

Settle down with me and I'll be your safety

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Settle down with me and I'll be your safety

by [DoubleVirgo](#)

Summary

5 times Ilya supports Shane, and one time Shane realizes what's happening

Notes

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любимый - Lyubimy - My beloved/dear

Жизнь моя – Zhizn moya – My life

Солнышко – Solnishko – Little sun

These were from google! If someone that speaks Russian sees something wrong, please let me know :)

1) Move Around

The awards were stupid - well they were actually very nice and many people had been using their speeches to highlight important causes.

This tie was stupid - but it did make his eyes pop as his stylist said.

This tux was actually very nice, but still stupid.

Shane hated presenting and having to read from the teleprompter. He refused to wear his glasses in public like that no matter how many times Ilya told him he looked like a hot school teacher. So he tried contacts, but that was also annoying and then he started over thinking that he wasn't going to be able to get them out of his eyes.

He and Ilya were here to talk about their foundation and the importance of mental health in sports. They were in a dressing room, waiting for their cue to be called. At first he had panicked about what people would think of them sharing a dressing room, but his mom reminded him they were no longer rivals and he was over thinking things. Overthinking had been his default since deciding he and Ilya were going to actually do this. He was trying so hard to protect their relationship and their reputations. He didn't want anything to distract from their careers or the foundation. He didn't realize how important it would be to people to bring attention to difficult topics. But hockey needed to come around to the times. Athletes were not super human, they were people who struggled every day with the choices they made.

These were the thoughts he was mulling over as he cracked his neck at least twice now. Next he started cracking his knuckles.

"This is disgusting." Ilya motioned his head towards Shane's hands.

"It's fine."

"Is not." Ilya stood up and unbuttoned his suit jacket, before draping it on the back of a chair. "You too."

"We do not have time -" Shane said, even as he was removing his suit jacket.

"Get head out of gutter." Ilya smirked and then did a jumping jack. "C'mon Hollander." Ilya continued to do jumping jacks and Shane followed his lead as Ilya counted to fifteen in russian.

"High knees." Ilya said as they switched movements. "You count too, I know you can." Ilya said as they did 15 high knees.

"Balance on right foot." Shane followed and counted again in Russian. "Switch to left foot."

"What is this Simon Says?" Shane asked, but still switched feet.

“Who is Simon?” Ilya asked, still balancing.

“It’s a game kids play where you have to follow what one person says. They have to say Simon says before each command. If they don’t say Simon Says and you do the move, then you’re out.”

“Sounds boring...did you win a lot?”

Shane huffed, “Fuck you...and yes I won a lot. I am good at taking directions.”

“Oh, believe me Hollander, I am well aware of that.” Ilya’s eyes took on a darker shade that had Shane starting to blush. “Now do the Macarena.” Ilya said suddenly starting the dance.

“Who even taught you that word?” Shane asked, confused but still followed the Russian’s lead.

“Why are you two so fucking weird?” Hayden’s voice came from the doorway as he walked in.

“I think it’s cute.” Yuna chimed in, followed by David.

Through it all both boys continued to macarena.

“We are dancing nerves out.” Ilya informed everyone.

“Well I think the nerves are danced out.” Shane said and he did feel better. Getting his blood flowing was a good idea.

“Ok, then stop.” Ilya continued dancing.

“You first.” Shane wasn’t about to quit first.

“You didn’t say Simon.”

“You’re an asshole, you would be Simon in this case.”

“Boys.” Yuna warned.

“Simon says only boring people should stop dancing.” Ilya stuck his tongue out at Shane. Shane gritted his teeth but continued dancing.

“Is this some type of weird foreplay?” Hayden chimed in.

“Please - there are some things a father shouldn’t know about.” David interrupted both Shane and Ilya before they were able to respond.

“One minute until you guys are on.” A stage hand popped in to get them. He furrowed his brow watching the two boys who had now slowed down the macarena and were glaring at each other.

“Don’t want to dance out of here Hollander.” Ilya goaded him.

“I think the cue has you going first Rozanov.” Shane glared.

“Simon says don’t make yourselves look like idiots on national television.” Yuna said giving them both an unimpressed glare.

Both stopped.

“A tie.” Ilya offered.

“A tie.” Shane agreed before they walked to the door. Ilya motioned for Shane to go first. He knew it was risky but when he passed by he squeezed one of the Russian’s hands as a silent thank you and made his way over to the wings of the stage.

2) Sensory Support

Many pro athletes would tell you that the noise of the crowd helped them play better. There was something electric about the chanting and the shouting. The buzzer for the goals scored. All of it was engrained in hockey culture.

For most games, Shane loved it all too. But every once in a while he knew he was on the verge of a migraine and the noise wasn’t going to help.

Tonight was one of those nights.

He was exhausted and overstimulated and he had told Ilya he was going to drive to Ottawa after his game had ended. Ilya was flying in from a string of away games.

Trying to shake off his migraine, Shane drove the two hours in complete silence. His eyes were hurting too, but he just wanted to make it to Ilya’s house so that they could relax and lock the rest of the world away.

Pulling in he frowned. What a fucking night.

Going up to the door he used the key to let himself in.

“Shane?” Ilya’s voice came from the kitchen where music was playing. Shane winced at the volume.

Ilya came around the corner smiling, but immediately his smile dropped. “What’s wrong?”

“Headache.” Shane walked over to Ilya pulling him in for a hug.

“Go lay down. I’ll turn off the music.” Ilya shuffled him over to the couch.

“No, don’t. I know you like to cook with music... Just like your mom.” Shane would feel terrible if he took that tiny connection away from Ilya.

“I don’t mind.”

“I do.” Shane insisted. He could sit here and breathe through it.

“You are being ridiculous.” Ilya rolled his eyes and left the room.

Rude.

Closing his eyes Shane focused on his breathing and unclenching his jaw. He was vaguely aware of the music getting lower, but not completely off and Ilya opening different cabinets. Then he heard the soft thud of Ilya walking over to him.

“Here.” Ilya settled a weighted blanket on top of him.

“I didn’t bring this -” It was grey, the one at his house was blue.

“I know. I bought after last time at your house when you said it was helping you.” Ilya shrugged. Then he tossed Shane a pair of headphones. “They are noise cancelling. I couldn’t remember what brand you get but Yuna said these were them, but better.”

Shane looked at where the headphones were laying on the blanket.

“You bought these for me?” Shane gulped.

“Of course.”

Shane must have made a face.

“What?”

“You bought these for me?” Shane echoed.

“Hollander, are you having panic attack?” Ilya gently caressed his cheek. Damn it, he was gonna cry, which might make his headache even worse, but who cared at this point. “Did I - did I do something wrong?” Ilya was frowning now.

“I love you so fucking much.” Shane answered and watched as Ilya’s face softened again.

“And I love you so much.” Ilya’s eyes moved down to Shane’s lips. “Will kiss hurt?” Ilya asked him.

Shane could have burst right then and there. He usually got twitchy during migraines and it always left him feeling overly sensitive.

“I’m willing to risk it.” Shane said, leaning in.

“I am not, we kiss later, when head doesn’t hurt.” Ilya pulled back, grabbing the headphones and gently placing them over Shane’s ears.

“I hate you.” Shane grumbled but got more comfortable under the blanket. Taking a deep breath and feeling himself sink into the sofa.

He didn't hear Ilya's response but saw him mouth, "No, you don't" before walking back into the kitchen.

3) Scruffing

He hadn't meant to get in a stupid fight with that damn rookie during the All Star weekend, but fuck that kid.

Really he could have ignored the trash talk - he normally did. But then the stupid kid made a fucked up comment about Shane's mom and he had seen red.

He only got in one hit before Ilya was grabbing him by the back of the neck and all but hauling him off the ice.

Shane felt like a stupid kid for even taking the bait but he was at his wits-fucking end. Ilya and Shane had been so careful this weekend, but part of Shane wanted to say fuck it. It was almost worst being together and being here. Terrifying might be the word for it. If they were casually hooking up then that was one thing, but they were fully in a relationship and once that got out, shit was going to hit the fan.

When they both had set a new record in different events all they were able to do was share a stupid man-hug or hit their helmets together before separating.

"What the fuck Hollander?" Ilya had pushed him into an empty supply closet before locking the door and leaning against it.

"He fucking deserved it!" Shane was tearing off his equipment. His gloves were somewhere back on the ice, but his helmet was suffocating him and the stupid pads were making him feel too constricted.

Ilya just observed as he wrestled himself out of what he could, throwing his shit haphazardly on the ground. He felt five years old again, having a tantrum because he couldn't stand certain textures.

"Enough!" Ilya finally said.

"Enough?" Shane was seething. He had acted impulsively and he was sure it was going to be all over the internet and he was going to get a call from the league. God he wanted to fucking hit something again. He balled up his fists looking around to see if there was anything in here.

Ilya must have realized his intentions before he was walking up to Shane and once again taking him by the scruff at the back of his neck.

If it were anyone else Shane would have already been out of their hold, but his body betrayed him and instead he felt the tension leave his body as he all but face planted into his boyfriend's chest.

“You are done.” It wasn’t a question, but a statement.

“Ilya-” He didn’t want to cry but he could feel the tears welling up in his eyes, he grabbed Ilya’s jersey trying to pull him closer and the whole time Ilya kept that secure grip on his neck.

“Has Shane Hollander ever even fought?” Ilya mused.

“Fuck you, I fought with Scott Hunter once.”

“That was yelling, no fists.” Ilya used his grip to gently move Shane’s head so they could actually see each other’s faces. “What is problem?”

“He said something about my mom.”

“Ok, and ?”

“And I just snapped.”

“I know, very not like you. You looked hot, but now is not the time.” Ilya seemed to say that last part to himself.

“I’m just tired.”

“Hmm, and here I thought it was because you are mad I beat you in hardest shot competition.” Ilya smiled.

“Fuck you, I beat you in the fastest shot competition.” Shane felt himself smile too. This was easy, competing against Ilya Rozanov was his default setting and something he hoped to do for the rest of his life.

“Ok, so we’re both the best. We know this. That rookie didn’t come close to either of us.” Ilya shrugged.

“I know.” Shane unballled his hands that had been in Ilya’s jersey. Inspecting his knuckles, he saw a tiny cut.

“And yet you still punched him.” Ilya now settled both hands on the back of Shane’s neck and squeezed once.

“You punch people more than I do.”

“Yes, but I am Ilya Rozanov and you are Shane Hollander.” Ilya’s thumb gently caressed Shane’s ear.

“Well I am told frequently that Shane Hollander is boring.” Shane looked expectantly at Ilya.

“You did not punch that dumbass because you want to not be boring.” Ilya tilted his head. “Tell the truth and then we can go out there and you can have some perfect answer about defending Yuna’s honor and that women deserve respect in every environment.”

“I miss you.” He pouted.

“I am right here.” Ilya kissed his brow.

“You know what I mean.”

“We’ve been together every night.”

“Don’t be an asshole.”

“No, you don’t be an asshole. This sucks, you think I don’t know that this sucks? You think I didn’t want to kiss you when you set that record?”

“I wanted to do the same.”

“Soon, любимый.” This time Ilya kissed his mouth for a few seconds before pulling away and removing his hands.

“Now get dressed, imagine what the press would say if they found out you stripped for me. So slutty Shane Hollander.” Ilya laughed.

“Fuck you.” Shane flipped him off before looking around to see where he needed to start putting himself back together.

4) Skin to Skin

Anyone in a long distance relationship would tell you that reunion sex was one of the very few perks. Usually as soon as one was in the other's vicinity, all bets were off - and by bets, Shane meant pants.

It was funny, they used to go weeks if not months between hook-ups. Now three days feel like fucking eternity. It’s not just the sex, but the freedom to be who he is and to love Ilya the way he deserves that Shane misses most when they are apart.

But yeah, the sex is also important. Shane had thought - worried- that maybe their physical relationship would start to die down, but if anything it heated up. It would be like they both would suddenly remember that they could kiss, or suck, or touch as much as they wanted and for as long as their schedules allowed. There were no more awkward goodbyes or uncertainty about seeing each other anymore, just a feeling that this was goodbye for now.

Shane had worried about what he and Ilya would be like in a relationship. They were notoriously not the best communicators and also overly competitive. There were parts of themselves that the other had no idea about.

Shane knew he was anxious and an overthinker. He took on way too much pressure and responsibility, but he did it because he knew he could rise to the occasion. Failure had never been an option to him and he would maintain that attitude for the rest of his career - hell probably his life.

Sometimes the pressure just got too much. Everyone wanted something from him. He loved his parents so much and was happy they took an interest in his career, but the brand deals and sponsorships were starting to get a little out of control. His team was now demanding a perfect social media presence because apparently that's where the world was heading and he was required to spend time filming "content". And even though Ilya never said anything to him, Shane felt like he needed to be the perfect boyfriend.

The panic attacks weren't normal per say. They weren't abnormal either. Most times Shane was able to walk himself back from the invisible line and calm himself down. He had techniques from his therapist that were supposed to help him- and sometimes they worked- sometimes they didn't.

Any one with anxiety will tell you that it's not something you can control and it can sneak up on you when you least expect it.

Like right now, he was at their shared desk going over the outrageous insurance they needed in order to run their camp. Who knew kids were this expensive?

The first week of camp was in two weeks and Shane was double checking they had everything they needed. He had alphabetized their contracts, went over all his spreadsheets and he still felt like he was missing something.

He had his glasses on and was squinting at the pages in front of him when Ilya came in.

"Oh, glasses in the office. Are you trying to seduce me?" Ilya sent Shane a look that normally would have him dropping to his knees, but there was still too much to do and too little time.

"Not right now, we have to send out the signed instructor contracts and the contact information from our campers need to be verified."

"Shane. It is 7:00 p.m. on Friday. You do not need to do any of this right now." Ilya came and took a seat on the edge of the desk, facing Shane.

"Well someone has to do it."

"Someone will. Someone we pay a lot to do it, by the way. Not to mention your mother -" Shane's groan cut him off.

What was that expression about too many cooks in the kitchen? They had hired someone, with experience, to run the logistics of the camp. His mom was considering coming on full time based on the success of this year, but Shane liked to check everything himself.

"You wouldn't trust someone else to wrap your stick." Shane mumbled pinching the bridge of his nose and taking a deep breath.

"Yes, because I am the best so I tape my stick the best. Are you saying you are the best at running a camp?" Ilya raised an eyebrow at him.

"Well, no -"

“Then we leave it to expert.”

“But I want to -”

“Shane.”

“Ilya.” Shane parroted Ilya’s tone.

“Take off your shirt.” Ilya said suddenly, removing his own t-shirt.

“What? No.” Shane smoothed out his light blue button down.

“Yes. I want to feel you.” Ilya rolled out the chair Shane had been sitting on and dropped to his knees. He slowly started unbuttoning and Shane was a little intrigued, and maybe a little horny, so he didn’t protest. After removing his button down, Ilya untucked his undershirt and shucked that off too. Then Ilya was scooping him up and out of the chair before settling back to sit on the desk. Shane was practically a koala clinging to his boyfriend, but neither of them seemed to mind.

“Take big breath.” Ilya murmured in his ear while using one hand on Shane’s neck and the other to rub soothingly up and down his back.

Shane did as he was told and slowly felt his muscles start to loosen as he rested his head on Ilya’s shoulder.

“Better?” Ilya asked after a couple minutes.

“Better.” Shane confirmed. “I just want everything to be perfect.” He pulled back to look at his boyfriend's face.

“It will be perfect because we are together.” Ilya kissed his cheek before kissing his mouth.

“For fucks sake, you are at work!” Hayden’s voice came from the door.

“Hmmm, we have done worse at real work.” Ilya shrugged, but turned, taking Shane with him to look at Hayden.

“I hate you both... And learn to lock the fucking door!” Hayden yelled before leaving them alone in the office.

“You know you could put me down?” Shane squirmed in Ilya’s arms.

“Nah, I’m good with this.” Ilya then sat in their office chair, readjusting Shane so they could stay connected like this for just a little bit longer.

5) Physical Grounding - Name 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.

Usually the cottage was a place where Shane didn't have to worry about himself. He could just exist in the water and the sun. There were no expectations about hockey or obligations with brand deals.

Just him, Ilya, and much to Ilya's dismay - the loons.

They hadn't been able to stay as long as they would have liked with the two camps expanding, but they were sneaking away anyway. In a twist, Shane was meeting Ilya at the airport. He had a last minute ad to shoot and Ilya had arrived at the cottage two days prior.

Shane was tired, cranky, and smelled like airplane.

Spotting his car in the pick up lane, he felt a little better. He put his bag in the back and got in the passenger seat.

"Look who drives a boring car now." He immediately reached for Ilya's hand.

"Your boring car." Ilya responded, squeezing Shane's hand before pulling out onto the road that would take them away from the airport.

"You want to stop?" Ilya asked after about five minutes.

"I just want to be home." Shane replied.

"I stocked up on groceries and before you ask, yes they follow your dumb diet. Your parents want to have dinner but I told them tomorrow night because I want you to myself tonight, my love." Ilya brought their joined hands up to his mouth and kissed them.

"Sounds perfect."

Shane wanted to doze off for part of the ride but couldn't get comfortable. He switched positions frequently, took off his sweatshirt only to immediately put it back on.

"You ok?" Ilya asked.

"Hmmm." Shane released his hand before sitting on both of his. He pretended not to see Ilya's frown.

Why did this drive feel so long today? Why couldn't he stop moving? He was feeling antsy.

Finally they were pulling up to the cottage and that did help. Once they were parking Ilya grabbed his bag before he could even get out of the car.

"I can do it." Shane huffed.

"So can I." Ilya responded before going to open the door.

Once inside he took his socks and shoes off and felt a little better. Looking out at the view he told himself to calm down. They had time. This was the cottage. They were always happiest at the cottage.

Ilya had taken his bag and taken it, presumably to their room, before coming back.

“Hi.” Shane smiled.

“Hi.” Ilya said before they crashed into each other. Then Shane was pressed against the island. Not wanting to be crowded, he used his strength to press Ilya up against the glass doors.

“Bed or couch?” Ilya kissed him again before moving down to suck and bite on Shane’s neck.

“I smell like airport.” Shane said without thinking, which made Ilya pull back.

“You’re impossible,” Ilya said but pulled back to link their hands together and tug Shane towards their room.

They walked into their room but instead of leading them to the bed, Ilya pulled them towards the ensuite. Ilya let go of Shane’s hand and turned on the shower. Then he crowded Shane up against the sink, kissing him, pulling at his clothes.

Once Shane was naked it was Ilya’s turn to quickly strip before turning to check the temperature of the water.

“C’mon, I wash airport off of you.” Ilya pulled him in. The warm water felt great and Shane felt himself start to settle. Ilya picked up the lavender body wash that Shane only allowed himself to use at the cottage. Ilya put too much in his hand before he started washing Shane. He started with his shoulders, massaging the tension out there. Then came his chest and abs. Ilya then dropped to his knees to quickly soap up Shane’s legs.

“Turn.” Ilya said, and Shane listened. Ilya repeated his journey of massaging and cleaning Shane as he went.

“Tell me what you see.” Ilya said.

“What?”

“What you see. Tell me.”

Rolling his eyes, Shane looked around, “The shower, the body wash, the bar of soap that needs to be replaced...” Shane frowned, did they leave that here from last summer? That was not sanitary.

Ilya pinched him, so Shane slapped his hand.

“Two more things you see.”

“I wish I was seeing my wet naked boyfriend.” Shane looked over his shoulder.

“Two more things you see.” Ilya kissed the back of his thigh.

“The grout and the eucalyptus.” Shane finished and saw Ilya start to stand.

“Tell me what you feel.” Ilya kissed the back of his head.

“Horny.”

Ilya snorted and turned Shane around so they were facing each other. “Close your eyes. I mean what you actually feel.”

“Um, I feel the water.” Shane felt stupid is what he felt.

“What else?” Ilya’s hand groped his ass.

“I feel someone grabbing my ass.” He opened one eye.

“No, close your eyes.” Ilya gently pushed Shane more fully under the water to rinse him off. “Now, what do you feel? Four things.” Shane washed his face off before coming out from under the spray.

Taking a deep breath, he kept his eyes closed. “The water, the tile, soap bubbles, and your heat at my front.”

“Good.”

“Three things you hear.” Ilya kissed Shane gently.

“Water, you uncapping the shampoo?” Shane guessed.

“Hmmm, one more sweetheart.” Ilya shampooed his hair before, dipping his head back to rinse.

Not even thinking about it anymore, Shane tipped his head down, coming into contact with Ilya’s chest.

“You, your breathing.” Ilya kissed his head again.

“Now two things you smell.”

“Lavender and...” Inhaling deeply, “...cigarettes.” He smirked.

“I had one, two days ago, how did you even...?” But Shane had moved and was now smiling at Ilya with an eyebrow raised. “Alright, it was this morning but you always let me have one at the cottage.”

Shane shook his head and leaned in to kiss Ilya, hands settling on his hips.

“No more demands?” Shane squeezed Ilya’s hips.

“One more. One thing you taste.” Ilya’s satisfied smile turned Shane on more.

“Well there are so many options of things to taste in here Mr. Rosanov.”

“Oh I know...my mouth, my neck... my dick....”

Shane rolled his, but kissed his idiot boyfriend anyway, pushing him up against the side of the shower.

“Better? No more airport? No more sitting on your hands because I have better use for them.” Ilya squeezed his ass again.

“I love you.” Shane said against Ilya’s mouth.

“Love you too.” Ilya kissed him back.

+1) *Russian*

Finding a scribbled up list that was being used as a bookmark wasn’t uncommon. Once Ilya lost interest in reading he would hastily grab whatever was closest and shove it in the book, probably while concocting some type of plan to annoy the shit out of Shane.

Usually it was the grocery lists he would write for Shane in Russian to help him practice the new language. Sometimes it was crude drawings he thought were hysterical to leave under Shane’s pillow or sneak in his away bag.

But this list was different.

Ways to Support Shane:

- *Move Around*
- *Sensory Support*
- *Scruffing*
- *Skin to Skin*
- *Physical Grounding - Name 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.*

Right there, in Ilya’s handwriting was Shane’s worst nightmare. He didn’t want to be managed like a child. He was a fully grown adult man. He didn’t need his partner coddling him.

Part of his was also embarrassed because he knew that these things actually did help him. What did that say about him? That he couldn’t handle the world without these supports?

“ЖИЗНЬ МОЯ.” Ilya had just walked in Shane’s house but Shane didn’t get up to greet him. He stayed frozen on the couch trying to sort out his emotions.

“Reading something interesting?” Ilya came around the corner spotting Shane.

“What the fuck is this?” He said impulsively, getting off the couch and waving the list around.

“Hmm, maybe if you stop moving, I can tell you. I thought you were getting better at reading Russian?” Ilya teased. Shane had been raised speaking English and French and he could probably understand Spanish if he absolutely had to. Russian was different, it was a different way of speaking and organizing sentences. It was fascinating and according to the Russian tutor he hired after Ilya had indeed only taught him the bad words, Shane was picking it up pretty fast. Still sometimes all the languages in his brain got a little scrambled and he couldn’t make sense of them.

Grabbing the list Ilya opened his mouth, probably intending to tease Shane some more before he promptly shut it.

“Nothing to say now?” Shane crossed his arms.

“It is list.” Ilya was smiling softly at the paper.

“It is embarrassing is what it is!”

“No it is not!” Ilya's eyes snapped up taking in Shane’s body language and cocked his head.

“Ilya.”

“Shane.”

“You - why would you - do you feel like you need a list of these techniques - I am a grown man -” He knew he wasn’t making sense, but he couldn’t help himself.

“Shane, you are fine - this list is fine... I haven’t actually seen this list in over a year... goes to show how boring that book was.”

“It’s a memoir about one of the greatest hockey players in history.” Shane had actually enjoyed the book and the way that there was a clear separation between a professional and personal life.

“It is not about either of us, so I don’t care.” Ilya shrugged, folding up the paper and tucking it into his pocket.

“Oh, so now you need that list?”

“No, I do not need it anymore.”

“Why did you need it in the first place?”

“I needed to know how to love you.” Ilya looked a little shy at the admission.

“You’ve known how to do that for a long time.” Shane reminded him. It had been years.

“I knew how to fuck you, not take care of you.”

“I don’t need to be taken care of.” He sighed.

“So you don’t try to take care of me?” Ilya looked annoyed now.

“That’s not the same-” Shane didn’t even know how to finish his sentence. Ilya’s needs were different than his own.

“Then why you learn Russian?” Ilya asked in Russian.

“What?” Replied in Russian as well.

“You learned Russian for me.” Again in Russian.

“And so what?” Shane replied in English.

“So why did you?” Now Ilya was speaking English too.

“Because I should be able to communicate with my partner in his native language.”

“Ok, and that is what I do with this.” He gestured to the note in his pocket. “This is how you communicate and I should be able to understand it. We are together, no?”

“Well yes -” Shane started but was cut off.

“Then I should know what you are saying, even if you aren’t saying it out loud.” Ilya gestured to the space around them. “Now I know how to help you, but in the beginning, I didn’t. I was scared I was not going to be able to be there for you the way you are there for me. So I made list. No big deal.” He shrugged, his eyes begging Shane to understand.

“We’re not the best communicators.” Shane looked down at his feet, shuffling his weight from one foot to the other

“I know. But we try, and that is what matters.” Ilya stepped forward, putting his hand under Shane’s chin and making him meet his eyes.

Shane let the words and the sentiment settle over him.

“I hate when you’re more romantic than me.” Shane grumbled.

“I know, Солнышко.” Ilya kissed him before pulling away.

“That’s a new one.”

“Guess you better start your own list.” Ilya smirked.

“Mine will be better.” Shane smiled, challenging.

“I’ll believe it when I see it.” Now Ilya pulled him in more fully, kissing him but smiling.

Shane already knew what would go on Ilya’s list. The ways he needed to support his partner. But maybe now wasn’t the time for that.

Now was the time to just be grateful for this beautiful, loving man who had made it his mission to love Shane fully - regardless of his quirks or stims. Shane had never thought he would find this, but now that he had it, he knew there was no other option than to keep it forever.

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