

lover of the russian queen

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by [satorussuguru](#)

Summary

Ilya cannot help the wide smile that breaks out across his face. "You ran here," he says, reaching out to smooth Shane's rumpled clothes, fingers working the chewed-up hoodie string free from his mouth while he sits very still and watches Ilya with wide eyes. "Across many states and up four flights of stairs—where are your grandma candies?—to ask if I have secret baby."

Notes

editors reading this plsplspls make more ilya svetlana friendship edits

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

Svetlana is in the stands today, in *Ilya's* reserved seats, wearing Scott Hunter's jersey. It is humiliation ritual, Ilya is certain. He had wrinkled his nose in disgust when he'd spotted her the first time, squinting up at the stands hoping maybe his eyes were playing trick on him. No such luck. There she was, wearing that ridiculous #21 jersey that probably cost her nothing because geriatric Scott Hunter has maybe seven fans total. The crowd had gone absolutely wild as Sveta did a little twirl and flashed him two thumbs up, her smile visible even from the ice. Unbelievable. The arena's jumbotron had caught it too, so now probably entire internet has seen her grinning like cat who got cream while sitting in his seats.

And so Ilya hasn't looked up at her even once this entire game, nor has he looked at what is surely to be a shit-eating smile on geriatric Scott Hunter's face.

(Shit-eating. Most beautiful English phrase, in Ilya's opinion.)

"She did you wrong, Cap," Marlow says to him during stoppage in play, though he seems a little in awe as he stares up at her. Ilya huffs irritably. Yes, Svetlana's presence does this to people, but Cliff Marlow is Ilya's friend first and Sveta is not allowed to steal him.

"I hate her," he sniffs, tapping his stick against the cement of the bench. They're up by two at the halfway mark, because Ilya would sooner sit on the sharp end of his stick than add a loss to this mess. "Knowing Sveta from young age taught me hatred from young age."

"Women," Cliff agrees knowingly, and a little dreamily too, still staring at her.

Ilya smacks him. "Stop looking, or I will step on your face with skates."

"I'm just admiring the, uh, the audacity," Cliff says, but he does look away, grinning. This, to Ilya's great displeasure, seems to be all anyone wants to talk about even after the game ends. He's still in his pads, hair wet from sweat, sitting at the table next to Coach LeClaire when the question comes. It's from Jenny McCarthy—not the famous one, the sports reporter one.

"Ilya, fantastic game tonight, but I think everyone in this room is dying to know—" Not Ilya. Ilya is not dying. "Why was Svetlana Vetrova in your seats wearing Scott Hunter's jersey? Social media is going crazy. People are saying she's your girlfriend, your fiancée, your—"

"I do not know that lady."

Blyat.

The press room erupts. There is laughter, scattered applause, and someone shouts "Come on!"

Jenny snorts, scribbling something down in her notebook as Ilya grimaces. He can practically hear Hollander in his ear: *you can't just say the first thing that comes to your mind, Rozanov.* Oops. "You don't *know* her?"

"Never see her before in my life," Ilya continues, scratching his neck. Very casual, very confused man. He is killing this. "Maybe she is lost? Maybe she sits in wrong seats? Is very confusing for me also."

Coach LeClaire is shaking next to him, trying not to laugh, and Cliff, sitting on his other side, has his head in his hands. His shoulders are trembling. Traitor.

"Ilya, she was waving at you," another reporter calls out. "You were seen having lunch with her two weeks ago!"

"Eh, you are mistaken," Ilya says primly. He is picture of innocence, Shane will be proud. "I am professional. I am focused on hockey only. Very serious athlete."

"The jumbotron showed her blowing you a kiss!"

Ilya shrugs helplessly, palms up. What can one man do against such accusations? "Many women blow kiss at me," he says reasonably. "I am very handsome. Cannot possibly know all of them."

Coach decides to throw him bone. "I know Ilya's love life is captivating, but does anyone have a question about hockey?"

When Ilya checks his phone later, it is, as expected, a disaster zone. First is Svetlana with a truly aggressive number of laughing-face emojis, enough to qualify as harassment. Ilya scowls at the screen, thumb hovering. He considers several responses, including but not limited to 'you are dead to me' and 'i have direct line to Rose Landry ur secret not safe with me.' Finally, he settles on a single, vehement thumbs-down that he sends with great satisfaction before swiping to his chat with Shane.

Jane:

?????

You cannot be serious, Rozanov

That is unfair. Ilya is not only serious, but one might even say heroic, for his quick thinking.

Lily:

what i did wrong

?

damage controlled 🙌

Strong response, in Ilya's opinion. Damage controlled is perhaps optimistic, but confidence is important in crisis management.

Jane:

Jesus Christ

Shane is frequently overreacting, so Ilya pays him no mind. This, he decides, has been a very long day. He has been publicly humiliated and he has played excellent hockey and he is very tired. Productive night, all things considered. Things move fast in hockey world and in famous people world, so Ilya lets his teammates rib him in the group chat and mostly forgets about it all. Twitter is having field day with that interview clip, Shane tells him later that week, half-exasperated and half-fond.

"They're doing, like, body language analysis. Next time they ask you about this, just say no comment," he advises. Ilya is having difficult time concentrating, on account of Shane's finger tracing patterns on his bare shoulder. His breath puffs softly against Ilya's collarbone when he talks, ticklish and distracting. "They'll use everything you say against you."

Ilya frowns, his brain lagging. "I thought that was police, no?"

"It's everyone," Shane says. He is frowning very hard, his forehead wrinkling like old man, and continues speaking even as Ilya leans down to kiss him. His words come muffled against Ilya's mouth. "Literally everyone."

"That seems inefficient," Ilya says. "Police should keep monopoly on this."

In any case, he successfully takes Shane's mind off of the press conference with a series of well-executed orgasms, as is his talent. Svetlana doesn't show up to his next few home games, which sparks speculation on its own, but Ilya is under the impression that he was right, and that people do not care anymore.

Evidently incorrect.

Two weeks later, Ilya wakes to his phone falling off his nightstand from its awful vibrating. For a few confused seconds he lies there staring at the ceiling, trying to remember where he is and whether he has done something recently that would justify this level of attention, before the phone lights up again and answers the question for him.

It is Marlow calling, and Ilya barely manages a hoarse "What," before Cliff's laughter comes spilling through the speaker, loud enough that he winces.

"Oh my god," Cliff wheezes, and Ilya can hear him struggling to compose himself and failing spectacularly. "Oh my god, Cap, you have to—you have to check Twitter right now, I'm begging you—"

"Marley," Ilya says, sitting up in bed now, resigned to his fate, "it is eight in morning, I have not even—"

"Check Twitter!"

Ilya has been hung up on. *Fucking Marlow*. Ilya opens Twitter, and he doesn't even have to search for anything because the screenshots are right there, trending, with over fifty thousand tweets and climbing: *#WhoIsSvetlana*.

Someone has asked: "Who is Ilya to you?" and Svetlana has replied: *cousin* ❤️! To another person asking the same question, she's written: *ex-husband* and then, to yet another person: *biological twin, we were separated at birth, it's very sad story*. The last one, with the most likes, reads: *father of my child*.

Good grief.

Ilya sets his phone down on the mattress and presses the heels of his hands into his eyes, groaning as he falls back against the bed, arms flung out at his sides in a posture of dramatic defeat that is not, strictly speaking, deserved. If anything, he is having difficulty not laughing. Svetlana, unfortunately, might be the funniest person he knows, and it is painfully obvious that she has both grown tired of answering the same question and seized the opportunity to make Ilya's life marginally more complicated for her own entertainment.

Well—Ilya considers this. It will really only make his life harder if he allows it. He is Ilya Rozanov, who has one hundred bastard children circulating the globe (lie) and who sleeps with fifteen gorgeous women per night (mostly lie) and has famously bad attitude (truth). Ilya likes every single tweet about the situation and reposts the ones calling him gorgeous. Because he is charitable, he also reposts the ones calling *Svetlana* gorgeous, which might fan the fumes, as they say, but he is nothing if not supportive of her antics.

Ilyusha:

they are saying our children will be beautiful

Sveta:

ur manager called me

she seems stressed

maybe u should check on her

Ilyusha:

she will ask me to be boring and behave or else get married

Sveta:

omg can we

i've always wanted a twin/cousin/ex-husband/current-husband

Ilyusha:

booooo

i have not forgotten scott hunter jersey

u are foul creature

Ilya goes to prepare double the amount of coffee he usually makes, because this is shaping up to be a multiple-coffee morning, and is halfway through adding an irresponsible amount of sugar when he hears a knock at the door, urgent rapping that suggests Ilya is perhaps in big trouble.

He opens it. Inexplicably, Shane is standing there, his hair disheveled and face flushed a bright scarlet that spreads down his neck and disappears beneath the collar of his hoodie. Ilya doesn't think anyone would fault him for being momentarily distracted, except Shane himself, who scowls fiercely and shoves his way past Ilya.

For a moment they just stare at each other, before Shane blurts, without preamble or warning or even a full breath: "You're not Svetlana's baby daddy." His voice is flat, despite the faint twitch of his right eyelid that Ilya recognizes to mean Shane would like to be swallowed whole by the earth. *Baby daddy*, Ilya mouths to himself. He has not heard this phrase.

Shane visibly braces himself, wrapping his arms around his middle. Because Shane is practically vibrating with fury and because Ilya is fundamentally a bad person, he says mildly, "Maybe I am."

Shane reels back, genuine betrayal flitting across his face so nakedly that Ilya almost—almost—feels bad, before he sees something in Ilya's expression that has his shoulders lowering a fraction, though his glare could still strip paint. "You're such a piece of shit," Shane seethes. "Seriously, Ilya, *fuck* you, and—"

"You did not really believe this," Ilya interrupts, astonished. "*Shane.*"

"I didn't *want* to—I just—everyone is talking about it and I saw the screenshots and the videos and—" Shane runs a hand through his hair, which only makes it stand up even more

wildly than before. "I could have called. Why didn't I call?"

"Shane—"

"My phone hasn't stopped buzzing since six a.m. Rose texted me. My *mother* texted me." He exhales sharply through his nose and begins pacing the length of Ilya's entryway. "There's a TikTok with, like, eight million views, Ilya."

Ilya realizes, bemused, that Shane has worked himself into a complete state over this since the moment he saw the trending topic and likely been reading every single tweet, comment, and think-piece until he couldn't take it anymore. How did he even get to Boston this quick? Ilya loves him *so* much.

"Shane," Ilya says again—gently, because if he bursts into laughter the way he wants to, Shane might actually jump out the window. They are very high up, so Ilya cannot risk this. He steers Shane to the couch and sits down next to him, their thighs pressed flush. Shane chews on his hoodie string, and Ilya's coffee is growing cold on the countertop, but he ignores it. "I have no babies."

Shane slumps back against the couch cushions like a puppet with its strings cut, one hand coming up to press against his forehead in a gesture that looks equal parts relieved and mortified. "Of course you don't, that would be—I mean, obviously you don't." He drops his hand and looks at Ilya with an expression that's almost apologetic, cheeks still flushed but fading now to a more manageable pink. "I'm sorry, I just—the internet was very convincing. There were so many screenshots," he mumbles, shuddering. "Jesus. *Jesus*."

Ilya cannot help the wide smile that breaks out across his face. "You ran here," he says, reaching out to smooth Shane's rumpled clothes, fingers working the chewed-up hoodie string free from his mouth while he sits very still and watches Ilya with wide eyes. "Across many states and up four flights of stairs—where are your grandma candies?—to ask if I have secret baby."

"You *know* they're called butterscotch," Shane reprimands instinctively. His face twists, cycling through a complicated mess of embarrassment and defensiveness and something else Ilya can't quite name, before settling on a sort of sheepish resignation. "Well," he starts, strained, but he doesn't finish his sentence.

"You did not even match your socks!" Ilya marvels. Shane blinks, looking down at his asymmetrical feet. "Come, I make coffee."

Shane follows him into the kitchen, still looking slightly frazzled and endearingly flustered while Ilya busies himself with reheating his cup and making one for Shane, too. He is acutely aware of the way Shane is leaning against the counter, fidgeting with the cuffs of his hoodie. His eyes dart from Ilya to the floor to the door and back to Ilya again.

"So," Shane says after a moment. Ilya can hear the careful curiosity in his voice, the way he's trying to sound casual and failing. "She's really just...messing around?"

“Yes, of course. This is what Sveta does. When you meet her, you will understand. It is love language.”

“Love language,” Shane echoes. He doesn't sound upset anymore, more amused than anything else, but Ilya still feels the need to clarify.

“We are best friends,” he says firmly, turning back to the coffee maker and pressing the button with maybe more force than necessary. The idea of Shane thinking there is still something between him and Sveta—it turns Ilya’s stomach in on itself. “Since we are very small children. She is knowing me longer than anyone, and I am knowing her, and this—” He waves his hand vaguely. “Is just for fun.”

“I *knew* it didn't mean anything, I just—” Shane stops abruptly, embarrassed. “I don't know. I thought maybe one of those things must’ve been true.”

“It *did* mean something,” Ilya corrects, very deliberately not thinking about how domestic this feels, making coffee for Shane in his kitchen at—he glances at the microwave clock—eight-thirty in the morning while they discuss his fake children. “Meant that Sveta saw me on television saying I do not know her and thought 'perfect, now I will make this worse.' Is very meaningful to her, she probably laughed for hours. I can shut it down,” he offers, knowing that Sveta will understand why he must. “I will make statement saying ‘fuck off!’”

“No, don't,” Shane says, shaking his head. “She deserves to laugh after being bombarded with questions about you. Plus, the Scott thing. *That* was hilarious.”

Ilya pouts. “You are very mean to me, you and Sveta both. I am surrounded by cruel people who enjoy watching me suffer.”

“You're so dramatic,” Shane scoffs, his lips quirking up fondly. Ilya very much wants to kiss him. That is not new, but this all still feels like uncharted territory. Ilya should probably say something dirty, soon, or else he'll accidentally admit the depth of his feelings and scare Shane off. “She's just dedicated. I mean, come on. A *Scott Hunter* jersey?”

“Is dedication to ruining my life,” Ilya huffs, though his focus is slipping now, drawn inexorably to how close Shane is standing. His eyes keep flickering down to Ilya's mouth and then snapping back up again, as if he's trying very hard not to jump Ilya's bones. Suddenly Ilya's kitchen seems much smaller than it did a moment ago.

“You really weren't upset,” Shane says, more a statement than a question.

Ilya shrugs. “About internet thinking I am father of many imaginary children? No. This is very on brand for me.”

“You're unbelievable.”

“Yes,” Ilya agrees. “But you come here anyway, no?”

Shane opens his mouth to argue, then closes it again, clearly deciding it is not worth it. His ears are pink again, and Ilya realizes faintly that a flustered Shane Hollander has been his

favorite thing in the world for nearly a decade. “You know,” Shane says, leaning back against the counter, arms crossed loosely. “One day, you’re going to do something actually scandalous, and no one’s going to believe it.”

Ilya, valiantly, holds onto the thin remaining thread of this conversation. “Like what? I am never scandalous.”

Shane’s gaze flicks to his mouth, just briefly, and then back up. “Like this,” he says, and then they’re crashing into each other, Ilya’s hands quickly finding their way to Shane’s waist, backing him up against the counter. Ilya’s phone buzzes again—Marlow or Svetlana or his manager—but the world could erupt into flames around them and it still wouldn’t pull him away from Shane. He’s grabbing at Ilya’s hair, his back, his shoulders, desperate for it. Ilya can taste the relief on his tongue.

They break apart for air, foreheads pressed together, breathing hard, and Ilya can feel Shane smiling against his mouth. “Hi,” he says.

“Hi,” Ilya echoes, brushing his lips against Shane’s cheekbone because he can. “Has anyone ever told you you’re very good at this?”

“Years of practice,” Shane says, and then he’s kissing Ilya again, slower this time. They stay like that for a while—Ilya’s not sure how long, losing track of time somewhere between Shane’s tongue against his and the way Shane’s fingers are threading through his hair. By the time they separate, his coffee has gone cold again.

“Coffee is lost cause,” Ilya mumbles against Shane’s mouth, punctuating the statement with another kiss. “Is second cup I have abandoned this morning. Tragedy, no?”

Dazed, Shane stares at him. He pulls back slightly, just enough to look at Ilya properly, and his lips are kiss-swollen and his hair is even more disheveled than before—Ilya’s fault this time—and he looks so thoroughly pleased with himself that Ilya wants to kiss him all over again. “I don’t give a fuck about your coffee,” he says finally, eyebrows creasing with irritation. “Come here, asshole.”

Ilya goes.

Of course, Svetlana remains his best friend, internet conspiracies notwithstanding, so the next time they meet, Ilya has no qualms about kissing her cheek goodbye outside of a nightclub. Naturally, it gets plastered all over the social medias, but Ilya decides, with great certainty, that it is a very cute picture and that Sveta looks radiant, and that he truly does not care.

She asks him once, when her face is nestled against his shoulder and his cheek pillowed on her hair, if ‘Jane’ is okay with all of this. Her voice is soft in a way she rarely allows, stripped of performance. Ilya looks at her then, his oldest friend, intelligent and glowing and endlessly loyal, and feels his heart swell with a kind of affection so absolute that it almost startles him. He thinks, with sudden clarity, that he loves her very much, and that he always will, and that the internet can think whatever it wants.

“Yes,” he tells her, once he remembers the question. “He is okay now.”

That's that. Because Ilya is so kind and generous—and because Sveta woke him up at 3 a.m to demand this of him—Ilya weasels Rose Landry's personal cell number from one suspicious Shane Hollander. This proves easier than expected, mostly because Shane Hollander is very bad at resisting Ilya's charms.

Warily, Shane watches him circle the kitchen island. “No,” he says preemptively, as Ilya's arms box him in.

“I have not asked anything yet,” Ilya points out.

“You're about to. I can tell it's going to be annoying.”

“Maybe. Svetlana has crush on Rose, you know. Very serious.”

Shane pauses, halfway through the motion of rubbing a hand down his face. His eyebrows jump up, mouth opening and closing like fish. Ilya can practically see the little gears turning in his cute head. Finally, Shane exhales, long-suffering, and pulls out his phone. “You cannot tell her where you got it,” he says, already defeated. “And if this becomes awkward, I'm blaming you forever.”

(He doesn't understand why this threat pleases Ilya so, but that's probably for the best. *Forever*. He feels giddy, like small child. He is Shane's forever.)

End Notes

inspired by caleb mclaughlin replying "yes" "no" and "maybe" to three separate comments asking if he likes sadie sink irl

also just pretend ilya and svetlana text in russian

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