

and again there is a silence, what a sound

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and again there is a silence, what a sound

by [eemolu](#)

Summary

“When are you going to invite me to stay?”

Shane coughed. “I don’t know. I’ve been pretty busy with, uh... the charity, and the camp, and all the planning. It hasn’t been very relaxing.” It wasn’t a total lie. He had been working on the charity with Ilya and with his mom, and he was keeping pretty busy. It just wasn’t all work that he was busy with. A lot of it was he and Ilya making up for lost time, putting the shower pressure to good use, losing their clothes in every room and making a game out of finding them when it was time to do laundry. They had a score sheet. Shane was winning.

Rose seemed to accept that excuse, and she talked for a little bit longer until Shane maneuvered his way off the call. Then, and only then, did he turn to look at Ilya. “Sorry about that,” he said, but Ilya only shrugged.

“Is fine.” He put down his glass of water. “You should do it.”

Shane was distracted by the way Ilya reached around his waist to pull food out of the pan and put it, still hot, into his mouth. After a beat too long, he asked, “Do what?”

“Invite Rose Landry to the cottage,” Ilya said, like it was no big deal.

(what it says on the tin)

Notes

um. so. i seem to have gone into a fugue state and written this fic. i had a good time doing it, so i hope you have a good time reading it.

nothing in here that isn't in the source material, so i don't have any content warnings - as always, please let me know if you think there's anything i should add.

title from the song "alone" by leith ross bc i think it would be criminal to choose a song by an artist who did not also, by their own admission "grow up gay and in ottowa" just like shane hollander. stream i can see the future NOW.

Shane made patient, affirmative noises as Rose talked about the new movie she was shooting, yet another in Canada. He had her on speaker, his phone flat on the counter while he chopped bell peppers for dinner and she talked about the idea of just buying a place in Montreal. "I'm up here enough anyways, and I'm tired of short term rentals," she said. Shane knew she wasn't in the makeup chair, because she only got this grumpy when she was alone and knew no one was going to think she was being ungrateful. They were alike, in that way. "Have I told you about all the bathroom issues with this one?"

"You told me about the faucet, yeah," Shane said.

Apparently there wasn't enough sympathy in his voice, because Rose groaned dramatically. "The faucets and the showerheads and one time the toilet, although you're about to eat so I won't remind you of the details. I bet your house is perfect. You never have plumbing issues."

"The shower pressure is pretty great here," Shane said, and then he pointedly did not look at Ilya and the very raised eyebrows he could make out in his peripheral vision.

"When are you going to invite me to stay?" Rose asked. Shane could feel the muscles in his back tense and his grip on the chef's knife he was holding tighten. "I have a long weekend I've been keeping open, especially since it never worked out last summer."

Shane coughed. "I don't know. I've been pretty busy with, uh... the charity, and the camp, and all the planning. It hasn't been very relaxing." It wasn't a total lie, Shane reasoned. He *had* been working on the charity with Ilya and with his mom, and he *was* keeping pretty busy. It just wasn't all work that he was busy with. A lot of it was he and Ilya making up for lost time, putting the shower pressure to good use, losing their clothes in every room and making a game out of finding them when it was time to do laundry. They had a score sheet. Shane was winning, but it was mostly because Ilya's heart wasn't really in it. He didn't see why they should be wearing any clothes at all.

Rose seemed to accept that excuse, and she talked for a little bit longer about her new costars until Shane maneuvered his way off the call so he could really start cooking. He measured the oil carefully into the pan and threw in the peppers. Then, and only then, did he turn to look at Ilya. "Sorry about that," he said, but Ilya only shrugged.

"Is fine." He put down his glass of water and walked toward Shane, entirely too nonchalant. "You should do it."

Shane was distracted by the way Ilya reached around his waist to pull a pepper out of the pan and put it, still hot, into his mouth. After a beat too long, he asked, "Do what?"

"Invite Rose Landry to the cottage," Ilya said, like it was no big deal.

"Ilya," Shane said, slowly, "she doesn't know you're here."

As always, Ilya's answering "Shane" was fond and mocking at the same time. "Of course she doesn't know. I am always so quiet when she calls, like little mouse."

"Okay, then, if she came to visit, what would you do? Your lease in Ottawa doesn't start until August. You can't stay with my parents, either, she's gonna want to visit them." Shane's brain was already going into overdrive. There was his apartment, but it would be stupid for Ilya to go spend the weekend at his place in Montreal. He could just see Rose when the summer was over.

This time, when Ilya reached around Shane, it was to grab him by the waist, to pull their bodies flush. When Ilya spoke, it was into the space directly in front of Shane's mouth: "I am not going anywhere."

It would have made sense if, after all these years, Shane could manage to have a coherent thought with Ilya so close. Unfortunately, nothing about them made sense. Shane leaned forward and let Ilya lick into his mouth, moaning into the kiss, showing a hand down the back of Ilya's shorts to grab at his ass. Ilya dragged his mouth down Shane's jaw, mouthing at the thin skin of his neck, and Shane finally responded, his voice breathy. "You're saying she should come visit both of us."

"Maybe it is time she knows about us, yes?" Ilya said, and then he bit at Shane's pulse point, hugged the smallest laugh at the way Shane's heart was speeding up. "She is your friend. And we know she can keep a secret."

"You really want-" Shane started, and then he cut himself off with a gasp as Ilya got a hand down his pants and around his dick.

Ilya drew back from Shane but kept stroking him, dipping his head so their eyes met. "I want to tell the whole world, Hollander. Ex girlfriend is only the start." How he could be so tender, so serious, while he twisted his wrist in the way that made Shane's hips jerk forwards involuntarily never made sense. Shane couldn't formulate any words, let alone sweet ones, so he dropped his head back against the cabinets and swore, with feeling.

After a long minute Shane was possessed of his faculties enough to hear a loud crackling from behind him. He put a hand on Ilya's chin and said, "Fuck, dinner. You need to stir the peppers." Ilya went completely still except for his eyebrows, which disappeared under the curls that fell across his forehead. "Turn the burner off, then," Shane said.

Ilya did just that, and then he sank to his knees in front of Shane as the two of them let their dinner get very, very cold.

It was much later in the evening as they were standing around the kitchen counter, eating mostly raw peppers out of the pan like they were kids having a packed lunch, that Shane asked, "Do you want me to tell Rose about you over the phone? Like, how should I prepare her?"

"She comes in, I say hello," Ilya drawled. Shane took his time looking Ilya up and down, eyes lingering at the long, uninterrupted view of his hips and his legs and his dick. "I will put on clothes. Obviously."

"Not right now, please," Shane said, just to watch the lazy smile spread across Ilya's face. He reached forward to grab at the dip of Ilya's waist. Ilya hummed appreciatively.

"You want I keep them off forever," he said, and then he switched to Russian to continue, "You want me to be here naked for you every single day, my beautiful toaster."

Toaster was a word Shane had learned a few days before when Ilya'd had to reach into theirs to grab a too-small piece of bread and sworn up a storm when his hand got burned. Shane repeated it softly in English, their little vocabulary review for the day, and then he took a step back and leaned his weight against the counter. "Will you call me that when I introduce you to Rose?"

"Does she speak Russian?" Ilya asked.

Shane shook his head. "She did a movie where she played a mob boss's daughter, though."

The expression of mock outrage on Ilya's face had Shane laughing even before he said, "Is awful stereotype you are using!"

"I'm doing it in the privacy of our home," Shane said, and was surprised when, after a beat, Ilya surged forward to kiss him, hard. There was nothing teasing about it, not the way Ilya

lifted Shane's jaw to get better access to his mouth or the way he tugged on Shane's hair with his fist.

"Our home," he whispered against Shane's neck, like it was a gift it had only just occurred to him that he'd received.

Shane tipped his head back, relishing in the feeling of Ilya growing hard against his leg. "We're never going to have dinner, are we," he said, although the second half came out as a gasp into Ilya's mouth.

Of course, Ilya still managed to understand him. Ilya always understood him. "I will have you for dinner," he said, nipping Shane's bottom lip playfully. "In *our home*."

So it was to their home that Shane invited Rose, although he wasn't able to call her until the next day. Given how thoroughly Ilya had fucked him the night before, he was shocked he was able to get up the energy at all, even after a night's sleep. It was one of Shane's favorite things about the cottage, waking up next to Ilya, still boneless, and getting to watch him sleep for a few minutes. Ilya was a light sleeper, but Shane was practiced at rolling over slowly and carefully so he could take in his face. It was always more youthful in sleep, a slack sweetness that Shane loved even when it made him sad.

Some mornings one or both of them woke up hard, and they took care of that before heading downstairs, but most days Ilya would go to the kitchen while Shane brushed his teeth and make scrambled eggs, wearing nothing but a pair of shorts slung low over his hips. He'd watched a video on YouTube of Gordon Ramsey and mostly figured out the recipe, sometimes even added in the little plant-based crumbles that Shane's nutritionist recommended, although when he did that he also loaded them up with cheese as a compromise that Shane only pretended he didn't like.

That morning was one of the latter, and Ilya gave Shane a quick peck before sliding out of bed and going down the stairs. Shane called Rose after he'd gotten ready in the bathroom, while he was rummaging around on the floor for something clean to wear. She was ecstatic, and appreciative, and immediately booked a rental car that Shane assured her she didn't need. "I'm not going to make you come all the way here just to turn around and go right back," she said.

Shane swallowed. His mouth was suddenly dry, never mind that he'd just brushed his teeth and drank a whole glass of water. "I kind of wanted to have time in the car with you so I could, um... so I could tell you something."

"Ooh," Rose said, and Shane could picture exactly the way her face was lighting up. "Tell me

what? Did you go overboard and get a hot tub or something?”

“No,” Shane said, although if he hadn’t had something incredibly important to say, he probably would’ve entertained the idea. “It’s just- I’m not the only one here.”

Rose let out a little annoyed huff. “I’ve met your parents, you know I don’t mind if they’re staying with you. I was going to ask to visit them anyways.”

“It’s not my parents. Although we can go see them, if you want. It’s...” Shane leaned his forehead against the cool glass of the window, squeezing his eyes shut and trying to focus on the sensation, let the solidity of it guide him through what he was about to say. “My boyfriend is here, too.”

“Boyfriend?” Rose asked, slowly and quietly like she was trying not to scare Shane away.

“Yeah. He wants to meet you,” Shane said, and then he tripped over himself to add, “Obviously you can’t tell anyone about him, or, like- he’s not out either. But we’ve been together for a while so we felt like maybe-”

“Shane,” Rose interrupted. “I am so happy for you. And my lips are sealed, like always.”

Her voice sounded thick, and it took Shane a second to realize it was because she was holding back tears just like he was. “I have to go because he’s making me breakfast right now, but I’ll see you next weekend?”

“Of course,” Rose said, and then, “I can’t wait to meet him, okay? And I’m so jealous you have someone to cook for you. The last guy I hooked up with tried to make toast and almost set the apartment on fire.”

“If it was the shitty rental, maybe it deserved to burn down,” Shane joked, and Rose let out a watery laugh.

“See you soon,” she said, and then she ended the call. Shane let the phone slide out of his grip and land on the bed before he pulled on the first pair of sweats he could find—they were Ilya’s, and so just a little too long—and headed to the kitchen.

Before Ilya, Shane had always thought he was good at hiding when he was crying. Apparently, though, when he was holding in tears they were easy to spot. Ilya always swore

at him, called them his big, stupid, beautiful sad boy eyes, said they were the reason he could never win a single fight. “I always give in to your ridiculous, adorable crying,” he always said, even if Shane protested and demanded they keep arguing. That day was no different; the second Shane came down the stairs Ilya turned and said, with a spatula in his hand, “You have been crying, moya lyubov.”

Shane turned to examine himself in the reflection of the microwave. He didn’t think it was that noticeable, so he muttered “Shut up” and went to go put some water on to boil. He tried to limit how much caffeine he drank, but green tea was fair game during the off season, even if Ilya could drink an entire pot of coffee by himself.

“Who made you cry?” Ilya asked, abandoning the eggs to run a thumb across Shane’s cheek. “Did Hayden call and remind you that you have bad taste in friends?”

“Fuck off,” Shane responded, but it was automatic and without heat.

Ilya rewarded him with a tiny smile and asked again, “Who, then?”

“I called Rose,” admitted Shane.

“Ah, and she reminded you that you are gay, and you cried tears of happiness,” Ilya joked. He patted Shane’s cheek just the other side of too hard.

“No,” Shane said, and then he paused and corrected, “Kind of. I invited her over next weekend and told her that she’d get to meet my boyfriend.”

There was a second where Ilya’s face was all tenderness, joy, and then very quickly a more teasing expression crept back in. “Who is this boyfriend? Do I get to meet him? I am very good fighter, remember, so he should be ready.”

Shane shoved Ilya gently backwards, which didn’t diminish his grin at all. “I didn’t say it was you in case you changed your mind about her knowing. I could say there was an emergency and you had to leave, or something.”

“I will not change my mind,” Ilya said decisively. “Rose Landry needs to know your boyfriend is very sexy, and she does not have a chance.”

“She never did,” Shane said, voice quiet, half with emotion and half because he wanted Ilya

to lean in to hear him better. He always wanted Ilya closer, and he was about to get what he wanted when Ilya breathed in and then froze.

“Fuck, the eggs!” he said, and lunged for the stove.

In the week between that day and Rose’s arrival, they could count the number of meals they made without burning them on one hand. Ilya was quicker to distraction but he was also the better cook, so it tended to even out. When Shane got Rose’s ETA text he showed it to Ilya and said, “Maybe we’ll finally be able to make something edible when we have a guest and you have to keep your hands off me in the kitchen.”

“We will send her outside,” Ilya scoffed.

“We will not,” Shane said, but he couldn’t help the stupid smile he knew was spreading over his face. Ilya had been cracking jokes all morning, probably because he knew it was the best way to get Shane out of his head when he was nervous. If he was funny enough, he could stop a spiral before it started, and he wasn’t taking any chances. Shane, on the other hand, relied on tasks: “Are you gonna help me clean up, or what?”

Ilya threw himself on the couch, messing up the pillows Shane had just finished arranging. “Or what.”

He followed Shane around the house the entire morning, messing up everything Shane cleaned and draping himself on every piece of furniture he came across. He got more and more obvious about what he wanted by the minute, sitting with his legs spread or putting himself eye level with Shane’s crotch. Eventually he started whining, and then Shane was blowing him on the back patio when he was supposed to be checking to make sure the batteries on all the lights were working. When he was finished, Ilya pulled his shorts back up over his hips and kissed him long and slow. Shane indulged in it for longer than he should have before he pulled away and said, “We only have like twenty minutes before Rose gets here.”

“I am going to take a shower,” Ilya said, and then he gave a long, languid stretch because he couldn’t help but piss Shane off at every available opportunity.

Shane followed Ilya inside and took advantage of the time he was busy to get some real cleaning done. He was mostly satisfied with the way the cabin looked when he heard the sound of tires on gravel and headed out to the front door to wait. Rose emerged from the rental car—a very nice Rolls Royce, which would make Ilya happy—and threw herself into Shane’s arms before she stopped to grab any of her stuff. Shane tried not to be nervous and must

have failed, because Rose leaned back with her hands on his shoulders and said, “God, you’re so stiff. I’m going to like your boyfriend, I promise. Where is he?”

“In the shower,” Shane said, and could tell immediately from the look on Rose’s face that she knew exactly why that was the case.

He followed her back to the car and took her suitcase out of the trunk while she said, “I’m glad you got that out of the way before I showed up,” which he refused to answer.

Instead, Shane took her bag inside and asked, “Which room do you want?”

Rose kicked off her shoes and tossed her keys on the counter. “I don’t care, put me anywhere. I want to hear about this boyfriend, please. The suspense has been killing me.”

“I want to get you settled,” Shane said, which was a poor excuse that Rose didn’t listen to. She padded around the cottage in her socks, taking in the windows and the view and the half finished mug of coffee on the table. Shane picked it up as he passed and set it in the sink.

He felt a little silly, following her around as she ran her hand over the blanket on the back of the couch and paused to point out a picture of Shane and his parents skating on a pond when he was little kid. Then she spotted another picture, framed above the fireplace, and stopped in her tracks. Shane’s heart skipped a beat as she asked, “Hang on. Is that Ilya Rozanov?”

Shane had forgotten that picture was there. Or, he hadn’t, really, he just hadn’t thought about the fact that other people could come and look at what he hung on the walls. It was a picture of him and Ilya sitting by the fire pit in his parents’ backyard. Ilya’s head was in his lap, Shane’s hand fisted in his curls, the two of them looking at each other with quiet smiles on their faces. Shane’s dad had taken it without them knowing, and Shane had it framed and hung up for Ilya’s birthday at the beginning of that summer, the first step to making the cottage theirs instead of just his. He loved that picture. It was also incredibly damning evidence that the man upstairs in the shower was, in fact, Ilya.

Rose squinted at the picture for a little bit longer and then turned to look at Shane, eyes wide. He nodded, mostly because he didn’t think he could talk. He wasn’t really breathing, so speech seemed unlikely. “Your boyfriend is- holy shit,” Rose breathed, and Shane prepared himself to explain everything, that he hadn’t meant for it to happen and he’d never let in get in the way of hockey, but, before he could, Rose started laughing. She put a hand up to her mouth and said, “I’m so sorry, I really shouldn’t be laughing. This is just- of course it’s him. Oh my God.”

“Of course?” Shane repeated, questioning, and Rose took a deep, shuddering breath to compose herself.

“You have to be the best at everything. Why would anyone think you’d settle for a nice, normal guy?”

“Ilya’s nice. To me, at least,” Shane said, because that was the only part of her statement he could think of a response to.

It didn’t matter, anyways, because his defense had set her off again. She walked over to the couch and collapsed onto it, putting her head into her hands, shoulders shaking with laughter. “You’re perfect,” she said.

Upstairs, the water shut off, and Shane knew he didn’t have long before Ilya came downstairs. He steeled himself and said, a little too fast, “I just want to say- I’ve been seeing Ilya for a long time. Since, uh, since before my rookie year.” Shane paused as Rose looked up from her hands, laughter gone, eyes wide. “But when we were together, I wasn’t- we weren’t talking. I wouldn’t do that to you.”

“Oh, Shane,” Rose said. She patted the couch next to her. Shane didn’t move. “I know you wouldn’t. And even if you had, the situation was... I would’ve understood.”

“I just wanted you to know,” he said. He could feel the heat that meant he was approaching big stupid sad boy eyes rush up his face, and he did his best to blink them away.

Luckily, Rose wasn’t Ilya, so she didn’t mention it. She just said, “I can’t believe that I’m about to meet Ilya freaking Rozanov. My brothers would be so jealous. They were mad enough when it was just you, I can’t even imagine what they would do if they knew I was hanging out with both of you,” and they spent the next few minutes talking about Rose’s family, what they were getting up to and what they were doing. Shane had never had the chance to meet her brothers, but he’d seen plenty of pictures and signed things for their birthdays.

Eventually, footsteps sounded on the stairs and the conversation stalled as Ilya walked into the living room. Rose stood up first, and then Shane did, because it felt awkward to be the only one sitting. Ilya paused at the foot of the stairs and said, “Rose Landry. Is good to meet you. I have heard many things.”

Rose smiled at him, but it was one of her beautiful, practiced smiles, not quite the real thing.

“Good things, I hope,” she said.

Ilya shrugged. “Mostly.”

“Well,” Rose said, meeting Ilya’s bluntness with bullish enthusiasm, “I’m glad you’re here. This place looks much more lived in than his apartment did, the last time I was there.”

And that was exactly the right thing to say to Ilya, who ran a hand through his still-damp hair and, finally, cracked a smile. “He likes to live in- what do you call them? Magazines for selling things?”

“Catalogues,” Shane supplied. “And no, I don’t, I just like things to be neat.”

Rose shot a pointed look at Ilya, and then all of a sudden they were on the same side. “I can’t wait to see what you do when I mess up all the pillows on the couch,” she said, and Ilya snorted.

“He will not be able to do anything until he fixes them,” he said, and Shane didn’t even try to argue.

It was ridiculous, Shane thought, how quickly the two of them became friends. It reminded him a little of the way Ilya was with his teammates, at least as much as he’d been able to observe from his view from the other bench. They chirped at each other, even though they mostly ganged up on Shane, both of them taking great joy in trying to force him out of his comfort zone. They had the same taste in movies—Ilya liked the old ones because they reminded him of what he used to watch in childhood, and Rose went to theater school, so she was a self-proclaimed snob—and insisted not only on roasting marshmallows, but on the fact that Shane would eat his fair share, as well. He acquiesced, if only because he was blindingly happy. It was a miracle to him that he was able to do this, introduce his friend to Ilya, feed her and hang out with her and still be allowed to hold his boyfriend’s hand without worrying.

They cooked breakfast, and kayaked, and had Shane’s parents over for dinner. On their last night, Ilya confessed that he’d never seen a single one of Rose’s movies, a fact which delighted her, and she made him promise that he wouldn’t see any of the new ones, either. “They made me blue in the last one,” she groaned, a hand over her eyes.

Ilya frowned and asked, “Blue means... sad?”

“Sometimes, but I mean literally. They painted me blue,” Rose confessed. “It was awful. I

couldn't do anything without needing to get repainted. I couldn't even pee."

"That is ridiculous," Ilya said, but then he thought for a second and said, "Is also hard to pee playing hockey. There are too many pads."

"Yeah, well, that's the price we pay for playing games for a living," Rose said.

Shane just sat back on the couch and watched them. He didn't know he was smiling until Ilya poked at his cheek and said, in Russian, "Come here, my smile." He pulled Shane back so he was resting against him on the couch, Shane's head tucked under Ilya's chin.

"The smile is mine, not yours," Shane responded, as best he could given his rudimentary vocabulary. He was sure his pronunciation was awful, too, but Ilya didn't seem to mind.

Ilya reached around to grab Shane's face, squeezing around his chin and forcing his lips into a pucker. "No, it's for me," he said, and Shane turned his head in Ilya's grip to press a kiss to his palm.

Rose cocked her head at them both. "You speak Russian?" she asked Shane. He could feel himself blush, as though it wasn't already obvious that he was pathetically in love with his boyfriend.

"Mmm," Ilya hummed in assent, "I insisted. Is sexiest language."

It was mostly a joke, but Rose didn't laugh. Her eyes flicked from Ilya to Shane, full of something he couldn't quite place, and after a second she turned silently back towards the movie.

That night, in their bedroom, Ilya lay draped across Shane, his body dead weight on Shane's chest. He propped his chin up on Shane's sternum and said, "I like her."

"Your chin is sharp," Shane said, but he didn't make any move to shake Ilya off. "I like her too."

Ilya gave him a long, searching look that he was too tired to take apart. Instead, he reached under Ilya's armpits and hauled him up so his face could rest in the hollow of Shane's neck, instead. "I wanted to go down, not up," Ilya grumbled. His breath was hot and wet against Shane's skin.

“There’s someone literally right downstairs,” Shane whispered.

“I can’t believe you didn’t soundproof this house when you had it built,” Ilya complained. It wasn’t the first time he’d brought it up, but it was the first time it really mattered. “You didn’t remember you are loud. Was mistake.”

They’d had this argument enough times that Shane skipped to the juvenile part early: he reached down and jabbed his fingers into Ilya’s side. Ilya yelped and rolled sideways, glaring. Shane said, “Now who’s loud?” Ilya didn’t respond. He just pounced.

Rose asked to go for a walk the next morning while Ilya was cooking, just her and Shane. It wasn’t the best timing—Shane knew exactly how long it took Ilya to make eggs, and it wasn’t nearly long enough for a good walk—but Ilya waved them off anyways, saying the food would keep or he’d make more, it didn’t matter. There was only one walking trail that was suitable for the kind of shoes Rose had brought, but luckily it was the shortest one, with the best views. They ambled slowly through the trees for a bit until the first clearing, where Shane suggested they stop and take a look at the lake. They were looking west, so the sun was behind them, and the surface of the water was lit with a line of sun that danced in the breeze.

“It’s really nice here,” Rose said.

Shane watched a mallard paddle towards the opposite shore and said, “I love the lake. The water’s cold, though.”

Rose reached out and tugged on his sleeve so he’d look at her and not the water. “I don’t mean the view, Shane. I mean your life. The cottage. Everything.”

It took a second for him to understand what she meant, but eventually Shane thought he had it figured out. She was talking about Ilya. He was what she meant when she said everything. Shane couldn’t agree more.

When Shane didn’t respond, Rose took a deep breath in and said, “It makes me sad to think you only have this in the summers.”

“I get this during the year,” Shane said, turning back towards the water. He couldn’t look at Rose anymore, not when he was talking about this, but the mallard was gone. He stared at the ripples from its passing. “Not like this, obviously. There’s snow, and we can’t be at the cottage because of the season, but I have Ilya.”

“Do you?” Rose asked.

“Yes,” Shane said, too fast and too sharp.

“I’m sorry, that’s not what I meant,” Rose said, and Shane nodded, accepting the apology. “I just- how much time do you really get together? And how careful do you have to be? I see the way you are with each other, and I want that for you all the time. You deserve that all the time. You shouldn’t have to come to a fortress on a private lake to get it.”

And all of a sudden Shane could see what Rose saw, understood why she’d picked this place to bring it up. The lake was beautiful. There was birdsong, and a breeze, and vibrant green everywhere he looked. But it was also isolating, and lonely. Ilya loved taking Shane for drives and dancing in clubs and seeing his new teammates from Ottawa. Shane loved going to the movies, letting the rules of etiquette tell him to shut his brain off and watch something with explosions for two hours, and he loved the market by his parents’ house that Ilya had discovered had delicious, handmade pelmeni, and they both loved taking walks in the city when it snowed, even if Ilya insisted on smoking a cigarette while they did it. They couldn’t have any of that and hide. But there was always, hovering at the edge of everything else Shane wanted, hockey.

Rose watched it play out on his face and somehow understood, like she always did. It was the thing that had made him think maybe he could’ve fallen in love with her, if there hadn’t been Ilya, and he weren’t gay, but it was also the thing he loved most about her as a friend. She said, “Just think about it, okay?”

Shane couldn’t manage anything more than a nod. Rose gave him a moment, and then she linked her arm through his and pulled him along the trail, changing the subject to all the issues her co-star had with the script, and how often it made the shoot go long, and how tired the crew was of his antics. Shane walked, and listened, and was grateful for her.

Rose left around noon. Shane stood with Ilya by the front door, waving at the back of her car as she drove away. The second she turned the corner Ilya hooked a finger in the collar of Shane’s shirt and walked him into the kitchen. The door clicked shut behind them and Ilya dropped to his knees, already fumbling with the button of Shane’s shorts. “Hang on,” Shane said. Ilya tipped his cheek sideways to rest against Shane’s thigh and looked up through his eyelashes. “Fuck. Sorry. I want you to- But I’m just-”

Ilya shifted his weight back to his heels and stood up in one smooth motion, trailing a hand up Shane’s side. “Hey, is okay,” he said, his hand coming to rest against Shane’s neck.

“Are you lonely?” Shane asked before he could stop himself.

Ilya paused, took the question seriously for a second. He said, “I think maybe yes. A part of me always will be lonely, because of what I have lost. But then also I am not, because I have you. Moya yaichnitsa-boltun’ya.”

“My... I don’t know what that is.”

“Scrambled egg,” Ilya said quietly, running a finger down the slope of Shane’s nose. “Why do you ask this?”

The first time Ilya had ever come to the cottage, Shane had asked that they try to tell the truth, at least for those two weeks. They had been the best two weeks of Shane’s life. He would’ve traded at least one Stanley Cup for them, maybe both, depending on the conditions of the trade. But because of that, he tried to be as honest as possible whenever he and Ilya were in this home they’d built together: “Rose is the only person I’ve ever gotten to come out to on my own terms. She didn’t walk in on me, or see some stupid Tweet, she just... she was my friend, and she made me feel like I could tell her. About me, and about you. But then on our walk, she said this thing about being sad that we-” Shane stopped to clear his throat. He only realized he was crying when Ilya wiped a tear off his face with the pad of his thumb. “I don’t understand why it can’t feel like that with everyone.”

Ilya pulled Shane into a hug, rocking him back and forth ever so slightly. “If the world was full of Rose Landrys we could tell everyone about us right now,” Ilya said. Shane nodded into his shoulder. “But maybe you are lucky to have your one. And we are lucky to have each other. It is enough for me. It is okay, though, if it is not enough for you anymore. We will figure it out. Okay?”

Shane dropped his head down so he was looking at the floor between his feet and Ilya’s. He knew Ilya could only see the top of his head, that Ilya didn’t like not being able to see his face when he talked, but he couldn’t help it. He said, “It’s more than enough. It’s so much. But why is it also lonely?”

“I don’t know,” Ilya admitted, and that was it, wasn’t it? Both of them were lonely. Neither of them were alone.

Shane felt Ilya’s fingers moving gently through the hair at the back of his neck. He looked up, like he knew Ilya wanted him to. Ilya pressed a kiss to his forehead, and one to each cheek, and then finally on his mouth. It started off chaste but quickly got filthy as Ilya lifted Shane onto the countertop and crowded between Shane’s legs, his hands somehow everywhere all at once. “I love you,” Shane breathed, because he never got tired of saying it, and Ilya never got tired of hearing it.

“Again,” Ilya instructed, so Shane said it again, and then again, until he couldn’t because Ilya was too busy taking him apart piece by piece, all thoughts of loneliness gone, scattered. And even if it were just for a moment, even if it came back the second that moment ended, Shane could live with that. It was a good fucking moment. And with Ilya, he knew, there would always, always be more.

End Notes

it's so late at night and my computer has no battery so i'm here to speedrun telling you that i hope you had fun reading and if you want to spend more time screaming and freaking out about this marvelous show i am on tumblr (also @eemolu) AND comments/kudos are catnip to me fyi and i would love to know what you think. i love ilya rozanov to death and would write him in any situation, and shane hollander's perspective comes maybe a bit too easy to me, so i'd love to do more of this if anyone has any ideas!!!

k love you byeee <3

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