

No Accent, Perfect

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No Accent, Perfect

by [Ilyhuuuuh](#)

Summary

Shane Hollander learns Russian in secret, eventually it's not a secret anymore.

Shane Hollander was anything but a slacker. He took everything in his life seriously. He woke up at 5am for his morning run, then he'd spend half an hour in his home gym before showering, eating a well balanced breakfast, and heading to the rink for whatever the team had planned that day. He took his routine seriously, and in turn, everything else seemed to fall into place.

He was fast, on his feet and on the ice. He was strong, to the point where he could effortlessly pin some of the biggest guys in the league to the boards and slip the puck off their stick and onto his own. He even managed to finish his daily sudoku in about 5 minutes every day.

He took to French like a fish took to water, that's why he was so frustrated when he first started picking up phrases in Russian. He couldn't manage to wrap his mind around the language at first, couldn't make his mouth move correctly to get it just right. He spent hours staring at himself in the mirror trying to find the right way to move his mouth for different words, recording his own attempts and comparing it to the audio guide on the app he'd downloaded.

He's not sure why he started learning Russian, maybe it was to get an edge over Rozanov, to know what he would mutter on the ice, or whisper against his neck as he pushed inside of him. Or maybe it was because he had two teammates who spoke Russian and he was the captain, he couldn't have his teammates feeling ostracized, could he? (They had little to nothing to do with his decision, but he refuses to acknowledge that).

He had come a far way from where he was the first year, where he used to stumble and trip over the pronunciations, he now glided through them perfectly, at least that's what the teacher he had hired around year 2 said.

He felt confident he could carry conversations now, banter back and forth with his friends. He doesn't know for sure, because the only person on the planet that knows about his Russian hobby is his teacher, Tonya. They had just finished their session for this week, he always felt strange after a session, a weird ball of guilt and shame welling up in the pit of his stomach he didn't fully understand. It might have something to do with the Russian currently texting him, but he tried to block that out.

Lily: Are your legs still shaking from last time? You skate like baby deer tonight.

He rolled his eyes before typing his response

Jane: Fuck yourself, I was skating fine.

He was, it wasn't his best night, and it pains him to admit it, but he'll play better on Friday and that's all that matters. He still scored a goal and got an assist.

Lily: You will be shaking again in a week, yes? ;)

Jane: Someone's full of themselves.

And he knew the second he sent it, he had walked right into a trap, he expected the response before he got it

Lily: You can be full of me too.

Shane turned his phone off and felt the flush creep up his cheeks. He should be used to the comments by now, but he's not. And it's only gotten worse since he's started learning the others native tongue.

All the whispered comments he makes, the words grazing his skin as he takes him apart. Sometimes he feels guilty for not telling him he knows what he's saying, and then Rozanov calls him beautiful again and his brain shuts off.

Before he'd thought whatever he was saying would be dirty, so filthy that Shane wouldn't even want to know, and there are plenty of dirty things that have tumbled out in Russian, but mostly it's soft praise '*you're so gorgeous*', '*your little noises are beautiful*', '*my pretty boy*'. It might be one of the reasons he still refuses to tell him he knows, because what if he stops saying them?

He puts all his things back where they belong, his Russian language book goes back in the bottom drawer, stuffed under two hockey biographies he knows nobody will care to read if they end up snooping, and his notebook filled with phrases, tips and notes gets put back in a bag that sits on the floor beside his desk, filled with random papers and forms.

As he walks around his house that evening he's practicing what they had went over in his lesson, wrapping his tongue around the words until they feel perfect before moving on to the next. Maybe he'll finally work up the courage to tell his Russian teammates soon, then they could talk to him without trying to grasp the correct words after a particularly hard game, or a gruelling workout. Probably not, but it would be nice.

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He was making an early lunch for himself before an afternoon practice when he stubbed his toe on the island, it happened without him even noticing at first. He had been going over some of his notes, and was practicing a few phrases he had heard in a post game interview with a Russian goalie on Washington's team. So it wasn't that surprising when he muttered a quiet "*fuck*" in Russian.

He was actually a little proud, curse words had been one of the first things he learned, before he fully committed to his secret lessons, he would listen to certain words Rozanov would say, whether it was a whispered praise just for Shane's ears, or a frustrated exclamation during a game, he would file it away and repeat it in his head until he got somewhere he could search it up. Rozanov's favourite seemed to be "*fuck*". Which Shane understood, it sounded rough, and aggressive, it felt dull in his mouth whenever he had practiced, different to English cursing. Not to mention it worked for most settings the Russian would curse in.

Shane hadn't thought twice about his slip up, just rubbed his foot and went on about fishing up his rice and chicken before heading out for practice. Nobody was around to hear him, it was nothing.

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The next slip up was a little more concerning, he was listening to some of the audios from the language app, earphones in, on the plane back home from Detroit. He was half asleep, the monotone voice wasn't helping keep his eyes open after the exhausting game that ended in overtime.

the voice was walking Shane though something he already knew, but he liked to put it on in situations like this, where his brain was too tired for anything new, but he wanted to stay on top of his learning.

"Hey, you want water?" Hayden nudged him and pulled one of his earphones out, Shane blinked one eye open, and seen the flight attendant in the hall, getting a cup of water for J.J. in the row across from them.

Shane shook his head, and without thinking said "*no, I'm good, thanks*".

Hayden looked at him with wide eyes, his mouth dropped open. Shane mirrors his expression and quickly corrected himself "sorry, no. Im good, thanks" he tried to smile politely at the attended who just nodded and continued on.

"what the hell was that?" Hayden whispered, a bit of a wild smile on his face, Shane blushed and groaned. "Was that fucking Russian, dude?"

"if I say no will you leave me alone?" He grumbled into his hands, Hayden laughed and nudged him again "not a chance" he looked over at his best friend who was still smiling at him "if I say yes will you leave me alone?" Hayden laughed again.

"why are you learning Russian, dude? Don't you already know French?" He asked, this time a little louder, Shane was quick to shush him, not wanted everyone on the team to know he was learning Russian and somehow connect to dots to his and Rozanov's...agreement? Situation? He wasn't sure what to call it.

Then he remembered his team. His Russian teammates. "Mikha and Popov" he said bluntly, Hayden just furrowed his eyebrows. "I mean, they only have each other to talk to in Russian, I thought it might be nice, and also, there are lots of players who speak Russian, it's got to be hard not being able to talk in your own language that often" he hoped it was a good enough reason for Hayden.

he was quiet for a minute, just staring at Shane with bugged eyes before smiling again. "This is why you're the captain, always looking out for everyone, that's really cool dude" Shane let out a breath and nodded "say something else" he said excitedly, and he internally groaned, this is what he didn't want. "No Hayd, not happening" he quickly shut the idea down.

"come on! I won't know if it's bad or not, just tell me you need to piss or something, I don't know" Shane unexpectedly laughed and shook his head before repeating it back to Hayden who laughed along with him.

”don’t tell anyone yet, I’m not...conversation ready” which was a lie, but it felt wrong sharing this with people when the reason he was even interested in the language didn’t know yet. “I got you man, secrets safe” he nodded once before turning back to his phone, leaving Shane with his Russian monologue in his headphones.

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Ever since the Hayden slip up, he’s been worried he’s going to say something in front of Rozanov. He’s often in a different headspace when he’s around. His brain turned to mush, the hottest man he’s ever seen kissing up and down his neck and covering him in Russian compliments.

He’s scared that one day Rozanov is going to say something he’s said a million times before like “*you like that, baby?*” Or “*you were made to take it, weren’t you?*” And he would crumble and respond in perfect Russian back, but he assured himself it hasn’t happened yet, so it’s not happening tonight.

That’s what he keeps repeating to himself as Rozanov pushed him back against the counter, his hands finding the bottoms of Shane’s thighs and lifting him up onto it.

“I’ve missed your mouth, 2 months is so long without it” his hands are wandering up and down his chest, only to find themselves tangled in his hair “missed you too, god” Shane’s brain short circuits for a second because Rozanov missed his *mouth* and he just admitted to missing *all of him*.

but before he can worry too much Rozanov is groaning and rolling his hips into Shane’s thigh, and everything vanishes. The missing him, the Russian, even the fact that they lost tonight, everything melts away and all he can think about is Rozanov, RozanovRozanovRozanov and moremoremore.

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He’s in the middle of a lesson. His teacher is going over one of the phrases he had just messed up when he recalls a word Rozanov had said a few days before, he had lifted him off the counter, and deposited him onto the couch, kissing up and down his neck when he ghosted his lips over Shane’s ear and said “moy Lou-bee-me”. He hadn’t remembered it after, too fucked out of it to write it in his notes for later.

He worked himself up the whole lesson to ask what it meant, only getting the courage as Tonya was saying her goodbyes “just one more question” he started, she looked back up to the camera and nodded “someone said something to me the other day, I was just wondering what it meant”

He repeated it back to her and her eyes softened a little “it means my beloved” his heart stopped for a second and he just looked back at her with wide eyes. “Whoever said that to you must really care about you” she continued on, her voice sounding mushier as she went on “is that why you’re taking these lessons? For them?” She asked, smiling warmly at him.

He felt his cheeks flush and shook his head “uh no. I mean-maybe? I’m not sure” she nodded and he quickly ended the call. What the fuck?

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The way his teammates found out was stupid. So stupid and avoidable. They were all chatting after morning practice, throwing gear around, making plans for the weekend they had off, talking about different plays and moves. And Shane being the good captain he was, was keeping an ear out for anything he could help with.

“I just can’t seem to get it right, i think my stick gets caught in my hip maybe, it’s pissing me the fuck off” Popov was talking with Mikha about the stick handling trick they had been practicing just before they left the ice, and without thinking Shane responded *“next time, angle the end of your stick more towards your feet”*

The two just turned and looked at him, the others around seemed to hear him too and stopped what they were doing, leaving the rest of the guys to look over confused.

Shane felt his cheeks burning before anyone even said anything “did you just speak Russian?” Mikha asked, a dumbfounded look on his face “he just spoke Russian, right? I’m not losing my mind?” He turned to Popov who looked just as shocked.

Before he could say anything Hayden piped up from his other side “Hell yeah he did! He’s been learning, said he didn’t want you guys feeling left out” Hayden smirked like he was so proud of his best friend, who just flushed even more because yeah, that was part of the reason, but not the main one.

Mikha and Popov just stared for a minute before they started smiling, they both reached over and pulling him into a three-way hug *“that is the nicest thing anyone’s ever done”* Mikha said and Shane almost teared up, maybe he should’ve told them long before today, he loved his team, and if he knew they would be this happy, and not freaked out, he would’ve.

”So Shane speaks...Russian...now too?” J.J. said from across the room “English, French, and Russian? Are you trying to make all of us look stupid Hollander?” He jokes and the other boys laugh “I don’t have to try, you all look stupid anyway” he gets a few boos, laughs, and a shin guard thrown in his direction before everyone settles back in and goes back to their earlier conversations.

“So how good are you? Fluent? Can you understand us fully?” Popov asks, leaning around where Mikha is sitting to talk with Shane *“I wouldn’t say fluent, but I’m getting pretty damn good”* he smirks and the two men just shake their heads in disbelief *“I can’t fucking believe it, how long have you been learning?”* Shane feels the blush creep back up, Mikha has been on the team for longer than Shane has been learning, but it still seems silly to say it’s been years and he hasn’t told them.

“a couple years now” he rubs the back of his neck as they both laugh *“years! How do keep that a secret for years?”* Mikha didn’t know Shane Hollander was very good at keeping secrets.

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Shane had just gotten back to his apartment after their game in Montreal, their game where him and Ilya barley looked at each other, the game where just hours before, him and Ilya had been sitting on his couch. In his house. And it all felt too real, too familiar. Too domestic. He had left Ilyas feeling like shit, cursing himself for staying, and for leaving.

He had a lesson scheduled for this afternoon but he had already cancelled it, the idea of learning Ilyas language while avoiding thoughts of him altogether didn't make any sense to him.

He's also not sure when he started referring to it as 'Ilyas language' but he wasn't sure of a lot of things these days.

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Rose Landry. He had seen the stories, the rumours, the theories. But none of them were true, there was no 'instant romantic connection', they had met that night and hit it off, yes, but they both knew it wasn't more than that. Rose was just a friend. Probably his best friend.

it helped that Rose probably knew from the start he wasn't into her like that. She hadn't mentioned it at the beginning of the rumours, just laughing it off before ordering take out to be delivered to Shane's apartment so they could rewatch some trashy reality show she was binging between shoots.

it was actually a month after they had started hanging out that she broached the subject at all. "So, I have this friend..." she started and Shane rolled his eyes, having heard that tone from Jackie more than enough times.

"Please Rose, I don't need to be set up with your yoga instructor friend, or nurse friend, or the barista from your Starbucks" she just smiled and turned to face him.

"what if I told you the barista was really cute...and he asked me about you?" She added quietly, Shane couldn't even control his body, he turned to her so fast, his eyes wide and his jaw slack.

"I could be totally wrong, please tell me if I am, but I just...I don't know, I maybe got the vibe you might be..." he trailed off, but Shane knew exactly where she was going.

He let out a shaky breath and turned away from her, resigned. "How did you know?" He started playing with his fingers, he suddenly felt way too aware of his own body, nothing felt right.

"I didn't, not for sure. I just, whenever someone asked if we were together you were so adamant that we weren't, and that's totally fine, I'm not so conceited that I can't believe someone's not into me. But it seemed like you weren't into anyone, girls throw themselves at you, and you don't even blink. But that one night we went to my friends party, the one at the

restaurant, you stumbled over your words when you asked for a ginger ale” Shane groans as he remembers what she’s talking about.

They had gone out after a home game, Rose had a long day of shooting and they met up for her friends birthday at some fancy restaurant she booked out for the night.

The bartender was cute, dirty blonde hair, broad shoulders, long legs. He reminded him of Ilya, so much so that he could barely get his words out before furiously blushing and downing his ginger ale.

“I thought, maybe you’ve avoided being set up because we weren’t shopping in the right section, so I took a swing” she said, Shane laughed a little, his eyes welling up.

“Have you, told anyone?” She asked, hesitantly, he shook his head no, looking down at his hands. “Oh Shane” she hugged into his side and one of the tears fell into her hair. “I love you, I’ll always love you, okay?” She said, hesitantly nodded, not trusting his voice.

“have you ever...been with another guy?” A small smile graced his lips before he could stop it, remembering all the moments with Ilya. The first time they met, the heated moments in hotel rooms...the flip in his stomach when he called him Shane. The way his brain refused to call him anything but Ilya now. “Yeah, I have”.

“are you with anyone?” She asked, and his smile immediately faded, because no. he wasn’t. And he didn’t want to be, did he? It would be ridiculous, there’s no way they could be together, so no. He wasn’t with anyone.

“No, I’m not. I can’t be” Rose sighed and hugged him tighter “I can’t promise everything will be okay, but I can promise I’ll be here even when it’s not” Shane felt more tears overflowing as he hugged her back. He was so worried about anyone knowing one of his secrets, but in this moment he was glad someone knew.

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“Are you ready for your game tonight? Playing Boston is always fun!” Rose exclaimed into the phone, Shane tried to match her energy, but he was anything but excited. He spent most of the morning wallowing.

“Yeah, it’s gonna be great” he said, trying to sound enthusiastic, Rose of course, caught on immediately. “Whats wrong? Why do you sound like that?” He scoffed at her bluntness and rolled his eyes with a slight smile “I don’t sound like anything, just a bit distracted. It’s a big game” he lied, it wasn’t really a big game.

Well, every game was a big game when they were playing in Boston, but it’s not like this one game was going to be life or death playoffs wise, it was looking like both teams would be in the playoffs either way.

“okay, if you say so. But on a completely unrelated note, I’m always here if you need to talk about something. Anything” she said, and he could almost hear the self assured smile on her

face, he chuckled and nodded “I know, I’ve gotta go, but I’ll call you next week yeah? We’ll get lunch or something” they say their goodbyes and he stares down at his phone, willing a text to come through.

After he and Rose talked, he had told her, as best as he could, without outing Ilya, or alluding to their relationship (?) too much, the situation. That he and this guy had been in this complicated space of being together, but definitely not being together. The times they would hook up, and lay for hours talking. The sweet kisses, the quiet confessions (in Russian, but Rose didn’t need to know that). All of it. Well, most of it.

Speaking of Russian, after that conversation he had thrown himself back into his Russian lessons, went right back to his language app, and his notebook. It felt like a comfort, to hear the words that used to be pressed into his skin. They weren’t coming from who he wanted to hear it from, but it was comforting to hear them, still.

Somewhere in the last few weeks, he had come to the realization that he might be a little bit in love with Ilya Rozanov. Well, he’d concluded that he may have been in love with him for a while. Having Rose in his corner, listening to him, and giving him advice, has been more healing than he imagined.

He realized he was in the wrong that day, that he had bailed when it got too real, even when deep down he knew he wanted it to be real. He had done a lot of unpacking and tonight he was going to lay it all out for Ilya to see, consequences be damned.

He knew what he was opening himself up to, heartbreak, rejection. he couldn’t imagine Ilya would out him and ruin his career, but he had let himself overthink that into oblivion last night, going over every scenario possible, not getting stuck on the happy ones, just to prepare himself.

He knew it was risky, and terrifying, but at least when it was out there he could breathe. He could know for sure what was going on, what they were, or what they weren’t.

So he’s been a bit on edge today, knowing what he was going to do after the game. But he did have to get through that first, he had to put his skates on one at a time and pump up his team, go on the ice and play his ass off.

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The first face off was between him and Ilya, the other man wouldn’t even look at him, his eyes downcast toward centre ice, waiting. It felt wrong, he wanted to stop before he started and wrap him in his arms, apologize for leaving, tell him he wanted him, truly wanted him.

He didn’t. He won the face off and skated down the ice.

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“you coming out tonight, captain?” Mikha asked as they got undressed, the team roaring around them after their win. *“Not tonight, gonna meet up with a friend and head back to the hotel early I think”* Mikha shrugged and went back to taking his gear off. He rarely went out with the team after games, especially while in Boston. Everyone assumed he had a girl here, and he let them. It was better than fighting about going out when in reality he wanted to be wrapped up in Ilyas bed.

he really hoped that’s how tonight would end.

He quickly got a shower, and made his way outside, getting in the uber and giving directions to Ilyas house, he still had his address saved. He pulled up and watched the car drive off. There were two cars in the driveway, so he really hoped they were both Ilyas, and he didn’t have someone over. If he did he wasn’t sure what he would do.

Before he could knock, another car pulled into the driveway, Shane turned and squinted into the headlights, this car he recognized, he had seen videos on Ilyas Instagram.

He waited for what felt like ages for Ilya to get out. He’s not sure what he was expecting, but Ilya walking straight past him, into the house, and down the hall, leaving the door open, was not it.

“Ilya” he whispered once he stepped in and shut the door. He’s seen the other man stiffen, his shoulders going rigid.

“what do you want Hollander?” the coldness of his tone, and the use of his last name made him want to run back home, but he took a breath and plowed forward.

“can we talk? Please?” Ilya nodded once and gestured to the stools at the island.

He made his way over, sat down, and watched Ilya grab two cans from the fridge, one coke, one ginger ale. It was a simple gesture, but it gave him a little spark of hope.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry for leaving” he started and Ilya nodded, not looking up at him. “I shouldn’t have, I just- I got scared” he whispered, Ilya looked up at him, calculated.

“Scared of what?” He asked, and Shane took a breath “scared of this. Us. It felt so...real, and I ran” Ilya flinched and nodded again, looking away.

“I’m not anymore. Scared I mean. Actually I’m terrified, but not in the same way” he clarified, seeing some of the stiffness leaving his shoulders. “You feel it too right?” He whispered, afraid that if he talked too loud he might hear the implications that question holds.

For a long moment, they were both silent, Shane looking at Ilya, Ilya looking at his hands. After what felt like hours, Ilya nodded once.

He let out a breath he felt like had been stuck in his lungs for hours, days, months...years. “It doesn’t change anything” Ilya muttered, and Shane’s heart dropped “we can’t be together” he

felt his eyes gloss over, and he finally tore his gaze away from Ilya, swallowing around the lump in his throat.

“I get it, I’ve been thinking about it. Russia isn’t safe for you, I totally understand” his voice was shaky.

that was one thing he discovered while learning Russian, Russia was not a safe place for anyone other than straight white men, there were laws, and unspoken rules. Shane had been up all that night, after he fell down that rabbit hole, worrying.

“What? No, I do not care about Russia. I said my goodbyes last time I was home. I have nothing to go back for” Ilya said, so confident, as if this was something he also considered once, but had come to terms with.

“Then what?” He asked, scared of the response, if it wasn’t his home, what was it? Did he just not want to be with him? Did he not feel what Shane felt?

“We are famous hockey players Shane! We are supposed to hate each other, not be together!” He yells, throwing his hands around for effect, Shane flinches “we cannot see each other more than few times a year! And I do not want to be home, missing you, when you are out fucking Rose Landry!” Shane was taken a back for a second, his eyes wide.

“Me and Rose aren’t...” he trailed off, Ilya scoffed and muttered “*you look at her like you love her*” he mutters in Russian, looking to his hands again.

and now it’s Shane’s turn to yell.

“*because I do love her, but not like I love you, you idiot!*” He yells back, Ilyas head snaps up, his mouth slack, his hands fall to his side. Shane doesn’t stop.

“*we were never together! We’re friends, she’s the only person in the world besides for you who knows me, she’s knows it all! I’ve spent hours crying to her over you! As for the famous stuff, nobody has to know, not right now. If that’s all that’s holding you back, I understand, but I hate it. I hate that just because we want to play hockey I can’t be with you, I can’t love you. I can promise you, together or not, I won’t stop loving you. The last 7 years have proved that*” when he finished he drops back onto the stool, resting his head on his arms, and letting out a shaky breath.

“you speak Russian” he hears Ilyas stunned voice, and something in Shane snaps, he lets out a chuckle that turns into a whimper, that turns into a sob.

before he knows it, strong, warm hands are on his back, circling around him, pulling him upright and into his Ilyas chest. He faintly hears his voice “*shhhh, it is okay*” “*you’re safe here*” “*relax my beloved*” and that just sends him reeling again.

After a few minutes he breathes again, still choppy but he’s not bawling. “*You are okay, I’ve got you*” Shane sags back into him and lets himself feel the heat of Ilyas chest pressed against his back, the feel of his fingers tangled in his hair. Let’s Ilya ground him.

“did you learn Russian for me, my love?” All Shane can do is whimper and nod, not trusting his voice *“you are perfect, my perfect boy”* he buries his face into Shane’s neck, and he can feel hot tears down his collarbone.

“Hey, hey, I’m sorry for yelling. Look at me” he turns and grabs Ilyas face *“say it again”* and he knows what he means, so he smiles sadly *“I love you”* and Ilyas kissing him.

He kisses him, takes his breath away, and restores it again. It’s soft, and gentle, but also hungry. Not the way their kisses are usually hungry, this one’s more about needing to feel their lips pressed against each other, like they would both crawl inside the others chest and stay there.

“when? When did you...?” He trails off, not knowing how to ask. Shane looks at their intertwined arms and blushes *“a couple years. You just kept saying how tiring English could be sometimes. I didn’t want all our conversations to feel like that for you”* Ilya takes his chin in his fingers, holding him gently, like he could break any moment.

“I love you Shane Hollander, I love you. You are so perfect, I don’t deserve you” Shane’s eyes well up with fresh tears and Ilya quickly wipes them away.

“you deserve everything” he says simply, because it’s true. Ilya Rozanov deserves everything good, he deserves happiness and love and support. The least he could do was learn how to speak to him.

Ilya kisses him softly again *“fuck hockey, fuck being famous, I don’t care you are everything. You’re all I need”* he knows there will be many more conversations, ideas, arguments, plans. But for now, that’s good enough, it’s more than enough, it’s fucking perfect. For now, this is everything.

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