

madra

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by [marigoldens](#)

Summary

“I cannot believe you waited two hours to pay my bail just so you could pick me up and yell at me.”

“Am I yelling?”

“Not yet.”

“Shut up.” Innocently, Ilya holds his hands up. “Put your seatbelt on, please.”

Such a sweetheart. Ilya does it. He’s not in much of a position to be saying no to Shane, and probably won’t be for the rest of their lives. *Hey, remember that time I had to bail you out of jail? Yes, Shane.*

or: Ilya’s speeding, for once, has consequences, and there’s only one person he can call for help.

Notes

title: madra - newdad

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

March, 2017

Ilya's mother died in the autumn, right at the shriveling of nature's green and yellow, at the start of the school year. And, logically, Ilya knew the plants did not die because they were mourning his mother. His father had nailed that into his head. But a boy with no companion in his grief often looked to his imagination for comfort.

She was buried near an apple tree, and while it had no offerings in the uninviting weather, it did provide Ilya a sense of privacy with its shade, and his mother's grave a protection from the snow and the rain.

Leaves still covered the dirt, and rested upon the gravestone, and kept her company when Ilya could not, when he was forbidden. He had to go to hockey practice, he had to go to school, his father had patrol cars out near the cemetery, watching for Ilya.

So he saw her on her birthday, and days where he would take the risk, or accept the punishment he knew was coming with his father's officers taking him up to his front door.

It stopped mattering as much to go, it had to. Ilya carried her with him, in his soul and on the chain around his neck. He'd talk to her alone, sad and lost, he'd talk to her after a won game, after a lost one. He'd talk to her anywhere, anytime, and then, at her grave, for the last time in his home country.

The final thing he does is to wipe away the snow, chipping at the grime in the letters of her name with the end of his lighter. *Who will take care of it now*, he asks himself.

"This isn't goodbye," he says, in Russian, sitting next to the headstone on the cold, frozen ground. "We never got that. A final time. Sometimes I'm grateful for it. Sometimes I wonder why you didn't, or if you did, and I didn't understand that's what you meant. If you didn't, then . . . did you not think I could hear it? I don't know. That's true, though. I couldn't. And I didn't.

"There will never be goodbye, Mama. Some say you need that, to feel it. Grief. But they don't know. They don't know that all you need is . . . you just need to remember the last time you saw them. Make something else from it. You said goodnight. Hugged me. To some, that's goodbye. That's it. To me, I think you're there. That you . . . hear me. Even now, you hear me.

“Would you recognize me? Do I look like your father? Your father’s father? I wouldn’t know. There’s no pictures. Not of them, and not of you. Now the last one to remember you, *truly remember*, is gone. Gone.

“The only thing I know, is I’ve inherited your sadness. God, do I feel it now. I-I feel it. I feel you. I miss you more than I miss him. I don’t know your voice, I just know your smile, and that—that was sad too, wasn’t it? But we had happy moments. I was always happy when I was with you. I can only hope that you are happy now.

“I love you. And you have to . . . you *would* understand why I have to leave. Why this is not where I’m meant to be. I don’t know where that is. But I have an idea. I wish you could meet him, but . . . I’ll tell him about you instead. One day.”

—

September, 2018

It was a month before the season would start, and Ilya was overwhelmed. Moving everything to Ottawa, playing with a new team, starting the foundation with Shane, driving out to see him whenever possible, which was still hard, even two hours away.

It was pressure, harshly applied, and Ilya did not get to escape it unless he was with Shane. Even then, it lingered in the back of Ilya’s head, encroaching on him when all he wanted to do was enjoy their limited time together.

There are other times he can forget it. When he’s at practice, helping out his team with their techniques. None of them are bad, it’s just . . . they could use the help. And that’s what Ilya is there for, sometimes he likes to just *teach* other than play. It will change, though, when the competition starts, when it’s him against Shane. It’s always better when it’s him against Shane. Unless he was considering how people really thought they hated each other.

But that would change, too, in just a couple of months, as soon as they could fully fund their foundation and get things running.

All the different in Ilya’s life is good. *Will* be good. He just has to get over the stressful part, and it would be good, too, if the stressful part was not *so* fucking stressful.

It’s the weekend, and he’s driving around Ottawa to distract himself from how he’s meant to be spending this night with Shane. But he can’t, he has an early morning tomorrow, he’s always late when Ilya’s there, *fine*. Ilya gets it. But everyone is late once in a while, every guy will make crude comments in the locker room of *why* he was late and get high fives.

But Shane can’t do that. He wouldn’t, even if he could, but the point is that he can’t. Ilya neither. Lots of things they are not allowed to do, and lots of things they should be. Ilya’s fed

up with it.

It helps to drive, he thinks. To push past forty into fifty into sixty and suddenly he is speeding past cars, and he can't hear anything other than the accelerator and the wind.

It's a rush. Different from on the ice. He can shove, and it doesn't matter there. Every risk matters on the road. The feeling is fast, perfect and ugly for it, Ilya hates to like it anymore, but something tells him to keep his foot on the gas and to not stop until he's somewhere he doesn't recognize, until he's lost to the world.

—

Shane's woken up by a shrill ring from his phone. Immediately, he groans, covering his head with the blankets. Dazed, he thinks it's his alarm at first, but it's not the same sound, and his clock reads that it's two in the morning.

He answers without looking, and then goes to hang up right away, because *why is he answering a call at two in the morning? You're a people pleaser; that's why, Shane*, Ilya's voice says in his head, and Shane tells him to shut up.

"So grumpy when you are woken up," he says, louder, clearer, and Shane *jumps*, checking his phone.

"Wha—he-hello?"

"Hello, sweetheart. You said that already."

"I did?" Shane falls back on his pillows, closing his eyes. "What's wrong? It's so late."

"I know," he whispers softly. "Sorry."

More seriously, Shane says, "Ilya, what happened?"

"There's maybe a problem. No, definitely."

"What is it?"

Shane becomes more alert, turning his lamp on, and then going for his shoes. Just in case.

"I, uh—I need you to bail me out."

He drops his shoes. Blinks. Too fucking late for this. Early? Late. It's late. "Of?"

"Jail," Ilya says.

"Oh, Jesus. Were you speeding?"

Fuck. And Shane is honestly surprised this hasn't happened before. Or, actually, maybe it has, and he had someone else bail him out instead, kept those arrests from Shane because *how* many fucking times has he told him that it's dangerous to—

“Ah, Shane, I know. I know this. Can you yell at me later, please?”

“Why, is your phone time up?”

Ilya mutters something in Russian. “Yes, actually. These officers do not like Boston.”

“Did you tell them you moved teams?”

Down the line, Ilya laughs in his ear. “Hm, somehow that did not convince them.”

“How am I supposed to—“ Shane talks while getting into his car, through chattering teeth while he turns the heat on. “How am I supposed to come in? They're gonna know who I am.”

Shane was too busy imagining Ilya sitting in a cell to think of this first. Serves him right, really, but Shane *will* be reminding him enough of how stupid this was to make him *wish* he had just done his time.

“You have my card's information, yes?”

Shane had gotten it when he was trying to help him move to Ottawa. “Yeah, but I—“

“No, you can't. Use my card, you can pay online, they will let me walk out. By myself.”

“You just need a ride.”

“No. No, you have practice. Just need you to—“

“They took your car, didn't they?”

Ilya hesitates. Shane hears him sigh. “. . . Yes. It is at a—what is it called—“

“Impound lot.”

“Yes. That.”

“*Ilya.*”

“Later,” he says, and is forced to hang up.

Shane groans. So much for going to sleep early. (*And of course Shane isn't going to just not go see him.*)

—

It's four in the morning by the time Ilya steps out of the police station. In about an hour or two, his arrest will be on ESPN. Videos, somehow. *What* he was arrested for. Whatever. It's almost scary how low of a priority that is to him right now.

Shane's going to be pissed. Svetlana is going to kill him. Right now, he just wants to sleep. He might skip practice. That seems like a great idea to him right now, along with some fast food. After he gets a car.

Headlights flash in his eyes, then blink off. On again. Off. His phone buzzes in his pocket, newly returned, along with his wallet they wouldn't let him have to pay his own bail, because the officers had a grudge against him. Over *hockey*. Bullshit.

It's Shane. And then, it registers, that it's Shane's car, his headlights signaling him to *get in*.

Of course. Of course he came.

As soon as he's in, the warmth welcomes him, and he shivers one last time, happy that Shane had left the seat warmer on. Even when he's pissed at Ilya, he still loves him.

He stares at him. Then, says, "You're an idiot."

"I cannot believe you waited two hours to pay my bail just so you could pick me up and yell at me."

"Am I yelling?"

"Not yet."

"Shut up." Innocently, Ilya holds his hands up. "Put your seatbelt on, please."

Such a sweetheart. Ilya does it. He's not in much of a position to be saying *no* to Shane, and probably won't be for the rest of their lives. *Hey, remember that time I had to bail you out of jail? Yes, Shane.*

"What were you thinking?" Shane says low at first, his eyes on the road. "Seriously, *what* were you thinking?"

"I—"

"Were you even considering how icy the roads are? Do you know how unsafe, how stupid, how *insane* it is to be speeding at two in the morning when there's people on the road coming off a night shift, people who have been driving all day and night, people who—"

The English jumbles in Ilya's head, as it starts to hurt, but he gets it. He scared Shane. Which is the worst of it. All he can do is apologize, hope it becomes okay. Sort of okay.

"Are you even listening?"

"Yes. Sorry. It's a lot of words, very fast."

This stops Shane's fast breathing, his clenched hands relaxing on the wheel. "Sorry. I just mean . . . that was a bad idea, Ilya."

"I know." Ilya places his hand over Shane's on the gearshift. *That was the point*, he thinks. "I'll pay you back." Because Ilya just *knows* he didn't use his card, as a way to fix this somehow, doing his part to help Ilya, through whatever crisis he is assuming Ilya is going through.

"I don't care about the money," Shane says, right away, shaking his head.

"Then what? What Shane?" *What can I do for you?* it means. How can *Ilya* fix this? He doesn't want one stupid action of his to ruin his relationship with Shane. It can't be that fragile. It isn't.

"I just care about you," Shane answers, misunderstanding what Ilya means. But it's . . . it's good he misunderstands. Ilya needed to hear that tonight.

"Then—say it."

"Say what?" He gives him a confused look, then back to the road.

"You want me to sell the cars."

"Of course I want you to sell the cars. The cars are stupid."

"They aren't."

Shane shrugs, irritated. "Then don't sell them. But stop speeding in them."

"What is the point of driving them if—"

"Then fucking sell them!" He finally snaps. It shocks Ilya, but it makes sense he would. He should. Ilya doesn't deserve his kindness right now.

"Fine," Ilya agrees.

"That's—" Shane sighs. "That was unfair. I just don't want you to get hurt."

"I'll sell the cars. It's fine, Shane."

"It doesn't feel like it's . . ."

"I don't care about them," Ilya confesses. He really doesn't. He used to, but then he stopped wanting what they gave him. They mattered when he got them, when Ilya first started having a disposable income and mostly freedom. But now, they're just cars.

"Then why do you do what you did tonight?"

Ilya blinks, away from the memories of his first years in the NHL. "Get arrested?"

"Stop it," Shane says, in a dry voice, tired.

“There’s a reason. But.”

“But. What?”

“You will . . . you will make me talk about it, and I don’t want to talk about it, I just want to forget it.”

They sit in silence for a moment. Shane has kept the radio off. He’s always serious, but this is different. He isn’t even joking, not anymore, or tolerating Ilya’s attempts to avoid communicating what tonight was.

“Yeah, I’m sorry, but you stopped being able to avoid this conversation when you got thrown in jail.”

“Yes. That was . . .”

Loudly, Shane finishes his sentence. “Stupid.”

“I know.”

“Look. I won’t . . . what am I supposed to think when you call me so late, out of nowhere, I—you know it scares me.” When Ilya doesn’t say anything, he keeps going. Talking slower now, so Ilya fully understands his words.

“Ilya, I just want . . . maybe I’m a little mad. Yeah, but I—mostly, I’m scared. You scared me. If it’s something so bad you’re speeding on a snowy night, and-and you feel like you can’t talk to *me* instead—“

“That’s not . . .”

“Then what? Are you—do you regret moving to Ottawa?”

Ilya flinches. “*What?*” He hasn’t thought that once.

“Well, do you?”

“*No*. How could you even ask that?”

“What else am I supposed to think here?”

It’s true. *What else?* Because Shane doesn’t know. All he has are questions, and Ilya isn’t prepared to answer them. Not now.

“I want to be with you.” Ilya offers him a bit of an olive branch, in the middle of their fight. And it is a fight, even though Shane is mostly keeping his cool.

“I wanna be with you, too.”

Fuck. Fuck the English language, really. Ilya’s been speaking it for years, and *still*, sometimes he will say something and it won’t come across *at all* in the way he means it to. “No, I mean .

. . all the time, I want to be with you. At practice, and at home, at bars, I just want to go and be with you instead. But this weekend, this—*today*, I really wanted to be with you.”

“Because of why you were speeding?” Shane carefully asks.

“Yes. I want to talk to you, and . . . but it is so fucking hard. So I drive instead, and I do stupid things.”

Ilya turns his head. He holds back what he’s been holding back all day. All night. For nearly two decades.

“Hey,” Shane murmurs, reaching a hand over and placing it on top of Ilya’s curls, then running his palm down to his neck. “It’s okay.”

“It’s not. It’s not okay to do this to you. I know this. But this is what I do on hard days, yes? I drive, maybe I drink, distract myself until it isn’t so loud anymore.”

Shane’s hand squeezes, reminding Ilya he’s right there. “You don’t have to distract yourself anymore. I wanna hear.”

Ilya knows he does. He just . . . hates making it real.

“Later,” he says. Shane lets it go, but just for now.

—

When they’re home, at Ilya’s place, Shane stops in his tracks. For one, it’s fucking freezing. And as he walks further in, he notices the mess in the living room, the piled up dishes that are not dirty but aren’t put away, either. The laundry unfolded, Ilya’s mail all cluttered next to the front door, pictures unhung, silverware unwrapped, mess of blankets on the couch, a space heater plugged in and knocked over.

It’s not glaringly obvious what Shane can see has been happening here. There’s not dust all over the floor, or a bad smell, there’s not expired milk on the counter.

But all of Ilya’s essentials are in the living room. His bed is unwrapped from the plastic, set up against a wall in the hallway. He’s living out of three suitcases, and, and . . .

Shane can’t speak. He follows where Ilya leads him, sitting on the couch.

It’s just, there’s boxes in front of one of the halls, where the thermostat is on the wall. And Ilya had said, he *assured* him that he didn’t need help unpacking. Shane said he could come with his parents, but Ilya said no. This whole month, he’s said no. And he’s gone to see Shane instead.

I wanna see your new place, Shane said, and Ilya said back, *You will. But I like driving to get to you. It is romantic.*

“You haven’t unpacked yet?”

Ilya shakes his head. “Been busy. You know.”

“Yeah. I could’ve helped if you were . . . if you’re struggling.”

“I’m not,” Ilya says, defensive.

“Okay. Just. I’m here now, and. I’m here.”

“I know. Thank you.”

In a way to show him he really is more worried than mad, Shane sits nearer, cuddling into Ilya’s side, holding one of his hands. It really is cold.

“There’s boxes. Everywhere.” Ilya shrugs, looking around the open space.

“Yeah. They can, uh . . . get ahead of you.”

“I know it.”

“Is it—“ Shane stops himself. He doesn’t know how to ask this, ask him if he’s . . . Jesus. “Is it harder for you to deal with them? Then, like, it should be?”

Shane whispers it, and eyes Ilya carefully, caressing the side of his face.

“Maybe, yes.” His voice cracks on the *yes*, but Shane doesn’t comment on it.

“Alright,” Shane says, as Ilya begins to cry. “Okay,” as he gathers him up in his arms, as he gets the blanket as tucked into Ilya’s sides as he can. This scares him more than the late-night call he made. He doesn’t know how to help him here, he doesn’t know what’s wrong. He tries, though, tries to be what Ilya needs, keeping lovely words in Ilya’s mind as he spirals. “I’m here,” he reminds him. “Right here.”

“I—“ Ilya sobs, loud and heartbreaking, right into Shane’s ear. It’s the most violent thing, because it has been otherwise buried for what sounds like years. “I miss my mom,” he confesses, and claws at Shane’s sweatshirt desperately. “I miss, I-I miss my . . .”

“Okay, okay,” Shane repeats. The admittance settles in. “Okay, it’s okay, it’s okay, I got you.”

Shane tears up with the force of Ilya’s grief. He wants to hold him tighter, protect him better, be with him today, and tell him all these assurances early, to come sooner, *why didn’t he come sooner?* How could he have not seen this?

“Today is . . .” he doesn’t move from his spot, his face buried in Shane’s neck. “She uh, she . . . today, she . . . sorry—“

“Ilya,” Shane starts, and is so ashamed that it’s eating at his insides. “Oh, God.”

Ilya cries until he’s empty, until it takes him completely, all that sadness into sleep. It doesn’t look peaceful, it reads agony on his face, his downturned lips and how ashen his face is. Shane lays with him for a while, until the need to do something about it overtakes him.

He quietly puts things away while Ilya is asleep. First, it’s the boxes to move, and then the heat to come on. Dishes away, his bed, his clothes, his *life* that he had moved from Russia and Boston all the way to Ottawa to be with Shane.

And Shane left him alone to deal with all this shit, thinking—not even thinking, not even *wondering* if Ilya could do it on his own. He’s so independent, and bright, and charismatic, that when he cries, and when it comes to things like this—Shane is nearly useless.

They buried these feelings. They hid them *so* far away from each other. It was only last summer that Ilya told Shane about Irina. He hasn’t spoken about her since, other than small things for the foundation.

But this, being alone on the anniversary of her death, the first time after going no-contact with his brother and his father’s passing, in another fucking country—Shane is the idiot. Not him. Before he started yelling, maybe he should’ve started listening, or thinking *anything* deeper than what anyone sees from Ilya, which is that he’s reckless for no reason other than he likes it.

But he does care. He cares so much it’s impossible for Shane to see how people can view him as egotistical as they say.

By the time everything is cleaned up and the house is warm, it’s seven-thirty, and Shane is late to practice. He won’t be coming in at all. He calls his coach, and then his mom. He doesn’t give her explicit details, just that Ilya might need some help unpacking the rest of the living room. Shane hadn’t done much there, not wanting to wake him up.

He texts silently with his mom after sitting back down, letting Ilya shuffle closer to lay his head across Shane’s lap. And when the night catches up with him, he rests himself.

—

Ilya’s head is *pounding*. That’s one thing he hates about his new house is how easily the sun can get in. Curtains, he needs curtains up. He needs to do a lot with this house. It just doesn’t seem to ever happen.

“Ilya?”

Oh. Shane is here, *Shane*. Ilya turns on his back. Looking at him, last night comes back to him. He groans. “God. I’m sorry.”

“What for?”

Ilya raises his eyebrows.

“Okay. Yes. That was—“

“Stupid.”

“Yeah. But I didn’t know what yesterday was for you. I’m sorry I didn’t tell you to come to Montreal. That was also stupid.”

“It’s like you said.” Ilya sits up. “You didn’t know.”

“But I should’ve. We’re together. We should be there for each other when we’re struggling.”

“That’s not how we can be, Shane.”

He shakes his head. “Yes, it is.”

“No. With our schedules? No.”

“You know what I mean.”

He does. But Shane’s guilt isn’t making sense to Ilya, so he’s going to be difficult about it. “I did not tell you. I told no one.”

“It’s not just that.” Shane readjusts on the couch, and takes a deep breath. “It’s the house. It’s you being out here alone. You don’t know anyone, you just know *me*, and I should’ve been more caring about that—“

“Shane, please.”

“No,” he says, firm. “You deserve an apology. I’ve been such an asshole. I’m *so* sorry for leaving you here, Ilya. I’m so fucking sorry. I should’ve pushed harder when you said you didn’t need my help. I should’ve just come.”

Ilya can’t cry again. That would be fucking ridiculous. Twice in twenty-four hours. Horrible. He looks down. “It’s okay. We’re learning to be in each other’s lives. Hard for both of us.”

“It shouldn’t be,” Shane whispers. His eyes fill with tears. “I love you. Why is that so hard to say? I wanna be with you, all the time. *All the time*, Ilya. I wanna know about you. Your mother. When you’re sad. I get so little of you for nine years, now I can’t get enough. I don’t—I don’t know. I’m sorry.”

“Stop, stop. Stop with the sorry.” Ilya’s head falls on Shane’s chest, over his quick heart.

“You put too much on yourself, you know.”

“Yeah, look who’s talking.”

“Whatever,” Ilya grumbles. Then, he turns his head, looks around the house. “Did you clean in here?”

Shane shrugs, like it was no issue. “A little, yeah.”

“I could have done it.”

“But you don’t have to,” Shane says. “That’s my point. I wanna help you because I can do that now. I like to. Okay?”

Ilya takes in the cleaned off floors, the warm and cozy air, Shane’s smile and his ask. “We’re very bad at this couple thing.”

Shane scoffs. “*No*. We’re figuring it out. Then we’re gonna be, like, the best couple ever.”

“You are so fucking competitive,” Ilya says, while going to hug him. “I love it. I love you.”

Shane sighs, happy into Ilya’s neck. “Love you.” When he moves back to look at Ilya, he bites his lip. “Will you tell me about your mom?”

Ilya smiles, and it is genuine. “Yes,” he answers. “I would like that.”

End Notes

i like to put little hints towards ilya's depression in my other fics bc obviously it was always there its just ilya was able to ignore it better and i think here too he'd be able to trick himself into thinking he'd be alright after opening up to shane and settling into ottawa its really intriguing to write abt !

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