

Soothing

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Soothing

by [ibumblebee](#)

Summary

Shane opens his mouth a few times, like he tries to get words out without succeeding.

“But it hurt you too,” he says finally. “You just wanted to check on me, your fucking boyfriend, after I got hit. And I pushed you away.”

Usually, hearing Shane refer to himself as Ilya's boyfriend sends a warm shiver down his spine. But now, with that almost venomous voice, the shiver is instead cold as ice.

OR, Shane gets injured during a game and Ilya is once again forced to see him unmoving on the ice. Neither of them handles the aftermath well.

Notes

Hello, long time no see!

So long in fact that I have gotten a whole damn bachelors degree since I last posted. I honestly did not expect 2026 to start with me being back and posting fanfiction, but I guess here we are! Over the last weeks I have been absolutely *obsessed* with this show and snorting almost every fic and clip there is. However, the show is not available in my country and I have not yet read the books, so there will probably be some inaccuracies with the timeline and stuff.

Anyway, hope you enjoy! As always, English is not my first language.

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

Playing against Shane has always been electric. On the ice, he is quick and brave and *fierce* in a way he never is anywhere else. Unapologetically himself, doing what he is destined to do. There has never been a time where Ilya has watched him play with any other feeling than admiration. Despite what he always says, Shane is probably the better hockey player out of the two of them. Ilya has the speed, yes, but the way Shane handles the puck. No one even comes close. Not even Ilya.

It is a Wednesday night and the crowd in the stands roars, excited for the game. **Boston vs Montreal**, the jumbotron announces. Shane is already at the faceoff circle, feet apart, knees slightly bent. It was a long time since they last saw each other. A few weeks. Sure, they had gone a lot longer without each other before, but not since they decided that they were boyfriends. As Ilya skates towards the center, and Shane, he thinks about their last messages, the last being sent forty seconds before he had to leave the changing rooms.

L: How many goals you score today?

J: More than you

J: Three

L: In your dreams

L: Tell you what, extra motivation for you

L: As many times as you score, I will let you cum tonight

J: Fuck you

J: Please

L: Good boy

And sure, Ilya looks forward to it, maybe almost a little too much, but most of all he found himself wanting to be close to Shane again. To see his bedhair. Hold him close. *Smell him*. God, what has he become?

When Ilya skates towards him, trying his best to not look like the absolute love-sick fool he is, his mind flashes back to the last time Shane stood like this, lowered in front of him. That was weeks ago, in Shane's own hallway in Montreal. They have not been wearing their helmets then. Or shirts. Shane's eyes had been half-closed and dark with raw *want*, a single tear stuck in his eyelashes as he greedily and obediently took what Ilya gave him. *Beautiful*.

Ilya comes to a stop in front of him. His eyes not for a second leaving Shane's face. The face that is covered in freckles and that Ilya is kind of dying to reach out and touch. Not now, he

knows he has to be patient for another couple of hours before he can do that, but when he does... *Blyad'*. He also bends his knees, getting into position, leaving them at the same height.

Shane's head snaps up and their gazes meet. Unlike last time, Shane's eyes are completely open this time. Open and focused. But beneath that, Ilya can still see the want. Shane's lips twist up in a smirk. Ilya still can't believe that he gets to *have* this. To have Shane. Even if they almost are the only two people who know. Shane belongs to him. To Ilya. And Ilya, damn it if he has not belonged to Shane from that first timid "Hi".

"Ready to lose, Rosanov?" Shane chirps. Ilya huffs.

"That was bad shittalk Hollander. I know you can do better." Shane lets his eyes glaze around them quickly. The refs are still talking to each other a few meters away, both of their teammates are circling around, not yet in position to start the game. He turns back to Ilya and lowers his voice, despite knowing that no one can hear them over the sound of the crowd.

"Don't exhaust yourself to much. You'll be spending a lot of time on your knees when we get home." Ilya's eyebrows shoot up in surprise and then he tries his best to keep his face from breaking out in a delightful smile. It's not often Shane is brave enough to say things like this to him, let alone in public. Shane blushes slightly, but looks very pleased with himself for getting this reaction out of him.

Before Ilya can retort, one of the referees comes skating towards them. He looks stern, like he is expecting a fight to break out between them at any time. Ilya has to remind himself that despite what they are behind closed doors, here they are Rosanov and Hollander, arch-rivals. And they stood talking to each other for more than a few seconds. Ilya flashes the ref his most innocent smile and gets a highly suspicious look back, but when nothing gets said between him and his rival the ref nods back.

"You both ready?" the referee says, holding the puck in his hand, stretching it out in front of him. Ilya turns his gaze to the ice and nods. His and Shane's sticks hit each other a few times before the puck gets dropped. He tries to reach it, but Shane, beautiful, talented, *incredible* Shane, is faster. He manages to pass the puck to one of his own players behind him. Ilya huffs with frustration, looks up into Shane's eyes for a split second, seeing them looking challenging back at him. Okay, maybe he is not feeling *only* admiration watching Shane play. Ilya can feel his eyes twitch before taking the first skates towards the puck. The game is on.

—

Shane's first goal comes after seven minutes. Ilya isn't on the ice when Shane gets the perfect pass from Pike and shoots the puck straight into the upper left corner. It's perfectly placed. No goalie could ever save that shoot. Shane catches his eye when skating past to their bench. *One*, he mouths, movements so small that Ilya wouldn't have seen it if he weren't already staring at Shane's lips. One goal. One orgasm.

Shane scores a second time two minutes into the second period. This time Ilya is on the ice, so he can't even use that as an excuse. Shane manages to dribble past both of Boston's defenders and somehow get the puck under the leg pads of the goalie. He lifts his arms up and yells. Before his teammates reach him, he once again locks eyes with Ilya. *Two*. Ilya really hates losing, but with this deal, he can't get himself to feel like a loser either way.

The third period starts and Boston is losing. 4-1. Shane is one away from a hattrick and Ilya has yet to score anything at all. As Shane comes hurling towards him and slams him into the boards, Ilya can practically feel the smugness radiating off him.

"You can do better," Shane whispers as he presses him against the plexiglass, echoing Ilya's own words from the faceoff. Ilya swears under his breath and tries his best to maneuver the puck away from him, but to no avail. Shane is on fire this game, even more than usual. He is playing like a man on a mission. Like he has *incentive*.

Shane finally gets hold of the puck from under Ilya's foot and takes off, passing it off to another player. Ilya grits his teeth and, instead of following, hurries towards the bench. He has been on the ice for almost two minutes and his legs are burning. Shane has been on the ice almost as long as him, and Ilya can tell that he feels it too, even though he hides it well. Most people would probably not be able to tell, but Ilya Rozanov was not most people when it came to knowing Shane Hollander. He knows all of Shane's skating techniques by heart, and now he watches him take off to end his shift. Ilya reaches the Boston bench and reaches for his water bottle, his eyes still fixed on the game.

That means that, as if the universe is playing some sick, twisted game on him, Ilya once again sees it first. Something he has seen once before, and then repeatedly in his nightmares. He opens his mouth in a soundless warning, but no sound wants to come out.

As if in slow motion Ilya can only watch as Marlow comes barreling towards an unsuspecting Shane. The crash is imminent and instant. Blue and black collide in a mess of limbs, sticks and the sharp blades of two pairs of skates. The sound of two bodies hitting each other harder than they should. A small scream of surprise and pain, and suddenly blue is down on the ice. *Shane* is down on the ice. Not moving.

Ilya feels his heart stop in his chest.

No.

No

no.

no

nonono

nonono

Not again.

He can not watch Shane, *his* Shane go down like this *again*.

Ilya is over the boards before he can even comprehend what is happening, skating as fast as he can towards the blue gameshirt on the ice. Despite there being hundreds of people around him, the only thing Ilya can hear is his own heartbeat, fast and panicked. Desperate to get to Shane.

But before he reaches him, Shane moves. His legs stretch outwards and he lifts his head. Still down on the ice on his stomach their eyes meet. Panicked hazel and dark brown, Shanes widening as they take in what is happening in front of him, seeing Ilya race towards him. Then, Shane shakes his head. It's just a small movement, not something anyone else would ever see, not unless someone is as focused on him as Ilya is. As he always is.

"No", Shane mouths. And Ilya understands what he means. *No. Not here in front of all these people here. I am not ready for them to know.* Ilya knows this. They have had this conversation before. And they both agreed, they cannot come out now. Him jumping over the boards just to fall to his knees in front of the fallen captain of the opposing team, it would expose everything.

But the damage is already done. Ilya is already over the boards. Everyone has seen him jump over. *Fuck.* He slows down his skating and forces himself to tear his gaze from Shane's, what it seems, mostly unharmed body. There has to be something that he can do. Looking around, the white and black stripes of the referee's shirt catches his attention. He changes directions and instead charges towards the ref, who is watching him with confused, furrowed brows. Ilya curses himself again, this was weird. Jumping over the boards to talk to the ref about a tackle that had been nothing. But at the same time he can't really blame himself, as he still feels the panic in his chest from having seen Shane once again fall onto the ice.

"That was clean tackle," Ilya says as he gets close enough to the ref. "You cannot blame Marlow."

"I will handle this, Rozanov. Go back and sit down." The ref still looks confused, but some annoyance bleeds into his voice.

"Tackle was clean", Ilya tries again. "Should not be penalty."

"Last time, Rozanov, go back," he says, now sounding properly annoyed, eyebrows no longer furrowed in confusion. Ilya nods slowly. Good. Annoyed is safe, better than suspicious. He turns around slowly, facing the players on both the ice and the benches again. Almost everyone is looking at him like, what is the expression, like he has grown a third arm? Head?

As he skates back to the bench Ilya once again looks at Shane. He is being helped up by fucking Pike, slightly favoring his right side, but seemingly mostly fine. He is not even looking in Ilya's direction. He feels a twitch of jealousy. Oh what he wouldn't give to be the one holding Shane now. Touching him. Making sure he is okay.

"Fuck was that Rozanov?" Marlow says as Ilya skates past him.

"Tried to save your bad tackle. Could be game penalty."

"Fuck you, that was clean! In what world would that be a game penalty?"

“Was last time you tripped Hollander, no?” Anger flashes in Marlow's eyes. That was a low blow, and Ilya knows it. But his heart is still beating way too hard and fast and he feels cold and Marlow is responsible for it two times over. Before any more words can be exchanged Ilya is back on the bench. Shane has managed to get back on the Montreal bench as well and is being led into the tunnel by some medic. His hand is clenching his right side and he is limping, but at least he is walking on his own.

After, if someone would have asked, the only thing Ilya can remember of the rest of the game is that Hollander did not return.

—

They lost. 5-2 Ilya thinks, but he is not sure. His head had definitely not been in the game after Shane disappeared. When the end signal rings through the arena he gets off the ice as fast as he can without being impolite or suspicious. He walks to the locker room with a sole focus, ignoring his name being called after him. Without even untying his skates he reaches for his phone, his thread to Jane already open. There are a few new messages.

J: Don't panic and do something stupid

J: I'm fine

J: Well, bruised ribs, but will be fine

Ilya breathes out, relief washing over him. Bruised ribs are fine. Or, not *fine*, Shane should never hurt in any way, but bruised ribs they can handle. Bruised ribs will heal. He sits down on the bench, closing his eyes for a moment, trying to force his heartbeat to slow down. The door opens and his teammates start to walk in, but no one is trying to get his attention. They just lost, it's okay for him to appear sulky. No one needs to know why. His fingers hover over the keyboard.

L: Good

L: Will skip press conference and come home

The *read* symbol appears as soon as he presses send. Shane must also have their conversation pulled up. The three writing dots appear almost just as quick.

J: Did you not read my first message? Don't do something stupid

J: I'm fine, I promise

J: Don't skip media

Ilya frowns his brows slightly. Shane sounds annoyed. Panicked. He understands it to some degree, Ilya is well aware that he almost just blew their secret, but he hardly thinks that he can be blamed when Shane went down like that *again*. Losing his career would be absolutely nothing compared to losing Shane. The phone shakes again with a new incoming message.

J: Please

But it's not only his career. It's Shane's as well. That *please*, so far from the previous *please* he had sent just before their game. Ilya can almost feel his boyfriend hyperventilating on the other end of the screen, begging Ilya to act normal, to not cast any more suspicion on them. The relief of seeing Shane's messages is suddenly replaced with a cold, uneasy feeling. Images of Shane alone in a bathroom somewhere in the arena plays in his head. He wants nothing more than to sprint to him, hold him, remind him to take deep breaths. But he knows that the only way for him to help with Shane's panic right now is to do press. He sighs.

L: Okay

L: Will join you home later

J: Thank you

L: Remember to breathe. Will see you soon

Ilya puts his phone in his bag, unties his skates and starts to take his clothes off. As he pulls his shoulder pads over his head he sees Marlow, Cliff, sitting still and silent in front of him. He needs to say something. He had not meant to hurt Cliff.

"Am sorry for what I said. Before." Cliff looks at him, long and hard, and then quickly glances around them. Ilya does as well. The locker room is mostly empty, most of the other boys being in the shower. A few of their team mates are still stripping down, but they are far away and not paying attention to their little conversation.

“I don’t know what is going on with you two, man”, Cliff says carefully but with force. “But you need to get your shit together.”

Panic of a different kind suddenly filled Ilya, his blood pulsating with it.

“I do not know what you mean,” he says. Cliff looks at him with an unimpressed look.

“You don’t need to tell me, but don’t lie to my face. Something is going on, has been going on for a long time. I’m not fucking stupid Roz.” His jaws are locked hard, eyes flaming with annoyance, but also, to Ilya’s surprise, kind understanding. For a second Ilya hesitates. He knows Cliff. He might even be his best friend, apart from Svetlana. Cliff would not say anything, that Ilya is sure of. Their secret would be safe with him. And *god*, it would be so nice to tell somebody. To have another person *know*. Someone he could talk to. But then he is reminded of how Shane is somewhere, stressing over him almost blowing their cover. This is not a decision he can make on his own.

“I know you are not,” Ilya nods at him, thinking about how he can best say something without saying it. Fucking stupid English language. He swallows and tries again. “I know you are not stupid Cliff. You are good friend. Maybe some day I can tell, but right now, you know nothing.”

He can feel his eyes widen, begging Cliff to understand, even though he is pretty sure he said it wrong. Cliff regards him for a moment before nodding and giving him a tight but genuine smile.

“Sure. But when that day comes Rozanov, you better tell me fucking everything.” And with that Ilya knows he is forgiven. He huffs out a laugh and continues to remove the last of his clothing before walking towards the shower. He turns in the doorway and looks back.

“Thank you,” he says earnestly. Cliff salutes him before Ilya walks into the showers.

—

Shane is, obviously, not doing press after the game. Logically, Ilya knew he would not be here, and would honestly have been pretty pissed if he had, but there is still a small sting of disappointment. He knows he is totally whipped, and would be more embarrassed about it if he weren’t so sure Shane felt the exact same thing.

Usually, Ilya likes doing press. Flirting with reporters, answering in an overly arrogant manner and playing his overconfident self. Today, however, he just wants to get home.

“So, Rozanov, you know I have to ask about it. The third period where Hollander went down and you jumped back on the ice to defend Marlow. What happened?” Ilya can’t stop himself from snorting silently, but he does his best to keep the annoyance off his face. He knew this question would come, and he will probably get it more times tonight, but it still irritates him. Nothing about the game.

“Nothing really happened. Other teams captain is down, my duty as captain to speak with players involved,” he says, having already practised the lie in his head. He tries his best to sound bored.

“But why would you need to speak to the referees about a clean hit like that?”

“Like I said, just something captain do. Now, you have more questions about actual hockey, yes?” Hopefully that will be enough.

The rest of the press asks the same question, and he keeps answering it in the same way. No, nothing serious happened. Yes, sometimes a captain wants to talk to the referee. The exhaustion is starting to set in deep in his bones, both from the game and from the panic of Shane's fall.

Half an hour later he is finally free to go and almost sprints to his car in his eagerness to get home. Thank God it was a home game so that he doesn't need to go back to the hotel with the team and sneak out of there later. Or no, no matter where they had played, Ilya would have gone straight to Shane. Always.

During the drive home Ilya views the speed limit more as a recommendation. A bad one. One that he does not follow. He reaches his house in record time and has barely put the car in park before he is out the door and up the stairs, equipment forgotten in the car. He fumbles with his keys for a second.

“Blyad’,” he swears before he finally succeeds in opening the door. Shane's shoes are placed neatly beside the door, despite Ilya always telling him that he doesn't need to remove them. It warms his heart a bit to see them here, Shane fitting in here, in Ilya's home. In Ilya's *life*.

“Shane?” he calls and makes quick work of his own shoes. “Moy lyubimiy?”

“Here!” comes Shane's voice from the living room. Ilya walks around the corner and there he is. *Shane*. Perfect, wonderful Shane. *His* Shane. He is wearing black sweatpants and is half-lying-half-sitting bare chested on the sofa. An honestly quite impressive bruise has already formed on the right side of his ribs. An icepack is pressed against it, but Ilya can see the nuance of purple and blue peek out from under it.

“Hi.” Shane tries to sit out a little but aborts the movement and hisses in pain. That wakes Ilya from his stupor stare. In less than a second he is kneeling on the sofa beside his boyfriend, placing one hand on the icepack to keep it in place and the other on Shane's cheek.

“Shane,” he breathes, stroking his thumb over the freckles he loves so much and has longed to touch all night. He can feel Shane relax under him, letting go of all the stress that he has carried in his body probably since the hit. He closes his eyes and lets out a shaky breath.

“You scared me,” Ilya says softly, and realizes a second too late that it is an exact echo of something he has said before, not even a year prior. But that time it had been in a hospital, and Ilya had gone a whole night without sleep trying to find updates of Shane's injury. This time he knows, and he gets to be the one holding and comforting him.

“I know. Didn’t mean to,” Shane mumbles. Ilya huffs at that.

“I would hope so.” Shane nods and for a short second his lips turn into a small smile. But then it disappears and a short sob escapes from his throat, eyes pressed even tighter together.

“Is okay kotenok.” A silent tear forms in Shane's eye, but Ilya's thumb brushes it away before it can fall.

“Fuck, Ilya,” Shane whispers, still keeping his eyes closed, leaning his head into Ilya's touch.

“Shhh.” Ilya places a soft kiss on Shane's temple before bringing their foreheads together. For a few moments they stay like that, Shane trying to compose himself with closed eyes and Ilya watching and touching him carefully, whispering a mix of Russian and English endearments.

“You are okay.” Shane nods and Ilya leans back slightly, creating some space between their faces. His hand however continues to stroke gentle patterns on Shane’s cheek. Shane finally opens his eyes, but keeps his gaze fixed on Ilya's shoulder.

“I’m sorry,” he says and it’s like he is shrinking in on himself. It would be funny, watching a man as big and broadshouldered as Shane trying to make himself invisible by sinking into the couch. But at this moment it’s far from funny and Ilya's heart breaks a little.

“Stop being so Canadian and apologize for everything,” Ilya says softly, drawing a breathy laugh from Shane. “What you even sorry for?”

“I don’t know,” Shane says, and finally looks up to meet his eyes. “For scaring you I guess. Again. And then being the one freaking out. Again.”

His eyes are wide and shiny with unshed tears. Ilya kisses his temple again.

“Nothing to apologize for. You did not get hit on purpose, yes?”

“Of course not, but...”

“Then nothing.” One of Shane's hands comes up and covers Ilya's.

“I saw the panic in your eyes,” he says softly and snuffles a little. “When I went down. I can’t imagine how that must have felt for you, after what happened last time. And still, my focus was not on soothing you and instead on me once again being so fucking scared.”

Soothing. Ilya isn’t familiar with that word, but he can guess what Shane is trying to say. Comfort? Calming?

“Was horrible to watch, yes. Jumped over the boards before I could think. But I should not have done that, knew that you would not like it.”

“That’s what I mean, Ilya. Not everything is about me. You have the right, too, to be scared or worried or, or, I don’t know, love someone in the open.”

Shane's voice is shaky and Ilya's heart drops. It's not the words themselves, but rather how Shane is saying them that suddenly claws at his chest. It sounds like Shane is giving him an out. Like giving him, *them*, up is even in the cards for him.

He removes his hand from Shane's face but keeps pressure on the icepack. Shane's own hand falls down onto the cushions. He whines a little at the loss of touch, probably without even realizing. He looks scared now, looking up at Ilya, gazing back and forth between his eyes, like he is searching for something, but is at the same time scared about what he will find.

"What do you mean? Not everything is 'bout you, I know this," Ilya says, despite knowing fully well that for him, everything is about Shane. "But is you who were hurt. I want to not hurt you more when you are already hurt."

Shane opens his mouth a few times, like he tries to get words out without succeeding.

"But it hurt you too," he says finally. "You just wanted to check on me, your fucking boyfriend, after I got hit. And I pushed you away."

Usually, hearing Shane refer to himself as Ilya's boyfriend sends a warm shiver down his spine. But now, with that almost venomous voice, the shiver is instead cold as ice.

"Where is all this coming from, huh? I want you to be okay, yes, obvious, but I knew you were okay when you looked at me. And I do not want us to come out like that either."

Shane looks at him for a moment before taking a deep breath.

"I'm just scared that you one day will realise that it is not worth it. The secrecy. Being with me." He says it as it physically hurts him to say it. Like he steels himself to say it, like his words will be what makes Ilya wake up from this wonderful dream they have been having and indeed realise that he is no longer worth it, or even worse, was never worth it and will resent him for the rest of his life. And suddenly Ilya feels lost.

He had thought they were on the same page, that Shane knew how much he meant to Ilya. Granted, he was not always the best at saying it, but he had thought that, at least after the cottage, Shane had understood. Ilya had said, repeatedly then and repeatedly since, that he loved him. They had a whole plan for how they were going to finally, *finally*, be together. He was planning on changing teams in order to be closer to Shane for fucks sake. He thought Shane understood. Apparently not.

"Hey hey hey," Shane's voice says and suddenly his face is blurry from the tears in Ilya's eyes. He closes them and turns his head, not wanting Shane to see. It's a habit, something that is still there since his childhood despite him trying to work it away with Shane. He knows that he is safe here.

Shane's hand comes up to his cheek, wiping at his cheek and suddenly the closeness feels suffocating. Ilya stands, quickly. The icepack falls from Shane's ribs and lands on the floor beneath the sofa with a thud. Neither of them move to put it back. Ilya stands a few steps from the sofa, breathing heavily, still refusing to look at Shane.

“Is this you saying goodbye?” he asks, voice rough. He doesn’t know how he can let Shane walk out of his door, his *life*, tonight. He honestly didn’t think that he would ever need to consider how he would do that, but if that is what is happening, he needs Shane to say it.

“Ilya. No. Fuck. No not at all,” Shane says, hurriedly in a way Ilya has not heard him speak in a long time. “Never. Never ever.”

Ilya can hear him draw a quick breath of pain and his eyes immediately snap towards Shane on the couch again, his body reacting automatically to the sound of his boyfriend in pain. He has managed to get to his feet but is grimacing as he takes the few limping steps to Ilya. His hands start to reach out, but then he freezes before the hands find Ilya. A sound leaves Ilya's throat, a feeling he does not know the name of in either Russian or English. *Please touch me* it says, at the same time as *if you touch me now you might as well kill me*. Whatever Shane interprets it as gives him courage, or maybe desperation, enough to finish the movement. His arms wraps around Ilya, tugs him close and close and close and somehow even closer still. Ilya sobs and buries his head in Shane's neck. He smells of shampoo and himself.

“I’m so sorry. That is not what I mean. I will not ever leave you. I don’t think I could survive it,” Shane mumbles.

“You think I could?” Ilya whispers in between sobs. Shane tenses under him for a second before his hands start to stroke along his back, one of them coming to a stop in Ilya's curls.

“Darling. *Ilya*. That’s not what I meant.”

“Because I would not survive. You are...,” he starts, but his English is yet again betraying him. “Fuck. Moy lyubimiy, you are *everything*.”

It does not feel close to enough of what he wants to say. He tries again.

“You make me live. Hockey or retirement. Hurt or happy. I do not care. I care of you only. You understand, yes?” Shane's fingers gently comb through his hair.

“Yes. I understand,” he says, voice thick with something, and Ilya buries his face even further into the crook between his neck and shoulder. “It was stupid of me to say it like that. I don’t think you want to leave, not really. I know you love me, you are in this as much as I am. But I just got into my head and couldn’t stop thinking of your face when I went down. That it would be easier if...”

“No. Not easier. Nothing is easier without you.”

“I know.”

“I do not like that you think this. I thought you knew... I will do better.” Ilya's words are mumbled into Shane's shoulder, spoken fast and quietly. He wants Shane to hear him, but at the same time he is scared to death of what his words can lead to. And his fears are confirmed straight away as Shane starts to withdraw from him. His heart, which had started beating more regularly during their embrace, picks up again.

“No.” He clings to stay close, to keep his boyfriend's arms around him, but Shane is stronger. He grabs Ilya's shoulders and keeps him at arm's reach. Ilya snuffles and looks away again, doesn't dare to look into Shane's eyes.

“Ilya. It's okay, look at me.” Shane shakes his shoulders slightly and Ilya suddenly remembers that night in Tampa, on a hotel bed back when they weren't... Not nothing, they had never been nothing to each other, but not something defined. Him sitting on that bed, trying his best not to cry and Hollander, *Shane*, comforting him, making him experience something he hadn't felt since he was twelve years old and safely tucked in his mothers embrace.

Shane moves one hand to Ilya's jaw, forcing him to face him. Another time Ilya might have accused Shane of stealing his move, him having done that to Shane more times than he could count. But right now, he feels too raw and vulnerable to do anything but gaze into the dark eyes he knew so well. He looks for any sign of anger or discontent. Instead, he only found love and warmth. *Soothing*, wasn't that what Shane had said?

“*Ilya*. You don't have to do better. Everything you do is already perfect.” Despite Ilya searching for it, he can't find a single tone of insincerity in the other's voice. Only the same love that was in his eyes. *Soothing*.

“No. Not if I have made you think I could leave you.”

“I don't think so. And I am so sorry I said that. I love you. And I know you love me.” Shane lets go of his jaw and shoulder, presses a kiss to Ilya's cheek before embracing him again. Ilya can feel his heartbeat against his own chest. It is faster than it usually was. His own is as well. He nods.

“I love you. So much.” He lets his face hide against Shane's shoulder again, letting Shane hold him and slowly let his palms stroke his back in a calming motion. *Soothing*.

“I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you.” Shane pressed each of his statements into Ilya's skin. “Ya tebya lyublyu. I love you. Yatebyalyublyu.”

He closes his eyes and lets himself believe Shane, lets himself feel the extent of what they are to each other now.

Ilya has no idea for how long they stand there, just holding each other, Shane mumbling a mix of English, Russian, and French at him. He just knows that it is long enough for both of their heartbeats to go back to normal. With his eyes shut it almost feels as if he falls into some sort of trance, or slumber. He can't remember another time when he has felt as safe as he does right now. No one is angry. No one is leaving. No one is hurt... With that thought he pulls away slightly.

“Fuck, your ribs,” he says. They have been standing for quite some time without Shane having ice on his frankly enormous bruise.

“It's fine. I'm fine.” Now it is Ilya's turn to grab Shane by the elbows, still touching him, grounding him, while being able to look down and viewing the shades spreading from his

right pec, down and disappearing into his sweatpants. He catches Shane's eyes again, and raises an eyebrow. Shane huffs and looks away, but only for a quick second.

“Okay, so not *fine* maybe, but...”

“Who would have thought that being slammed down on ice would hurt, huh?” His words may be teasing but his smile is sincere.

“Such an asshole.”

“You like it,” Ilya smirks and places a quick peck on Shane's eyebrow. “Go lie down again, need to be iced.”

Shane hesitates, his eyes once again moving between Ilya's.

“Are we good?” he asks with a small voice. Ilya nods.

“We are perfect,” he says and knows that it is true. The panic has subsided inside of him, replaced with the contempt of having Shane in his space again. In his home, in his arms. It has been some long weeks since they last saw each other.

Shane nods. Once. Twice.

“I love you,” he says again.

“I know.”

“Don’t you fucking Han Solo me.” Ilya laughs. Yeah, they are good.

“Should have been nicer earlier. Then I say it back.”

“Unbelievable,” Shane mutters, but he is smiling widely. He turns around and takes a small step back towards the couch. Just that small action makes him hiss in pain. Ilya is quickly beside him, taking some of his weight to help him back down onto the cushions.

“This is so stupid,” Shane mumbles, a little out of breath by only this small walk. “Marlow sucks.”

Ilya nods as he lifts the icepack from the floor and presses it to Shane's side.

“I talked to him, after. In the locker room.”

“You didn’t beat him up, right?”

“No. No. Wanted to, but didn’t.”

“T’wasn’t his fault.” Ilya choses to not respond to that particular statement. Logically, he knows Shane is right. Marlow would never hurt even a fly on purpose. But now he has hurt Shane. Twice.

“We just talked,” he says instead. “He... Ummm. He knows.”

“Knows?” Ilya hums.

“Yes. About us. Or, he knows *something*. Said something about I need to get my shit together around you.” A small smile spreads across Shane's face.

“Woah, you really are crazy about me.”

“Shut up,” Ilya strokes Shane's hair. “But yes.”

A surprised, but delighted, laugh escapes from Shane, making him recoil slightly with pain. But before Ilya has time to comment on it, Shane speaks.

“You should tell him.”

“Tell him what?”

“You should tell Marlow. About you. About us.”

“Shane, you don't need to...”

“No, I know. But I trust you, and you trust him. I have people to talk to about this. My parents. Rose. I know you have Svetlana, but maybe it's time that someone else knows too. Especially if he has already figured it out.”

“I could still deny.”

“I don't think he would believe it even if you did, don't forget how craaaazy you apparently act about me.” He sounds all too pleased.

“I knew I should not have told you about that.”

“You absolutely should have. But I want you to tell him,” Shane says. Ilya eyes him carefully.

“You sure?”

“Positive. Yes.” There is nothing insincere in Shane's voice.

“Okay. Yes. I would like that. But I am still mad at him, he owes me at least two rounds of great sex.”

“Hey, don't write tonight off yet. I could still...” Ilya interrupts him.

“No. You are doing nothing beside laying and icing.” Shane pouts.

“But...”

“No. Hollander, stop being so horny when hurt.” And besides, Ilya has a hard time seeing himself getting into it tonight, not when he still feels *raw* and so bone-deep tired. He yawns before lifting Shane's own hand, placing it on the ice-pack. It is very wet, dripping slightly on the cushions. Once he is sure the pack is secure in the others grasp he stands up.

“Noooooooo,” Shane says and tries to sit up to follow him. “Don’t go.”

Ilya places a hand on Shane's shoulder and gently pushes him back down.

“Relax kotenok. I will just grab new ice pack. And water,” he says and nods to the empty glass on the coffee table. “Have you taken medicine?”

“What time is it?” Ilya glances at the clock on the wall.

“About ten thirty.”

“Then I can take another Advil.”

“Two seconds. You will not even notice I am gone,” Ilya says. He grabs the glass and quickly walks towards the kitchen.

“I always notice,” he can hear Shane mumble behind him, low enough for him to understand that the words are not meant for him, but rather for Shane himself. Despite it, it fills Ilya with warmth and he can feel his face get hot, even though Russians absolutely don’t blush.

He makes his way to the kitchen, fills the glass with water before gulping it down himself. He fills it again and places it on the counter, pulling his phone out of his pocket. He opens his text messages and finds Marlow's name. Quickly he types out.

I: Am sorry about before. He is fine. I want to tell you about him. But you maybe want to not know absolutely everything...

His finger hovers over the *send* button for a moment. Svetlana had figured it out. This would be the first person he told. He lets his thumb press the button before quickly pocketing the phone again.

Ilya takes out an Advil from a drawer and fishes out another ice pack from the freezer before taking the glass in the other hand and walks back. Shane’s eyes are on him the moment he reappears in the doorway.

“That was definitely more than two seconds,” Shane complains with a pout. Ilya walks up to him and replaces the ice pack, putting the used one on the floor. He should probably put it back in the freezer, but right now he really doesn’t want to leave Shane again. Instead he removes his hoodie and t-shirt and sits down on the couch. He hands the water and the medicine to Shane, looking as he swallows the pill and downs the entire glass. He takes it from Shane's hand and places it on the table.

“You can scooch?” Wordlessly Shane moves so that Ilya can crawl onto the couch, laying down behind him and placing Shane's head on his chest. Once again he lets one hand dance through his hair while the other grabs hold of the ice pack.

“You played like shit, by the way,” Shane says after a moment. “I watched the rest of the game on my phone. You missed, like, two open goals.”

Ilya pinches him carefully, but still hard enough to yearn a yelp.

“Was little distracted, no?”

“Everything I’m hearing is that Marlow is right.”

“You are destroying my image! Russians do not do this.”

“Do what?”

“I don’t know the word,” Ilya says grumpily. Shane laughs.

“Obsessing? Well, this one seems to do at least.” Ilya kisses his hair. Shane turns his head up towards him. The angle is very awkward, but Ilya still manages to kiss his mouth and can feel Shane melt under him. They kiss for a moment before Shane is whimpering slightly, moving to get better access by turning around. Ilya stops him and Shane whines again.

“I meant what I said. Not tonight.”

“But I scored. Twice. You promised me one orgasm for each goal.” Just as it did back on the ice, Ilya is surprised by Shane’s bluntness in moments like this. Other times, he can’t even think of the word ‘sex’ without blushing.

“I give you more later. One for each day you rest while hurt. I will make you desperate underneath me. Begging. You will like it.” Shane swallows.

“Okay,” he mumbles, mouth sounding dry.

“My god Hollander you are so easy.”

“Well. Easy for you maybe. Didn’t know I needed to play hard to get.”

“You do not. You already have me.” Shane lets his thumb sweep over Ilya’s hand holding the ice pack.

“I suppose I do. As much as you have me,” he says, sounding thoughtful. “We should talk about this though. Properly. I don’t want that to happen again.”

“Yeah you should stop falling over for fucking Marlow.”

“Ilya. I’m serious.” He is about to answer *me too*, but something stops him. Maybe it is comments like this that fucked with Shane’s head in the first place. Maybe he needs to be more sincere. Not always, but in tender and fragile moments like this.

“Yes I know. We will talk. I will get out of your thick skull whatever makes you think I do not want to be here. But not tonight.”

“No. Not tonight.”

They do need to talk, Ilya knows that much. He needs to forever remove that tiny part of Shane's brain that believes that there could even exist a world in which he wouldn't choose him in a heartbeat, no matter the consequence. And similarly, as Ilya snuggles closer to Shane, he has a feeling that he has to take care of the voice in his own head that doubts his boyfriend's devotion for him. But that can wait. They have time, he still can't really believe that they actually have time. The purple on Shane's ribs will disappear, but their love will remain.

Shane's breathing has just evened out, he is snoring slightly against Ilya, as his phone buzzes in his pocket. Careful to not move too much he gets it out of his pocket. A notification from Marlow lights up the screen.

C: I'm glad to hear it Roz. Looking forward to it. Take care of your man.

Yes, Ilya thinks, looking down at the sleeping Shane in his arms. I will always take care of my man.

End Notes

I had so much fun writing this, really hope you liked it! Kudos and comments are always very appreciated 🥰

Also, I don't believe that I can keep myself from coming back and writing more Shane/Ilya in the near future, so stay tuned for that!

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