

i'll always look for your face

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i'll always look for your face

by [leaveittome](#)

Summary

The urge to not leave with words unspoken encouraged Shane to open his mouth again, “But... I called *you* didn’t I?”

Ilya’s gaze flicked to him, bright blue eyes shining wide, “Does Rose Landry know you are safe?” He asked, changing the subject.

“I didn’t text her,” Shane replied, shaking his head. “Not... anything about me drinking.”

“Your parents?”

“No. I didn’t text anyone else. Just you.” He clarified, needing to get that point across. Didn’t that mean anything? That out of all the people Shane could have called, he’d chosen Ilya.

instead of going to the bar with rose, shane stays home and drinks

updated with part 2 - the morning after

Notes

drunk shane is here!

alt ending to ep 4 :)

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

Chapter 1

Shane: Sorry to do this, but could I get a raincheck on the dancing? I'm not feeling too well tonight.

Rose: oh no :(how bad are you feeling? need me to come help with anything?

Shane: No, I'm alright.

Shane: Probably just tired after the game, and I need to rest a little bit.

Shane: Go ahead, have some fun :)

Rose: alright, but let me know if you need anything! ill be there in an instant

Rose: i mean it! <3

Shane: Thank you. I'll let you know.

Rose: love you!!

Shane let out a groan and threw his phone onto his bed. So much for telling himself the events throughout the day hadn't bothered him.

It wasn't as if he'd been expecting Ilya to text before the game. He hadn't even expected one afterward, given the current tension between them, but not even a single *glance* his way was what really messed him up. Ilya pretended like they hadn't even known each other at all. As if their history didn't matter, and Shane's presence had no notable impact on his life.

Shane was doing his best to keep that silence between them as well, determined not be the one to break, even though it absolutely killed him inside. To think that it wasn't killing Ilya just as badly made him nauseous.

The last thing he could stomach after a game like that was a night out. Shane was never the type to rely on distraction to take things off his mind; they always came back to linger anyway. There was no point in spending the night with others, knowing he'd be suffering in silence the whole time. It'd be hard to explain why he was so down in the dumps, especially since they'd just won the game, poisoning the mood. And Ilya wasn't a topic he could talk to Rose about— she was his *girlfriend*, for fuck's sake.

Shane might as well just stick the night out and wake up feeling better in the morning. Everything would soon get better, it would. His emotions would heal, and he'd eventually stop wondering if he'd fucked up everything good he had by walking out on Ilya that day.

Not every night was to be preluded by blatant ignorance by the one he used to desire.

Lying in bed, listening to the faint hum of his television in the background, Shane stared out his window. There was only one thought lingering in his mind; *Was Ilya thinking of him too?*

Was Ilya lying awake just as distraught, uncomfortably staring at his phone, wondering if anything should be sent?

Or, was he out minding his business, sleeping with anyone else, feeling *nothing*; because that was how their relationship had always been. Fuck buddies. Ilya could feel the same with any other body. There was nothing that made Shane special.

Shane hated this feeling more than anything else. He hated the constant gnawing at his stomach, making him nauseous. Hated the way his mind was clouded with regret, holding a multitude of emotions too tangled to identify.

He lay down in bed, hoping to close his eyes and let sleep overcome him, but there was no use. His heart was pounding out of his chest, too desperate for answers to questions he wasn't even sure how to phrase.

He should call someone. His mom, his dad, hell— even Hayden would suffice, be able to talk some sense into him. But it was getting late. Nobody needed to be bothered so deep into the night, not when Shane was perfectly capable of working through it himself.

He picked up his phone again, secretly hoping there would be a message from a certain someone. There was nothing but a few texts from teammates, wondering if he was going out anywhere. Shane couldn't hide the obvious disappointment that followed. He turned his phone back on silent and shoved it into his pocket.

After another hour passed of nothing but a tight chest and restless legs, Shane pushed himself out of bed and dragged his feet towards his kitchen. Aches of exhaustion surged through every muscle, and he'd been nursing a blossoming headache behind his eyes, but his mind still refused to sleep. He'd been up and busy for hours, and yet—

Nothing. Shane wanted to put his mind to sleep so desperately, but *nothing* was working. His eyes lazily drifted around the kitchen, looking for a snack of sorts. Maybe he was just hungry, and everything would be cured after a few slices of cheese and crackers. An unforgiven treat to celebrate his lackluster win.

He searched through the cupboards, seeking anything else that might numb the pain, before his eyes fell on a few cases of beer.

Shane bit the inside of his cheek. They weren't his, obviously. His dad liked to keep some in his apartment for convenience whenever his parents visited. Shane hadn't had a sip of anything alcoholic in a while, too stricken by the negative effects it had on his body, but... he supposed a few drinks wouldn't hurt. To get his mind off things a little, make him drowsy, and lure him into a peaceful slumber. Then, the regret would quit crawling up his throat.

With a deep breath, Shane grabbed the first bottle of beer he could see, leaving the wine cellar door open behind him. He then searched for a bottle opener, before finding one wedged into the back of his cutlery drawer. It took a few attempts, but once he formed a secure grip, the cap came off with a sharp pop. Shane shut his eyes as he lifted the bottle to his lips, unwilling to witness himself drinking. He felt the liquid slide down his throat. It was bitter, foreign, but he swallowed with little effort.

Desperation took over the moment he felt the cooling sensation settle in his stomach. It felt like a prize, a promise that he'd soon be free from the chains his own mind had locked him into. A surge of adrenaline rushed through his body, eager to persist.

Nothing was going to come from simply sipping, Shane quickly realized. He needed to drink, chug, to get the alcohol into his system. Once he choked down the rest of the bottle with a couple of dramatic gasps, Shane glanced back at the cellar. One wouldn't be enough. Not even close. He reached for several more and lined them onto the counter, popping the tops open one by one.

Shane started to drink the rest, blinking at his floor when it seemed like they were doing *nothing* to help ease his anxiety. Wasn't that the promise? The solution? That by throwing away his sense of self, by turning into a drunken mess, he'd also lose those demons clinging to his shoulders?

He swallowed hard, holding back a tear.

He wanted to temporarily forget about Ilya and his stark absence in Shane's life. But, somehow, the more he swallowed, the more he seemed to remember him. The features of his face, the small smirk before he'd lean in, kissing Shane on the lips. His body, his hands trailing to Shane's back, to his ass, squeezing his nipples, moaning in his ear—

Shane took a deep breath, shut his eyes, and continued to drink.

He couldn't keep track of how many, but it wasn't as if it mattered— not when Ilya was still the only thing on his mind.

How had Shane let himself fall so hard? How had he become so obsessed with another human being, enough to make him lose his sense of self in the process? Shane was supposed to think about hockey, to be nothing but the best player he could be, and yet— every time he shut his eyes, a curly-haired blonde boy stared right back.

At some point, Shane gathered what was left of the open drinks and dragged himself toward the balcony. It was too stuffy to sit alone in the kitchen. He needed some fresh air. The apartment was haunted with Ilya's presence as memories filled every location. His bed, the living room, even the damn laundry room. Ilya had taken over his life.

Shane slid the balcony door shut behind him, hit with a brisk breeze biting his bare skin. He set the bottles on the ground before sitting down, leaning against the door. Only then did he process how dizzy he was. Thoughts were rampant, but somber, aching with a pain deeper than before.

He picked up another bottle as his mind sorted through their conversations from before. The last time Ilya had been in his arms, Shane was confused, mildly irritated, yet still enthralled by everything Ilya had to offer. It seemed so picturesque, with Ilya fixing him a meal that they enjoyed together while chatting on the couch over a hockey game. So simple, so domestic, a dynamic he'd never imagined he would have with a partner, modeled by one of his parents. Something he thought he'd never get from Ilya.

And yet, the second he was presented with that scenario, Shane had dropped the puck and bolted.

Fuck. If he hadn't freaked out, Ilya could still be in his arms.

It wouldn't be the same, nor everything he imagined, but Ilya would've been *here*. And, at the end of the day, that was what Shane seemed to crave the most. Ilya's presence, no matter the circumstances.

Shane took another deep breath, staring at the stars in the sky. He couldn't process formal thoughts anymore, with every emotion colliding through his mind with haze. He could only flick his gaze between the balcony and pale night sky, wishing Ilya was right there with him. Maybe they'd chat about the game before easing into kissing. Or, maybe they'd jump right into fucking, knowing it'd been a while since that had happened.

But, there was nothing. Nobody else, just Shane alone with his thoughts.

The silence was driving him insane.

Shane blinked a tear away, unaware he'd even started crying. Did he even have the right to fight those tears? Shane was the one who walked away and cut it off. The one who went out and got a fucking girlfriend— someone who wanted him, who was waiting for him— and yet, he was drunk on the ground of his balcony, left dreaming about someone who wasn't his.

Another couple of drinks and teardrops later, his phone was back in his hand before he could process what was happening. Through his blurry, dizzy vision, Shane opened up his contacts and pressed the call button on Lily's contact.

Even if he answered, mad and upset about being bothered, Shane would be able to hear his voice. For now, that was enough.

When the call was denied just seconds later, Shane thought about just tossing his phone off the balcony. It wouldn't matter that much. He'd just get a new phone. But, he didn't think he could stand himself off the ground at this point, and he certainly wouldn't be able to make it to the edge.

A message popped up at the top of the screen, causing his heart to stop.

Lily: you meant to call rose landry

Shane scoffed. Their first exchange in months, and that was it? Ilya didn't even phrase the message as a question. It was a statement, and Shane was desperate to prove him wrong.

Jane: No. I nmeant tto call you Ikya

Typing was difficult as his fingers dragged across the keyboard in haste, a foggy blur.

Jane: Okay /? Got tthat?

Jane: I'm going to do i t again

Jane: Becauaus you dont even wan yto answer sme

Jane: Fuck off

Jane: Whyyyyyyyuyuyyyy

Jane: Uhhhhgh

The call answer screen flashed on his screen before Shane could type any more messages. He squinted at the contact, letting out a scoff at the bolded *Lily* that appeared. Still, he answered in an instant, holding the phone to his ear, and immediately met with a surplus of background noise. “What? The hell?” He spoke into the phone, immediately thrown off by how slurred his voice sounded out loud.

“*Hollander.*” Ilya’s voice spoke, loud enough to project over the background noise, but it didn’t erase the confusion in Shane’s mind, “*What is—*”

“Where are you?” Shane interrupted, “It’s so.... noisy out there.”

A few more noises filtered in on the other end, some sounding muffled, some sounding clear as day. Shane was only able to make out the sound of a few doors being shut before he processed that his question was never answered.

“Hello? Ilya? Are you going to answer me, or what?” Shane asked, ending with a small chuckle, as he was apparently so damn amused by the situation. Words were falling from his mouth before he could catch them.

After a brief pause, Ilya’s voice returned, “*A bar.*”

“Oh.” Shane blinked, not expecting that response. “You’re out partying? In Montreal? Celebrating a win that... isn’t even yours? Come on, you don’t show up at all on the ice, and now—”

“*Are you drunk?*”

Shane actually laughed out loud at that. “No. What the hell are you talking about? I’ve just... I’ve had a couple of beers. I mean, who’s out there getting drunk on a few beers?” He shook his head. He leaned against the glass door behind him, shutting his eyes for a moment as he felt almost calm. It was a new sensation to be on the phone with Ilya, speaking whatever was on his mind, while also feeling relaxed.

This was it, the sensation he’d been chasing. Now, he could go to bed, and everything would be fine in the morning. All his worries were for naught.

“*Beers? From where?*” Ilya asked, as the background noise on his end slowly dispersed.

“Where? I don’t know. My dad, I guess. Want me to ask? I don’t think he’s awake, but—”

“*No, I mean, where are you drinking?*”

“Oh. Outside.” Shane replied, looking up and seeing nothing but the night sky. It was peaceful. He wasn’t even slightly chilly anymore, feeling like he was nuzzled under a warm blanket.

“Outside?” Ilya asked, clearly shocked, as if it were unusual, *“Outside where?”*

Shane shook his head, “Wow. You have... a lot of questions for someone who isn’t responding to my texts.” He said, spouting the first thing that came to mind. Shane couldn’t even remember what he was referring to, but he knew he had a point in there somewhere.

Ilya only mumbled in response, a stark contrast to the clear-cut answers he’d been giving.

Shane pushed the phone closer to his ear, “What? Are you speaking Russian? I don’t know what you’re saying.”

“I say, you didn’t text. Anything. Before now.”

“Well...” Shane didn’t have an answer to that, “I did it in my mind. Your fault for not responding.”

Ilya took a deep inhale, audible from the other line, *“Where are you?”*

“Oh, now you want to know—”

“Hollander. Where are you?”

Shane swallowed, aware enough to note the urgency in his tone. He bit his cheek again, wondering if something was wrong to make Ilya sound so urgent. “At home. Of course.”

“You’re on the porch?”

“Yes,” Shane replied, using his other hand to pick up the nearest bottle. He swirled the liquid around before tilting it up near his mouth. Half of the liquid spilled down his chest, but Shane managed to get at least some into his system. That would help, to keep the worries away.

“Put the drink down.”

“Huh? You could hear that? I thought you were at a bar,” Shane said, setting the drink back down. He missed the ground, and it toppled over, liquid spilling out over his porch.

“Not anymore,” Ilya spoke, voice sounding significantly more clear.

“Oh? Did you get bored? Never thought you’d get bored of drinking.” He stated simply, before pausing. That phrase could easily be taken in the wrong way, and he didn’t call Ilya to insult him. “I mean... I don’t know, not like that—”

“I’m coming over.”

“What? Really?” Shane forced himself upright, shocked by how quickly Ilya had decided on that. Shane thought it would take more than a few drunken insults to get Ilya back in his

room, “I mean, that’s great, I guess, but... I don’t really know why...”

“You are drunk. I will not let you pass out on your balcony alone.”

Oh, so that was why. Ilya was coming over because Shane was drunk and alone. Ilya didn’t want to be held responsible if something went wrong for being on the phone with someone who was obviously drunk. But Shane was fine, he really was, he was just feeling a little... different than usual. More carefree, sociable, and less afraid of the world around him crumbling beneath his fingertips.

Shane held his hand out in front of his vision, narrowing his eyes at the fuzzy edges. There was only mild impairment to his vision, nothing too out of the ordinary. He’d drunk plenty of times before, usually with other teammates after a great celebration. Maybe he was a bit lax on his alcohol tolerance, but it wasn’t a completely new sensation. He’d be alright.

Too much time had already passed since his original plan to drink some beer and then fall right asleep. The call to Ilya was just a minor bump in the road, but he still had the same end goal: to fall into a peaceful slumber. Shane could do that himself; he didn’t need to worry anyone. If he wanted to burden others, he would have just called his dad in the first place and skipped the whole drinking-on-his-porch thing.

When he looked back down at his phone to tell Ilya that he was fine, he noticed that the call had already disconnected. Fuck.

The guilt tugging at his chest briefly outweighed his desire to have Ilya in his arms as Shane found himself opening up the messaging app.

Jane: Made a mistake.

Jane: Fine

Jane: You don’t have to come

Lily: I’m coming.

There was no getting out of it now. Once Ilya had made up his mind, that was how it was going to be.

Shane numbly stared up at the sky, taking a shaky deep breath. He couldn’t quite place where his emotions were settling, as he felt like there was a blanket over top of his heart, disrupting all he was meant to experience. Shane knew that was the intention, for everything to feel muted in time, as if he were the only soul living in this world.

At the end of the day, Shane still yearned so deeply for Ilya’s presence, no matter the scenario. Some sick, twisted part of him was happy that Ilya would drop everything to be by his side, but he didn’t allow himself to feel that way for long. As best he could, Shane grasped at the straws of reality, forcing himself to be as consciously aware as possible. Though he couldn’t quite pinpoint everything he’d said on the phone, he knew there was some discrepancy from his usual demeanor.

Shane didn't know how long he remained perched on his balcony, but it felt like hours. Every breath poked holes in his consciousness, reminding him of his damning reality. He no longer hoped for elation and relief from his distraught thoughts. Shane's mind was blossoming with that lingering doom, begging for a moment to just feel *right* again.

He should have known it was a bad idea from the start. And yet, the second Shane heard a door slide open from behind him, all those thoughts scattered.

Ilya was there.

Standing halfway in, halfway out of the sliding glass door, he had on a black puffer jacket, holding his hands at his sides. An unreadable expression lined his features as his gaze stayed strong on Shane, surveying his body up and down.

Shane blinked up at him, breathing out a soft, "Hi."

Ilya opened his mouth, only to shut it moments later as his eyes landed on the bottles scattered across the deck. He quickly mumbled something under his breath before crouching down in front of Shane. "Why... why did you drink so much? You won the game."

Rolling his eyes, Shane turned his gaze away from Ilya, "Hockey isn't all I think about. Wow, really? Seriously. I'm not... void of emotions, or anything. One win does nothing in—"

"Okay, okay." Ilya shook his head, cutting off Shane's rambling. "It's cold. Come inside." From the looks of it, their basic small talk wasn't Ilya's main priority. He quickly placed one hand on Shane's back, urging his body to sit farther up.

"I think it's... peaceful out here, though. I'm not even cold." Shane said, unsure if his hesitance came from knowing he couldn't get up on his own, or if he was still trying to convince himself that he didn't need any help. Both points seemed to contradict each other, though. That seemed to be the common theme in his thoughts lately.

Ilya didn't seem to listen, as he continued to push Shane's body away from the wall. "Careful, don't step on glass," He mumbled as Shane was slowly brought to his feet.

"Wow— it's dizzy up here. Like, when I'm standing," Shane felt the world spin, as he instinctively reached back to hold himself up, met with Ilya's hand, interlocking his fingers.

He didn't have to fight the dizziness for long, as Ilya was efficient in leading him back indoors. He helped him up, stabilized his body enough to walk, and allowed Shane to hold on tight. Shortly after, Shane was hit with the warmth of his own apartment. The air was still just as stuffy and reeked of alcohol, causing his nose to scrunch in disgust. Shane was far more content when he was lying aimlessly on the deck.

Ilya continued to mutter things under his breath the entire way. He sat Shane's body down comfortably on the bed before briefly stepping back onto the porch. He returned moments later with a handful of bottles. "Where is trash can?"

“In the kitchen,” Shane replied, voice significantly more faint than it had been when Ilya first arrived. He wasn’t sure what he’d been expecting, but Ilya hadn’t truly *looked* at him for more than a second at a time. Shane wasn’t sure how to feel about that. Maybe he was mad, upset that his peace was disturbed, which only filled him with more guilt. “You... you really didn’t need to come. I’m okay. I promise.”

Again, Ilya ignored him, already walking towards the kitchen, “I’m going to get some water.”

“Oh— okay,” Shane said, left with dull silence the second Ilya left.

He threw his head back onto his mattress, hardly processing that he’d made it back to his room at all. His head continued to spin, joined by budding nausea in his stomach. Overall, he felt sickly, unsure of himself, and still confused as ever. Ilya was walking around his apartment, cleaning up his mess, and yet— Shane was lying uselessly in bed, staring up at the ceiling.

He placed a hand over his chest, feeling the increase in his heart rate. Ilya’s presence always made him excited, in more ways than one. Instinctively, Shane placed his hands on the sides of his pants, slowly dragging them down. Ilya would return soon, and then they could—

“Hollander?” Ilya stood at the doorway, eyebrows furrowed. “What are you doing? Put your pants back on.”

“Why? You didn’t...” Shane’s voice trailed off as he pulled his pants back up to his waist, sitting himself up.

“No, I did not come for sex.” Ilya stepped closer to him, eyes finally locked on Shane. The glass of water in his hand was thrust into Shane’s grip. “I came to make sure you were okay. Drink water.”

Shane swallowed, feeling shame wash over him. Of course, what was he thinking? The whole point of all of this was that Ilya *didn’t* want to have sex with him, and the only way to get him close was to call him while drunk. He slowly brought the cup back to his lips, hesitating.

“Drink,” Ilya commanded.

Shane took a small sip before pausing.

“More, drink more water. Your body needs it.” Ilya insisted, closely observing, “Need help?”

“No, no,” Shane shook his head. He continued to drink, feeling warm under Ilya’s intense gaze; one that didn’t break until Shane had finished the entire glass of water. It made him feel just a tad more nauseous, but at least the world was starting to clear up.

But that only made reality settle in deeper. And it wasn’t as if his reality was a desired one at the moment. Shane liked it better when he didn’t have to consider the implications of his actions.

Ilya placed the empty glass onto the nightstand, standing in front of Shane. For a moment, no words were spoken, as their breaths matched in rhythm with each other. There was still an unreadable expression on Ilya's face, but he didn't quite look angry or upset. At least there was that.

Shane licked his lips, swallowing thickly. "I think I fucked up." He admitted, met with another roll of nausea through his body.

"Is okay," Ilya replied softly, reaching slowly to drape a hand over his head.

"I mean, I—" Shane began, words cut off by a sob choking through his throat. He let his head fall, stimulated by Ilya's fingers working through his hair. He hadn't realized how desperately his body had been craving Ilya's touch. Even at such a small, minuscule action as brushing his hair, Shane found himself nearly trembling.

A tear fell down his cheek, one Ilya quickly wiped away, "Don't say anything you will regret in the morning."

Shane looked back up, tilting his head in confusion, "What will I regret?" He said, but the answer was blindingly obvious. He would regret everything that happened after his lips touched that beer bottle, and somehow, he knew that was how it was going to be all along. Yet, he did it anyway. He took a deep breath, pressing his lips together.

"Place your head on pillow, will make dizziness better," Ilya said, urging Shane's body down to the bed.

Shane obeyed, coaxed down by Ilya's light touch. Immediate relief filled his body the second his head touched the pillow, wondering if that was what he needed all along; relaxation.

Or, perhaps he felt comforted by Ilya's warm touch. Feeling a sense of desire while being the sole object of Ilya's attention sent flutters of wonder throughout Shane's body. As Ilya brought the covers to his chest, tucking him into bed, Shane snuggled in deeper. The act was so kind, endearing, a trait of comfort that he hadn't witnessed much from Ilya. Shane desperately yearned for more. He *wanted* to get to know Ilya in that way, but that was precisely right where the issue lay; they didn't have that kind of relationship.

Their interactions always followed the same script. Desire, sex, distance. Shane would go home feeling fulfilled, send Ilya a few flirty messages, and then await their next meeting. At the beginning, it didn't seem like anything serious, but... Shane grew connected as time went on. He began to hope for more, and the sheer realization of how that would never be the case was what caused him to run.

However, sex wasn't on Ilya's agenda for the day. He simply tucked Shane into bed before stepping over to shut the light off.

For a moment, Shane thought that was all there was to it. That he was supposed to just fall asleep, and awake to find Ilya gone once more. Maybe they'd even resume the period of silence, pretending as if none of this had happened at all, and Shane would be left right where he started.

He couldn't let that happen. He refused to, not when Ilya was in the same room as him for the first time in months.

"I missed you," Shane whispered into the air.

Immediately, the light flicked back on. Ilya was standing at the other side of the bed, looking ready to hop in. "You did?"

"I did. I... I was all alone." He admitted, having to curl deeper into the blankets to hide the shame from rising. It became clear his senses hadn't completely returned, as Shane was still able to blurt out the first thought that came to mind, "I thought you might text, but... you didn't."

Ilya blinked back at him, "You have a girlfriend. Is it really appropriate for me to text, asking to hook up?"

Shane dropped his gaze immediately. Throughout everything, he had almost forgotten about Rose. He swallowed hard, sniffing back another sob. Shane wanted to ask, desperate to know, *'Is that the only reason you'd want to text me?'* But, he held back, in favor of mumbling out a small, "I guess... not."

Ilya let out a heavy sigh, plopping his body right next to Shane's on the bed. He pulled out his phone, beginning to scroll through something Shane couldn't pinpoint.

The urge to not leave with words unspoken encouraged Shane to open his mouth again, "But... I called *you*, didn't I?"

Ilya's gaze flicked to him, bright blue eyes shining wide, "Does Rose Landry know you are safe?" He asked, changing the subject.

"I didn't text her," Shane replied, shaking his head. "Not... anything about me drinking."

"Your parents?"

"No. I didn't text anyone else. Just you." He clarified, needing to get that point across. Didn't that mean anything? That out of all the people Shane could have called, he'd chosen Ilya.

Still, Ilya seemed to brush off the statement, "Go to sleep, Shane. You are exhausted."

"You're not listening." Shane tried his best to sound firm, as much as his slurred speech would allow.

"I am."

"I'm saying—" Shane said, inching his body closer to Ilya's. He finally got to a distance where their gazes could connect. He licked his lips, reaching forward to place a finger on Ilya's chest, "I texted *you*, and only you, because I *missed* you."

Ilya's breath hitched in his throat, teeth sinking into his bottom lip. He didn't so much as move, looking frozen in place.

Shane only scooted in closer, feeling his voice grow desperate for an answer, “Did you miss me too?”

It took a moment for an answer to come, but Ilya eventually nodded, “I do, I do.”

“Okay. Good.” Shane felt that was enough confirmation for his heart to settle. It was at least *something*, a reminder that he was on Ilya’s mind too. It wasn’t all one-sided as he feared. After all, that was all he wanted to know; the main thought that kept him up that night.

Surprisingly, a deep breath didn’t seem that unrealistic anymore. Shane was able to fill his lungs, wondering if he’d be able to hope for a good night’s sleep again. There was no longer any worry that Ilya was out sleeping with someone else, because he was lying right next to Shane.

“Very late now, time to sleep,” Ilya said, reaching over to flick the light off once and for all.

Shane didn’t protest, knowing it’d be easier to fall into a slumber if everything was dark. He wiped what was left of his teary eyes, making a promise to himself not to cry anymore. There was no reason to waste any more tears.

Ilya missed him too. Ilya came when he called. Ilya was lying next to him with no intention to leave.

Shane knew in his heart they wouldn’t be able to last without each other’s presence in their lives. No matter what, their paths would cross.

Once the light had been off for a moment, Shane felt comfortable enough asking, “Can I lie on you? Your chest? I want to.”

“Yes, come here,” Ilya replied in an instant.

Shane wasted no time shuffling his body over as best he could, immediately feeling comforted by the heat from Ilya’s body. His scent was so desired, so familiar, that Shane instantly felt at ease all over again. He lay his head carefully over Ilya’s chest, adjusting until comfortable. The careful rise and fall of Ilya’s chest was soothing, helping to ease those last bustling nerves.

They’d never spent the night like this before. The calm, steady sleep was both foreign, yet familiar; as if Shane was where he was meant to be all along. A part of him felt so wrong for enjoying lying on Ilya’s chest so much, but at the same time, there wasn’t anywhere else he’d rather be. The specificity of that and everything that desire would cause could be addressed in the morning. For now, Shane just wanted to sleep in comfort.

Ilya’s hand soon gravitated toward his back, wrapping their bodies together with ease. Shane found himself wanting to stay there, held in Ilya’s touch, until the end of time.

Chapter 2: the morning after

Chapter Notes

the morning after! enjoy :)

* some mention of eating and nausea*

Shane didn't remember much of his dream once he woke up. As soon as the fluorescent lights of his bedroom peeked into his eyelids, his mind went blank, suddenly met with a throbbing headache. Usually, that only happened when he was sick or hungover, and based on his chalky, dry mouth, he confidently assumed the latter.

He slowly sat up in bed, rubbing his eyes before squinting around his room. Something was off... but he couldn't quite put his finger on it. His stomach was desperately screaming at him, probably filled with toxins ready to crawl their way up his throat, but there was certainly something else out of the ordinary going on.

It wasn't until he checked his phone, noting a few recent messages, that the events from the night before began flooding back to him.

Rose: good morning!!

Rose: how'd you sleep? feeling any better?

Rose: last night was fun, though we did miss you :(

Rose: [IMG_png]

Rose: me n miles lol ;p

Rose: let me know when you're up!!

Rose: id love to grab brunch, or something :)

Ah, right. He'd blown off Rose to get wasted in his apartment alone, only to be joined by his ex-fuck-buddy-whatever, cuddling him to sleep. Boyfriend of the year award should be arriving at his doorstep any second now.

Shane blinked a few times, rubbing the side of his head, before letting out a deep groan. Shit. That was another issue entirely. The whole situation was messed up, and the ache in his stomach wasn't exactly doing anything to calm those growing nerves. Shane didn't know what kind of sight he would find when he opened his door to the kitchen. He wasn't sure he

was prepared for that conversation, as the faint scent of food could only mean one thing; Ilya was still there.

The only other possibility would be his dad, but since he wasn't standing in Shane's doorway scratching his head over all of the missing beer, Shane had to assume it was Ilya.

Had Ilya stayed the night? He had to have, right? Shane could only assume as much. The last thing he remembered was shutting his eyes in Ilya's arms, warmed by the comfort of his body. That was likely the reason he slept so soundly, overcome by familiarity as he drifted to sleep. He'd been relaxed, satisfied, and content; all feelings that'd been difficult to experience as of late, sucked in by the hole of loneliness Ilya left in his heart.

More waves of discomfort rolled through his stomach the longer he sat idly. Shane wasn't quite sure if it was due to the alcohol or his nerves. He quickly shoved his phone to the side, feeling too guilty to look at Rose's messages any longer. One day, sometime soon, he'd have to break the truth to her; that he was in love with and obsessed with Ilya Rozanov. Oh, and that he was gay. That also seemed important to note.

Shane rubbed the side of his head, squinting around the room. On one hand, he had to wonder what had gotten him to that point in the first place— to be completely inebriated, calling Ilya and spouting nonsense like his life depended on it— but Shane knew deep down that behavior hadn't been all random, drunken actions. He called Ilya because he wanted to talk to Ilya. Because nobody else was on his mind, but Ilya. Being ignored for one mere game was enough to drive him up the wall, bordering on the edge of insanity.

Even just *one* glance his way from Ilya would have likely changed the whole outcome. Perhaps even a chirp, mumbled into his ear during the play. He'd even accept an insult to his skills; anything that would get Ilya to actually acknowledge his presence. If that'd been the case, Shane would have realized there was still hope there, and he wouldn't have resorted to numbing his mind for the night. Maybe he would have even worked up the courage to message Ilya that night, a simple *Good game, but I guess the better team won in the end*.

Well— at least he had his drunk self to thank for that. He didn't have to wake up with that same desire gripping his mind, as Ilya was currently in his presence, fumbling around in his kitchen. At the end of the day, he'd accept this reality over many others.

Shane had a lot of answers for himself, clearly, but a growing number of new questions now burdened his mind. The most notable one was undoubtedly regarding the words they'd exchanged the night before. Shane had been drunk, sure, but Ilya seemed sober, for the most part. And unless he was just telling Shane what he wanted to hear, he had definitely admitted to missing Shane too. Those were the words he'd fallen asleep with in mind, there was no misinterpreting them.

After a quick pep talk, Shane pushed himself up from his bed. He paused for a moment, ensuring he wouldn't vomit everywhere, before dragging his body across the room. Though he was clouded by shame, and the thought of having to face his embarrassment was terrifying, he wanted nothing more than to see Ilya. To watch him, smell him, know he really was in Shane's presence after all, and that he wasn't just a hallucination.

Shane was definitely in over his head, but the full weight of his actions hadn't quite settled in yet. He was still in a state of disbelief at Ilya's presence, with that feeling only growing as he stumbled his way into the living room, suddenly hit with a gust of Ilya's familiar scent. It drowned out the nausea in his stomach and the bitter taste in his mouth, as Shane made a mental note to brush his teeth once he was done with... whatever this whole interaction would consist of.

Shane stared mindlessly for a moment, watching Ilya silently hum to himself as he watched the MLH news, likely covering the games from the night before. Ilya had a plate in hand, tapping a thumb against the plastic edge. He looked so relaxed, so at home, wearing a t-shirt with his feet draped over the coffee table. As if he had no intention of leaving anytime soon. That was a good sign.

Shane took a deep breath before croaking out a small, "Hi."

Ilya's head didn't whip to him as expected, a subtle sign that he'd sensed Shane was standing there all along. He finished his bite, licked his fingers, and nodded towards the kitchen, "Hungry?"

"Um. Yeah, I guess," Shane mumbled, awkwardly taking a step back as Ilya forced himself off the couch.

Ilya stepped towards the kitchen with a small grunt, dramatically stretching his arms into the air. "Your couch is hard."

Shane shrugged, "I don't think it's that hard."

"Very hard. Gives me knots in the back."

"I think it's comfortable enough," Shane mumbled back, though unsure why he seemed so defensive about a damn couch; one he wasn't even particularly fond of himself. Maybe some part of him was trying to hold onto the slim amount of pride he had left. If that meant defending his stupid couch then... so be it!

"Want an egg?" Ilya asked, holding up a pan.

Ah, so that was what he'd been munching on. Shane stepped forward, inching his way to the kitchen counter, intrigued, "Sure. Did you make them?"

Ilya raised an eyebrow, "Yes. They don't come pre-made, Hollander. They come in a shell, and you have to cook."

"Well— I mean, I was wondering if you ordered them from somewhere, or..." Shane's voice drowned out as he shook his head, realizing he wasn't making any sense. His mind was still fuzzy, his headache still pounding, and the words were tumbling from his mouth before he could process them. Much like the night before, much like the moments leading up to when he placed that first beer bottle onto his lips, much like... every moment with Ilya. Something about their interactions always had him behaving out of sorts, throwing himself into situations he wouldn't normally find himself in.

Ilya's burning gaze cut Shane's train of thought as he nodded towards him, "How are you feeling?"

"Like shit," Shane said, sliding into one of his countertop chairs.

"Because... you won the game, right?" Ilya said, already fumbling around with a few eggs in hand.

"Very funny," Shane rolled his eyes.

"Like I said, first person I have ever known who drinks over winning a game. Happens all the time, I'm sure?"

"It wasn't the game," Shane clarified, fairly certain Ilya was messing with him, but desperate to get his piece out there anyway.

"Okay. What, then?" Ilya cracked an egg over the pan, hearing the sizzle echo into the air as the yolk touched the heat. He must have kept the pan warm, somehow, knowing Shane would wake up and need sustenance in his body.

Ilya stayed. He didn't leave. Shane hadn't even considered the possibility of Ilya dipping out in the middle of the night, maybe leaving a small text behind about his whereabouts before continuing their streak of listless silence. He didn't want to think about that, how heartbroken he'd have been. To not only pour his heart out onto his sleeve, but have it be thrown right back at him. There would be no recovering from that one.

Mentally, Shane had never been in that position before— where he cared a little *too* much about the attention of someone else. Particularly, the blond, curly-haired hockey player currently cooking in his kitchen. It was all unfamiliar territory, one he was focused on figuring out alone, as there wasn't exactly anyone he could confide in without releasing a lot of secrets.

As Ilya navigated the gas stove, a burst of warmth erupted in Shane's chest, replacing the lingering bitterness. Shane often pictured what their life would be like in a domestic, traditional relationship, but it was different to see Ilya standing in his kitchen, fumbling with his dishes, acting as if he lived there too. The casual tone in his speech. Small, prominent moments where Ilya showed he truly *cared* for Shane— all of it. It offered a stark contrast to the relationship they'd led before. Shane always knew he wanted something different out of them, that was the whole reason he—

"You have amnesia?"

"What? No, no, I..." Shane bit the inside of his cheek, shaking his head, "What was the question?"

"I asked why you drank. I asked last night too, but you only said a lot of nonsense."

And yet, that was the one question Shane didn't feel like answering. He only let out a groan, dumping his head onto the counter, rubbing his temples. His cheeks felt flush, rosy and hot,

as he felt the cool granite against his skin. Momentary relief to the temple of fire his body was turning into.

“You are feeling okay? Need anything for a headache?” Ilya asked, voice significantly softer.

There was no point denying it anymore, and rejecting his offer would just seem rude. “Yeah. It’s dull, but I’ll take something.” He wasn’t sure what Ilya had planned, but a pill and a fresh cup of water was soon placed in his outstretched hand. Shane hesitantly lifted his head back up and swallowed it, hoping the dull throbbing would soon die out.

“Feel like you have to puke, or anything?”

“No, not yet.”

Ilya blinked back, “Not yet, or... not ever?”

“I’m fine,” Shane reassured. If anything, he’d probably throw up due to nerves. Sitting there with Ilya, basking in the silence of unanswered questions and words unspoken, made his stomach churn. He wasn’t even sure where to begin, if he should spark the conversation back up, or just watch Ilya stir eggs on his stove.

Realistically, it’d be a lot easier to just pretend nothing happened last night, but that would also mean disregarding the past few months of their relationship. It felt like a domino effect, with one simple event, one simple decision, leading to a plateau of silence, that could apparently only be broken by a drunken phone call.

Pushing his emotions to the side only led to more issues. Shane learned that the hard way, and yet—he struggled to even speak a word about what happened. Part of him just wanted to go back to sleep, but the other part of him knew that he’d only be able to sleep soundly with Ilya cuddled up next to him. Which, didn’t seem like a realistic outcome, given their circumstances.

“I saw Rose Landry last night,” Ilya commented after a moment of prolonged silence. His tone was casual, as if he hadn’t just dropped information that could change the entire trajectory of last night’s events.

Shane blinked back, “You did?” He made a mental note to reply to her text.

“Yes, she was with her friend.”

“Miles?”

“I guess,” Ilya shrugged. “I don’t know his name.”

“Oh,” Shane commented, “I guess you guys went to the same club, then.” He murmured, half to himself. He was suddenly overwhelmed with the alternative, if he *had* gone out with Rose, and ran into Ilya at the bar. What then? Would they have spoken? Would Shane have gotten too drunk in the same way, opting to seek Ilya out, knowing he was within the same vicinity? There were too many possibilities, all holding different outcomes.

Shane decided that this was the ideal scenario; likely the only one that ended with Ilya making him breakfast.

“Yep. Same club.” Ilya said, before grabbing a plate from Shane’s cupboards, pushing the fresh eggs onto it.

“Why, though? I didn’t think you went out much.”

“And I didn’t think you drank. Never mind, alone in your apartment.”

Shane pursed his lips, “Well... I guess we’re both doing things out of the ordinary.”

“I guess so.” Ilya said, pushing the plate in Shane’s direction. “Now, eat.”

He looked at the pile of eggs, feeling insanely nauseous at the sight, but knew he should eat them anyway. If not to get some substance in his body, then because Ilya made them for him. “Can I have a fork?”

“I don’t know. Can you?” Ilya asked, before getting Shane a fork.

With that, Ilya grabbed a mug of coffee, sliding into the seat right beside Shane. He sipped slowly, one eye peeking over to Shane, likely making sure he was actually eating. Shane stabbed a small chunk of egg onto his fork and shoved it into his mouth, quickly washing the flavor down with some water. He figured it would be ideal if he never actually tasted it, unsure how his hungover stomach would react.

Shane continued shoveling small pieces into his mouth, finding relief in his stomach feeling at least a *little* better. Baby steps.

“I’m sorry,” Shane mumbled, keeping his head down.

Ilya’s gaze flicked to him, “For?”

“Calling you. All of this. I don’t know, I interrupted your night out and basically pleaded with you on the phone. It was... I don’t know why I did that,” Shane said. It was only partially true—he knew exactly why he’d done it. Conscious or not, Shane wanted Ilya by his side. But, drinking and worrying Ilya in that way was a selfish action, even if it seemed like the only option he had.

Ilya let out a light hum, “I don’t know why you are saying sorry. Things happen.”

“Yeah, but getting drunk on my balcony, losing sense of myself, and passing out isn’t exactly just ‘something that happened.’” Shane argued, once again embarrassed by his actions.

“I don’t think you passed out. You went to bed peacefully.”

“I fucking passed out.” Shane shook his head, resting a hand on his gurgling stomach, “None of that was good for me. Mentally, or physically. Not at all.” He’d always been so on top of his health, his diet, everything to keep him in shape. One night of bad decisions could easily break that streak and build habits he’d rather not engage with.

A beat passed before Ilya spoke again, tone shifting, “What do you want me to say?”

Shane scrunched his eyebrows, “Huh?”

“I’m asking. Genuinely. You don’t want me to say it’s okay, what, do you want me to yell at you? Call you irresponsible?”

“Well,” Shane awkwardly shifted in his seat, “Not really.”

“Okay. Then hear my words, telling you it’s okay. Drinking too much, calling people, it happens.”

Shane stared at his half-eaten eggs, unsure how to respond. He was touched by Ilya’s words, of course, but that didn’t undermine the guilt clawing at his mind. Someone out there needed to hold him accountable, “Still, I shouldn’t have drunk that much. Especially not alone.”

“You regret it, then?”

“Obviously.”

“All of it?” Ilya asked.

Shane could only surmise he was getting at something deeper with that, as all of his words were simultaneously impulsive, and extremely thought out. “I guess... not?”

Ilya relaxed a bit, nudging Shane’s plate closer to him, “Eat more.”

Shane nodded, though he didn’t make much of an effort to continue. Shane wasn’t sure if he should keep prodding the subject or if it was a conversation they had to revisit at a later time. Maybe when they were both a little less exhausted and emotionally driven.

Though, that was just a regular day for the pair, it seemed. The MLH didn’t leave much wiggle room for emotionally charged lifestyles and personalities, not when the competition was so fierce.

“I looked for you,” Ilya stated.

“When?”

“After I saw Rose Landry. I thought there was no possible way you weren’t there too. So, I looked around.”

Shane bit his lip, making *another* mental note to text Rose back. Damn, he really should get on that, but he was too intrigued by Ilya’s words, offering a new side to the story. His worries from the night before suddenly felt irrelevant, as the one thought terrorizing his mind was *what if Ilya wasn’t thinking about me back?*

But— there it was. Proof. Living, breathing proof that Ilya saw Rose out in public, and immediately began to look for Shane. Instead of listlessly enjoying his life away from him, Ilya was too wracked by his presence, seeking his attention in every scenario. At least, that

was Shane's first assumption about Ilya's words, but he understood him enough at this point to feel confident.

Maybe it was hope, that Shane wasn't the only one in this scenario disturbed out of his mind without Ilya in his life. Craving for more than just Ilya's body to pleasure him; craving his attention, thoughts, fueled by the desire to be the sole receiver of Ilya's attention.

If only he'd been brave enough to reach out at some point, before or after the game, they could have skipped this whole ordeal. Maybe Ilya would take a while to respond, maybe he'd offer a sarcastic response, but at least— he'd know that Shane was out there thinking about him too.

In perspective, that just made the little stunt he pulled the night before all the more dramatic. Shane was trying to ignore that part. "She did invite me out, but I said no."

"Because you were too sad you won the game?"

"No," Shane replied, though he couldn't help a small chuckle from falling from his lips. Ilya matched it, and their faces were graced with a joint smile for a moment. "My brain was just elsewhere."

"Mine was too. That is why I went out."

Shane looked to the side, meeting Ilya's gaze. Staring back were his ice blue eyes, a look that always made Shane's heart stop in his chest. Beautiful. Ilya was beautiful. Shane was reminded of that every single time they shared gazes.

"You should have gone out. Would have been fun."

"Looking back, maybe I should have, instead of staying home alone. I don't know what part of me thought that was a good idea. I just felt so... out of it."

"Yes. She is your girlfriend, you should spend time with her," Ilya said, before immediately breaking their gaze, standing himself up from the counter. He placed his mug in the sink and turned the faucet on, humming to himself.

Shane's shoulders drooped, ears pricking with annoyance. That wasn't where he hoped the conversation would be going. But, he should have known nothing was going to be as simple as he hoped. "Ilya, come on."

"What? I am just giving good relationship tips." Ilya held his hands up in defense, "If you have girlfriend, you should spend time with her."

"Seriously?" Shane groaned, rubbing his head, "Are you going to do this to me? Can't you at least wait until my headache goes away?"

Ilya looked around in confusion, as if he were trying to find a hidden camera, "I was not aware I was 'doing' anything to you. Is this not okay? I should leave now? I thought you were the one to call me so we could talk, and yet—"

“Okay! Okay, I get it.” Shane waved his hands out in front of him, wanting to hear anything but the actions of his drunken efforts spelled out for him, “I already said I’m sorry about all of that, okay? In which you replied, ‘nothing to be sorry about,’ but clearly, you had some words left unspoken.”

Ilya let out a grunt, putting his hands on the counter, “Okay. I should not have said that in... that tone.”

“So you still wanted to say it?” Shane raised an eyebrow.

“Well, yes of course.” Ilya mused.

Shane let out a small chuckle. It was crazy, how easily their dynamic could bounce back and forth. As if they were both dancing around the elephant in the room, awaiting for the topic to come up naturally. In a way that wouldn’t result in one of them speaking words they’d regret. He played with the fork in his hands, before nudging the half-eaten eggs to the other side of the counter.

“All finished?”

“Yes. Thank you, for cooking. I’m just not that hungry.”

Ilya hummed, before adding the plate to his stack of dishes in the sink.

Shane nodded, “Are you planning on doing all of those?”

“Yes, I will do the dishes. Sometime before I leave.”

“So you’re planning to stay?”

“I planned to. Is that alright with homeowner Hollander?”

Shane shrugged, “Yeah, I guess.”

“Good. Because I still want to talk.” Ilya turned to face him again, expression unreadable.

Shifting in his seat, “About last night?”

“No. I want to talk about the weather. Yes, about last night,” Ilya said, holding a hand up to pinch his temples. “This... I would like to talk, figure some stuff out. Because it’s been hours and I’ve been here, on your hard couch, just waiting.”

“Sorry to keep you waiting,” Shane commented, unsure if he truly meant it as there was nobody else to blame on the delay except for himself. “And sorry for the hard couch. I’ve actually been meaning to get a new one.”

Ilya let out a sigh, letting his eyes gaze out into the distance. “It is okay. Let’s just... clear up some things. You told me you were drinking because you were not able to stop thinking about me. Is this true?”

Shane scrunched his eyebrows, “I said that?”

“Yes.”

“Well— I guess that’s... true?” Shane said, raising his own eyebrow in confusion. If mixed signals were a person, that would certainly be him.

“This isn’t getting us anywhere.”

“I know, I know.” Shane replied, biting his tongue, “This just isn’t easy for me.”

“I can see that.”

“No, I mean—” He let out a sigh, shaking his head. It was time to come clean; tiptoeing around in circles wasn’t going to help anyone. Ilya was going to keep jumping to his own conclusions unless Shane fessed up, “Not talking to you, not seeing you. It was killing me.”

Ilya stood still, nodding for him to continue.

“I was lying awake waiting for *something*, waiting to see if I was the one who should reach out. Though, I ultimately decided not to, because something told me you wouldn’t really want to hear from me.” Shane admitted, shutting his eyes in regret at how bad those words sounded out loud.

“You have a girlfriend. I said this last night, but is it really appropriate for me to—”

“I know, I know. I’m the one that left, I’m the one with the girlfriend, I’m the one who started this whole mess,” Shane waved his arms up in exasperation, cutting Ilya off before he spoke the same words Shane already understood. “I know I made a lot of things weird for us, but I’m also confused. About myself, about you, about what I want, and...” His voice trailed off, teeth sucking in his cheeks.

Ilya’s icy state was unbroken, though his eyebrows softened.

“I wasn’t lying. As much as I feel like an asshole for saying so, I didn’t want to see Rose last night. I wanted to see you.” Shane admitted. If he was putting his cards on the table, he might as well go all in. “I just couldn’t handle the thought that you wouldn’t even text me after the game.”

“You didn’t text me either.” Ilya countered.

“No, but... I called you, right?” Shane looked up, sheepishly smiling.

Ilya rolled his eyes, “Drunk.”

“But I wanted to call you, I always wanted to.”

“You said the same thing last night.”

“Well, I’m sober now, aren’t I?” Shane countered, feeling like a weight was lifted off his chest the second those words fell in the air. The building tension had tumbled, and neither was given the high ground. Just two bodies, unsure how to feel, unsure how to act, trapped in Shane’s kitchen. Ilya had completely disregarded the dishes, opting to keep his gaze on the counter with his eyebrows knit together.

Shane assumed the same position, though he peeked his gaze up to keep note of what Ilya was up to. He could almost see the gears turning, witness every word Shane spoke fly into his mind. There was a lot to process, as Shane wasn’t quite sure what had been going on in Ilya’s head. A lot of unanswered questions, as Ilya was the one who had to deal with the uncertainty of drunk Shane’s words. Something that’d probably been driving him insane.

After a while, Ilya finally responded with a small, “I guess so.”

“Ilya. I’m serious. Very serious,” Shane repeated, in case that point hadn’t been interpreted by now, “I can’t stop thinking about you.”

“Me neither.”

“So you believe me now? That whatever I said last night wasn’t a lie, and that I’m just as confused as you are, trying to navigate through all of this.”

Slowly, Ilya began to move. He dragged his feet across the ground, making way across the kitchen over to where Shane sat. He let out a dramatic sigh, draping a hand over Shane’s neck, before mumbling, “I believe you.”

Shane let out a chuckle, reaching up to grasp hold of Ilya’s hand. “For the record, I’m very sorry about all of that, the whole part about leaving you after promising to stay. I really am.”

“Good. You hurt my feelings.”

“I was just scared,” Shane admitted, “I was thinking... what would happen if I fell in love with you?” He said, realizing there was no sense in trying to dodge the topic any longer. Everything had already been either spoken or implied, and there was no shame either, knowing they both held the same thoughts. “What would that mean for us? For our career?”

Ilya’s grip was warm and comforting, as his hand dragged down his body, resting his head on Shane’s shoulder. “A lot of stuff that would be hard to figure out, I am sure.”

“Yeah, because what do we even do then? We live so far away from each other, and that’s just one of the many barriers,” Shane continued, reaching a hand up to run his fingers through Ilya’s hair. The position they were in was far from comfortable, with Ilya awkwardly standing over him, and Shane having to lean to the side, but it was the closest contact they’d had in a while. He didn’t want to move and interrupt the moment.

“I don’t know.”

“Like, realistically, that’s a lot to figure out, but I don’t even care about that at the moment. I just want to be with you, Ilya.”

“Good,” Ilya said, mumbling into his shirt, before picking his head up, “I wanted to hear you say that again. From your own words this time, not drunk Shane.”

“Hey, drunk Shane knows what he’s talking about.”

Ilya let out a laugh, “Sure, maybe he does. But I don’t want to keep testing that theory. Okay? No more drinking alone. Especially if it is because I haven’t texted you.”

“I won’t. But only if you promise to text me.” Shane countered. They needed to get everything clear— Ilya wasn’t allowed to ignore his texts messages anymore. He wasn’t willing to revisit those emotions.

“Okay, I promise. Every time Shane Hollander texts, I will drop everything and respond. Does that work?”

“Yeah. That does.”

“Good. Glad we figured that out. Now, can I have a kiss?” Ilya asked, tilting his head.

Ah, right, Shane was still forgetting something. He quickly shook his head, “Not yet, I haven’t brushed my teeth.”

“Seriously? Teeth? I do not care. When have I ever cared?”

“No, seriously, I’m sure it’s gross. I drank a lot, and honestly—” Shane paused mid-sentence, remembering the other hesitation. “Fuck. I still have a girlfriend too.”

“Ah.”

“One moment. Let me, uhh…” Shane mumbled, quickly pulling his phone out from his pocket. He took a deep breath and clicked on Rose’s contact, trying to ignore the guilt from resurfacing. It needed to be done. He couldn’t keep pretending any longer, not when Ilya was breathing down his neck, watching every move.

Shane: Hey. I’m sorry about everything. And especially last night. Can we talk?

Rose: sure, what’s up

Shane: I’d rather do this in person.

Shane: It’s pretty important.

Rose: oh okay. how about brunch in an hour?

Shane: That works.

Shane sighed, shutting his eyes. “Tell me I can do this.”

“You can do this. If anyone can break up with their fake girlfriend, it is you.”

“Hey. For the record, she’s not a fake girlfriend. I did genuinely think I could love her.”

Ilya nodded slowly, “I see. And that helped you realize...”

“Realize that I was in love with you, yes,” Shane playfully nudged him away, “Happy?”

“Hm. I will be happier when you return.” Ilya said, planting a small kiss on his cheek before returning to his position in front of the sink. “I will clean up while I wait, okay?”

Shane watched on with a smile on his face, nodding. “Okay.”

Ilya was going to wait. Ilya was going to stay with him. That was the most important thing. Everything else, they could figure out in due time.

End Notes

please let me know if theres any tags i need to add!

lmk your thoughts!! kudos and comments are always appreciated :D

thank you for reading :)

my twitter is @leaveit_tome

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