. It's not something that could have flown over his head, even with their schedules and everything they've been running around to do the past few months.

He already didn't plan much for the wedding. They knew what they wanted, Ilya and him. They just wanted to marry each other, have people over, sign their papers and carry on with their lives.

As far as Shane was concerned, they were married the night they said I love you to each other. It took him a while, and it took a wake up call for him to realise it again, but he already chose Ilya that night, and he'll continue doing that for the rest of their life.

And he knew planning for the wedding would have taken more of his time, and he would have stressed himself for nothing he needed to really worry about. So, he let his Mom plan for the majority of it.

But the dance.

He should have known better, though, and knew his Mom would insist on it. She asked him about it once before, weeks ago. She asked if he wanted any specific song, and he mumbled about getting back to her. He never did.

Now all he can remember is Ilya's dazzling smile while Rihanna's Diamonds played in the background. He slid open the door and welcomed the breeze that greeted him. It wasn't messy outside as well, just an arch they left to be collected later, some personal chairs they used stacked up one side—Ilya has been fond of hosting lately so they bought all the party essentials with chairs, and tables, and even those big picnic umbrellas.

He was just planning to put everything back in their garage when he hears the door sliding again, and the familiar voice that Shane will never get tired of,

"Good morning," he said, hand shielding his eyes squinting at the sand before he smirks at him, "husband."

He smiles at him and lets the corny pet name pass because it is their first morning married, and it's making his stomach do weird somersaults that he always thinks is over for whatever he's feeling for Ilya, but they're there. Strong and ever present. It's probably never going to go away.

"Good morning," he turns to him and extends one arm out to welcome him and Ilya falls to him, making them both step backwards a bit. Ilya laughs and isn't that just the most wonderful sound there is?

Ilya nuzzles his face into his neck, “Why awake so early? We can leave this till later.”

Shane steadies the both of them as he makes no move to stop Ilya from peppering kisses along his neck to the side of his jaw, even moving his neck so he can claim more space.

“You know me,” he says, and sighs because nothing else feels so good right now.

“I do.”

Ilya continues on kissing him and Shane has to hold the side of his tank top, and as he reaches the side of his lips, he tells him, “I brushed my teeth so I can kiss you right now.”

Shane laughs and kisses him, longer than the kisses they shared in their backyard yesterday. Ilya crowds over him and they walk back till they hit a stack of chairs, and stop only when it falls to the ground.

“Oops,” Ilya grins at him. Nothing in his expression apologetic.

Ilya leans in again before he dodges him and picks up the stack of chairs instead. He hears him groan, but goes and helps him. He laughs at his frustrated husband, looking the best he’s looked with his gray tank top, and pyajama pants Shane was pretty sure was his because Ilya would never own a plaid pair like that.

He can say all the shit he wants about his wardrobe, but he knows Ilya likes sharing clothes with him, too.

“Not going to help?” Ilya asks him when he just continues to look at him, letting his eyes go all over. He smirks at him, and that familiar glint in his eyes that’s been there as long as he’s known him, “Like what you see, Hollander? All yours.”

The look of admission hasn’t been as long though, the plain truth of what they felt for each other hasn’t lived on the surface of their skins as long as their want has, the confessions that clawed its way out of their chests was hard earned and heart felt.

Shane feels it like warmth spilled all over his body whenever Ilya looks at him now.

The way he wears his love so openly, his admiration free, the way he’d really given all of *this* to Shane. This life, this love, this dream—no, this reality.

“All mine,” he says, stepping back into Ilya’s space. Not for two weeks. Not for two years. Not for a limited time. *Forever*.

He remembers a time when that felt forbidden to think about. But even then, he would’ve given forever to Ilya if he asked him for it. He would’ve given him everything. He will.

“Yours,” he tells him now, too, as he brings Ilya’s palm over his own chest.

Ilya smiles as he nods his head, “Mine.”

They were back in the middle of their backyard, but the sun was shining down on them this time, and as much as he loved the image of them dancing last night, he can't really seem to shut his mind about it.

Especially knowing he did think of a song. A few actually.

Shane never did like listening to music. He liked the quiet of working out, counting and focusing on that because adding music to the mix would confuse him. Sometimes, any classical instrumental music was enough, especially for yoga or meditation.

Fabian Salah had a lot of amazing songs, but they made him think of a different time, not exactly one appropriate for dancing with his husband in front of his parents, or in front of anyone, really. It wasn't what he really wanted to play.

There were a few that he recognised Ilya would know, or even like. He tried to compile some in a playlist he already knows he'll tease him about, *but*.

But for some reason, Shane just really wanted to dance, a proper first dance, with the love of his life.

"Hey," he says, soft and Ilya probably wouldn't have heard him if they weren't so close to each other. He nodded his head, "You know how I said I didn't know about dancing last night?"

"Yes," Ilya said as a matter of fact, "You do not know how to dance."

He slapped his palm over his chest, but Ilya just caught it and put it around his neck, smiling at him.

"Yes?" He urged on instead.

"Asshole," he rolled his eyes, but he and Ilya knew it was nothing. The fondness in his tone was clear as day, there was no point hiding how he felt about him. He continued, "well, I lied. I did have a song ready."

"You were nervous?"

"Yes."

"You don't need to be."

Ilya was guiding his other hand to connect behind his neck, and his hands were on his waist, seemingly knowing where Shane wanted to go with this, and his heart swelled more than it could probably take. His ribcage is probably complaining how big his heart gets whenever he's around this man, how much it beats, how much it's been really existing just for him.

"What song was it?"

"I have a few," he smiles at him, small and shy like he's just revealing his crush on him now. He gets his phone out from his pocket and scrolls through the Spotify playlist Ilya is peeking

over. He can see how the other suppresses the teasing remark he probably already has at the tip of his tongue.

He titled the playlist, as obvious as he can be, “*First Dance SI*” as if the album on his Spotify can belong to anyone else.

“Rihanna’s Diamonds is not in it?” He can hear the smile in his voice even if he doesn’t look up at him.

“Unfortunately not,” he informs him, eyes darting between the songs even though there’s one he’s actually set his heart on. He stands there, Ilya’s hands on his waist, one hand on his neck and the other still contemplating and hovering over his choices.

Ilya started swaying them, but after a minute he nudged his forehead with his nose, “Come on now. What song is it?”

He tries to show him his phone screen, but Ilya is shaking his head and looks away.

“No. Your choice. You pick. Harris already chose my song for me last night,” he grins as he looks back at him. He looks at him, a bit uncertain, but Ilya smiles again—this time the one he usually reserves when Shane needs some quiet away from everybody else, or when the world gets a bit too much, or when doubt floods him and all he needs are those hazel eyes and his strong arms, and everything melts away.

“Okay,” he tells him, then adds, “don’t laugh.”

“I won’t.”

He plays the song before he pockets his phone away and the familiar melody to him plays over in their backyard. Ilya has the starting lines of a teasing smile from the beat picking up, but then he hears a foreign language that he can distantly recognise as Japanese.

Ilya turns his head to the side, imploring, but still guiding Shane to it, moving him along and keeping him warm and close.

“I,” Shane starts, “I know it’s weird, but—”

“Not weird,” Ilya corrects him, “just not familiar. Is Japanese?”

He nods his head.

“From Yuna?” Ilya asks, but his Mom probably listens to songs that Ilya’s more likely to recognise than this. He shakes his head.

“My grandparents,” he shares, Ilya nods his head in understanding and smiles as he recognises the first English words there.

*You’re my only shining star*

Shane has never been really that connected to his Japanese side, especially when his grandparents died before he turned thirteen. It's a shame, really. He knows they have such a rich culture, and Yuna talks about it sometimes, but Shane has been busy with hockey since he can remember.

Now that he's learning Russian, he gets more jealous of the fact that his Mom knows how to speak Japanese. He feels like she's a different person whenever she speaks it, just like how Ilya also feels just a bit different when he's talking in Russian.

Sure he speaks French, but it's different with the way they have that other world tied in with the language they speak in.

"They used to play this in the car a lot," he tells Ilya now letting the Nihongo wash through them, "especially when Ojiichan would drive me to hockey camp training. Obaachan would be beside him all the time. I'd sit at the back just staring out the car window seeing Ottawa pass by."

He's told Ilya some stories about them before, showed him photos and he's sure his Mom has also mentioned them to him before.

Shane doesn't know if his grandparents would have understood his relationship with Ilya. They came from a different time, a different place, a different culture. He doesn't think he'll hold that against them.

But distantly he thinks, his Ojiichan would see the way he looks at Ilya and he'd be reminded of the way he similarly looks at his Obaachan whenever he'd sneak glances at her from the driver's seat. With warmth and love and familiarity that only two people who went through the same things together could ever understand.

He thought of this song, and his grandparents the first time he picked Ilya up from the airport. Sitting at the driver's seat, sneaking glances at the beautiful boy that he wanted to keep all to himself, seeing Ottawa pass them by.

So much has happened since then, but he's just as smitten, if not a whole lot more.

He begins humming to the song, and eventually finds the familiarity wash over him as he starts to sing some of the words back to Ilya.

Ilya stilled making him open his eyes, "What?"

"You know Japanese?"

"No," he laughs, "I wish, just this song. And maybe another one. It's more of just the songs they played. A few words here and there."

"Can you be more perfect?" Ilya asks him as he briefly takes his hands off his waist so he can hold his face and plant the biggest kiss on his mouth, squished and all.

"Barely any words, Ilya."

“Still more than I know,” he easily snaked his arms back to his waist, and pulled him closer.

“I still want to learn more Russian.”

“And you will,” he tells him, “How did you find this old song? Did you upload it to Spotify yourself?”

“No, but I did try to find the CD they used to play it from. I just knew I wanted this specific song, and I know some of the lyrics now, but I didn’t know when I remembered it. Like, all I had was this memory of my grandparents singing it and I knew I’d recognise the CD if I found it.”

“You wanted the memory?”

“Kind of,” he buries his face further in his chest then, still shy about admitting just how romantic and soft Ilya reduces him to, “It’s kind of the first solid memory I have of a song and love. Mom and Dad weren’t big on love songs.”

“We can be big on love songs,” Ilya pushed him off his chest while holding his hand out and pulled him back in flush against him. He laughed and Shane just glowed.

“I don’t like—”

But Ilya’s shrugging his shoulders, “We can play all the songs on your playlist every night and I can take you out here, or we can stay inside and I dance with you like this. Or I can dance and you can stand however you like next to me.”

Shane kind of really wants to cry.

“Moy lyubimyy,” Ilya calls him softly and he doesn’t realise the tears have already started falling, “I will dance if that is what you want.”

He’s shaking his head against his chest, all he wants is this, all he wants is Ilya. There’s nothing much he can really ask for.

*You’re my only shining star*

He repeats the English words to him as the song nears its end, “You’re my only shining star?”

He nods, giddy and so full of love it might rival the river beside them, “My only shining star.”

He kisses him just above his chest, then his chin, and his mouth. Ilya is kissing him back with everything he has. The song ends and he’s pretty sure Marry Me by Train is playing, and he should have probably thought about this song when he was proposing and not now.

But Ilya’s stopped kissing him and is just looking at him like he wants to say something, but he wants to say something, too.

Ilya took his phone out from his pocket and pressed the pause button, and before Shane could say anything, Ilya interrupted their silence first.

“I prepared little something.”

He looks sheepish as he avoided eye contact with Shane and reached in his pocket for something. Shane eyed it suspiciously, and can see the dent of Ilya’s handwriting on the back of the paper. He smiled.

He wanted to laugh, actually.

How can they be this in sync? He can’t say he’s surprised.

“You wrote vows?”

They agreed on not having vows yesterday. It was easier, and while they were comfortable with everybody there—words and declarations and confessions in public were still something they threaded with care and caution.

They might say it’s just being familiar with this way, but it was also nice to have this, to have some things they only really share with each other.

It was enough that everybody else knew what they meant to each other. It was for just the two of them to know just how much, in what way, in what capacity, in what disgusting and lovely details only they really needed to know.

“That’s sweet, Ilya,” he can’t help adding a little teasing to his tone to which Ilya responded with a light shove on his shoulder, and,

“Oh, shut up.”

Honestly, he hopes they never change.

“Shane Hollander,” he starts and Shane doesn’t know if he should laugh or cry because Ilya’s voice already sounds so choked up, “Shane,” he repeats, softer, fonder, “I never thought I’d have this. Never thought I’d have you. I don’t think you remember, but you asked me before if I wanted more time.”

Shane remembers. Of course he does, but he doesn’t interrupt Ilya, letting him focus on the letter he’s reading.

“I always wanted more time. I want all the time in the world. I don’t know how many times I wanted to stop you from leaving my hotel room, how many times I almost stayed in yours. Sweetheart,” and there are tears from his eyes that Shane tries to catch, “I will follow you anywhere. I have. I will continue to do that. I would give up the world for you, Shane Hollander. I know you will not ask, but just know that if you ask, I would. You make me brave and strong and I hope I make you feel like that too.”

Ilya does. He makes him feel that and so much more. He made him want to face the world.

“I will tell anyone who listens, or even if no,” Ilya laughs looking up, tears free falling around his cheeks, and Shane joins him, “that I am so in love with you. I am so in love with your boring personality, and your stupidly pretty face, and your freckles. God, your freckles.” He lets his fingers graze them and Shane is a goner with tears all over his face.

“You are stubborn and competitive and smart and obsessed with hockey, just like you are obsessed with me.” Ilya has stopped reading from the paper, smirking at him with wet eyes, and was holding his other hand in his while he looked at Shane, earnest and bold and the bravest person Shane has ever laid his eyes on.

He shrugged his shoulders, no point in denying the obvious.

“I have been yours since first time we saw each other.”

“The first time?” Shane asks, surprised. They’ve said that before, joked about it, but Ilya is saying it in his vows.

“First time, yes.”

“In Saskatchewan?”

“Yes, that is where we first met, yes. This is my vows, correct? Why are you interrupting?”

But Shane doesn’t really care right now because it puts something in place for him, “You’ve been mine since then?”

“You hope I don’t interrupt yours,” Ilya says, but he’s throwing his arms around him and Ilya is lifting him a bit off the ground and holding him up and squeezing him and feeling the way a laughter bubbles up from inside of him. Where can he put all of this joy?

Ilya puts him down, “Are you done? Can I continue?”

“Sorry,” he tells him, beaming, glowing, smiling, he’s not really sorry.

“Jesus,” Ilya says sounding exasperated but his smile said otherwise, “as I was saying,” he pauses, “now I don’t know where I am.”

Shane laughs as he crowds him again, and kisses him—fast and chaste and full of just teeth against his own. “You’re right here,” he jokes, but Ilya puts his palm on his chest, and says, “Here. I’m right here.”

“I love you. I’m all out of English now. Free me.”

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“So, do you have anything prepared?” Ilya was mostly joking, and mostly egging Shane on because he interrupted the last part of his speech. Not that he had anything more to add, he said what he wanted to say.

And he has forever to go to say anything else he remembers anyway. Ilya won’t waste a second of it.

But Shane smiles, ducks his head away, cheeks the colour Ilya loves on him, shy like they haven't completely bared their flesh and their secrets buried deep under their skin to each other yet. Like he'd say something that Ilya would ever turn away from, like he'd do something so embarrassing that Ilya would decide that it'd finally be too much for him.

Nothing is too much for Ilya. Nothing about Shane would be ever too much for him. If he was being honest, he wants more of Shane. He'd take anything he can get from him. He'd take anything he gives him, palms open and heart up, hungry and ready for whatever it was.

Forever might not actually be enough for Ilya.

"I may have prepared a little something," Shane says, "but it's short, and I memorised mine."

"Of course you did," he sighs exasperated, gesturing his hand towards him like he was proving a point, but his heart warmed and his smile didn't leave his face even for a second.

"Are you ready?" Shane asked him, and adds, even more quieter, probably more of a whisper to himself than Ilya, "Am I ready?"

"Moy lyubimyy," he starts and Ilya takes sharp inhale of breath already because he'd use that on Shane over the last few years, but he'd never really used it on him. He smiles and Ilya's fucking stomach drops because he continues in Russian.

*Fucker.*

"Я бы ничего не смог поделаться с собой, даже если бы попытался. А я пытался, правда пытался, но всё было бесполезно, Илья. Влюбиться в тебя было самым естественным на свете. Как игра в хоккей. Или голубое небо. Или то, что я из Оттавы, и я люблю тебя".

*"I couldn't have helped it even if I tried. And I did, I did try, but it was no use, Ilya. Falling in love with you has been one of the most natural things in the world for me. I play hockey. The sky is blue. I'm from Ottawa and I love you."*

Ilya can't interrupt him, could not because he was pouring his heart out in a language he does not quite understand just to reach something deep inside Ilya that he knew was important to him.

He did it with the *khleb da sol'* and having everyone say *gorko*. He did it by naming their charity after his mother. Shane does it every day reminding Ilya that he's worth the trouble, that he's worth the love.

He wipes away the tears that keep on escaping Shane's eyes. He remembers the way his face crumpled during the ceremony yesterday, how he does that in front of a lot of people, how he did that with Ilya before.

He doesn't need to do that anymore. He'll capture every tear, he'll bottle every smile, he'll keep every laugh and sigh and snore he makes in his back pocket. He'll keep it all.

"Всё, чего я хочу, это быть с тобой. Надеюсь, я ясно дал это понять. А ещё надеюсь, что ты понимаешь, что я выбрал тебя, Илья Розанов. Я обещаю и дальше выбирать тебя, даже если выхода не будет. Я выбираю тебя. Навсегда".

*"All I want is a life with you. I hope I've made that clear—I also hope that I've made it clear that I chose you, Ilya Rozanov. I promise to keep choosing you, even if there are no choices to be made. You are my choice. Always."*

He quickly thinks of a prayer of thanks, at first Ilya's not sure to who, but he quickly thinks of his Mom. In some ways, he thinks she sent him Shane. Somehow in whichever way that would be possible, and with a mother's love, Ilya thinks anything is quite possible.

Ilya thinks his Mom sent him this Canadian hockey player with stunning freckles, and a heart too big for him, and arms that fit Ilya perfectly, and with a family he's always longed for.

*Spasibo tebe, Mama.*

"Я буду рядом с тобой, даже если не смогу помочь, особенно, в это время. Я просто буду рядом, пока не буду нужен. В горе и в радости, Илья. Обещаю. Ты больше никогда не останешься один. Я люблю тебя".

*"I will be standing with you, even if I can't help, especially then and just be there till you need me. For better or for worse, I will be with you, Ilya. I promise you that much. You never have to be alone again. I love you."*

And Ilya is overwhelmed with emotion and tears and that's all he tastes when he kisses him. He pulls away and peppers his face with kisses whispering I love you to each kiss, in Russian, in English, in French, *fuck*, even in Japanese.

He'd say it in every fucking language Shane needs to hear it from.

"Were you done?" He asks Shane when he pulls away, Shane just shakes his head with the biggest smile on his face Ilya's ever seen on him.

"I was."

"Where did you learn all that?"

"Anna; my Russian teacher, I told you about her," Shane smiles proudly, like somebody showing off their high remarks and Ilya has to kiss him again. He's been taking it more seriously lately, actually enrolled in a class that he gets to meet with the teacher once every two weeks when he can. Otherwise, they'd give him modules and homework.

Ilya's never seen somebody study so hard.

Ilya's never seen somebody want to understand him so hard. It's not just understanding him because he's sure Shane already understands him more than anyone, but it's this other level where Ilya feels seen, and heard, and loved more than any time in his life.

He knows Shane chooses him, knows he chose him already. Ilya's chosen him a long time ago, too.

And he sees it, he sees the next years of their lives with Ottawa Centaurs, and he sees the years after that. Children and more dogs and SUVs and little hockey gear and cooking meals together and growing old. Quiet and peaceful—a life that he's always wanted, but never really known. He teases Shane about it all the time, but Ilya wouldn't really mind boring. He might even prefer it.

Besides, he doubts things would ever get truly boring with him and Shane.

He studies him now, tries to memorise how this first morning feels like. How it feels like to be Shane Hollander's husband standing in their backyard together, promising to dance—even though his husband is a terrible dancer—for the rest of their lives together, reading their vows—somebody memorising it because they were a show off.

A show off Ilya loves with his whole entire heart.

Neither of them were poets, but they were in love. Their tears this morning was a testament to that.

He lets his thumb glide through his freckles because Ilya is breathless everytime, especially now under the morning sun, the river just beside them—Shane looked like every dream he thought impossible.

He's here and he's real, and he just promised Ilya he's not going anywhere. He's his husband and this was forever.

He steps closer to him again, as close as he possibly could letting his arms rest around Shane's shoulders, and before he kisses him, he whispers, "Gorko."

Nobody really counts, but nobody really needs to because Ilya swears they don't stop kissing until they're back inside their home, gasping for air.

Their love is strong as can be, nobody's doubting that anymore.

## End Notes

I also wanted to say the biggest thank you to [mint](#) who has helped me so much with the Russian wedding traditions and Shane's speech that she translated for me! I appreciate it so much, you really don't understand! Thank you!

And this, this fic is a gift to the one person I always get excited to share fics with! Happy Birthday, Ally, this should have been earlier in the day, I was hoping for 12am your time yesterday, but you know I got a bit sick so hopefully this still makes it as your birthday gift! I'm sorry I'm a little three years too late in reading The Long Game with you, but I'm here now! I hope you enjoy this, as much as I enjoyed and cried writing it. I love you and you're the bestest friend anybody could ever ask for!

While a gift, the premise is also very self indulgent because I can't move on they danced to Rihanna's Diamonds in the books! I'm a sucker for first dances (and I really wanted something from both of their cultures somehow in their wedding), but this fic quickly grew away from that as all fics I write do, but I really did enjoy writing again! Thanks Hollanov for giving me that.

I'm on [tumblr](#) and [twit](#) if you ever wanna see me scream about hollanov, buddie or superman (most of it is smallville superman) im down for a lot really

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