crux

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by agathav

Summary

When it comes to Shane Hollander, Ilya knows he's fucked up. Oh, he's fucked up plenty and somehow, Shane always finds a way to forgive him.

To want him again.

—or someone said ilya should have apologized to shane after the "marrying svetlana" comment. i agree.

Notes

i lurk on twitter and saw user @saltedsan asking for ilya apologizing to shane in this scene and couldn't stop thinking about it..

all of ilya's thoughts are in russian, but since i don't speak russian (and english is my second language as well) i tried to use it less except for that one bit. translation at the notes at the end.

See the end of the work for more notes

If you were to ask Ilya Rozanov when was the first time he had been aware of having made a mistake, he wouldn't know what to tell you. Not because he lacks awareness of his many fuck ups or because he can't remember mistakes from his childhood. If there are memories he's got to spare, it's those of him being the target of an angry father, an angry brother, an angry coach. Ilya knows when he's made a mistake the moment he makes it—mistakes are an intrinsic element of who he is—and though he no longer has to brace for punishment, sometimes he wishes he had the incentive of it. The fear of being held accountable for fucking up by someone other than himself. That internal voice that sounds a bit too much like his father, always there and as ever, not enough to keep him from barreling down the wrong paths, forming the wrong words. It's not enough.

When it comes to Shane Hollander, Ilya knows he's fucked up. *Oh*, he's fucked up plenty and somehow, Shane always finds a way to forgive him. To want him again. Ilya is luckier than most, he realizes, when he remembers every time he has brought hurt to those eyes. Dark brown, surrounded by the thickest of equally dark lashes and always so filled with all kinds of bottled emotion even when the rest of his face remains stoic.

Ilya recalls them on a rooftop and Shane calling him out on things Ilya couldn't clarify for him. He remembers the Olympics, how Shane had been so kind and the words *we are not anything,* cold words that dealt them both wounds that festered for six months—wounds Ilya went again and fucked up by reopening in a bathroom and later in a hotel room. They hadn't even kissed that night—yet another regret for Ilya.

Tonight, Ilya feels it's wrong as soon as he speaks. Just as he thinks out loud and says,

"I could marry Svetlana. She's American. Would be easy citizenship. She would do it." Ilya pauses for a moment to give Shane a chance to react, he doesn't. Ilya shrugs. "Her father is goalie Sergei Vitrov."

"Yeah, you've told me." Shane replies, his voice an octave lower than earlier when they'd simply been enjoying the tranquility together. *He must be tired*, Ilya thinks. *Or he hates this topic of conversation. Good job, Rozanov.*

"She would help me." Ilya sing-songs, hoping to ease him back into normal conversation.

“But,” he sounds wrong, even the way Shane pauses to swallow sounds wrong. Ilya feels his stomach drop with the realization that after the beautiful day they’ve had together, maybe he’s ruined it? “is she someone you’d want to marry?”

“We are friends, we would be fine.” Ilya finally chances a look at him and he curses himself. The amount of times he’s put that look on Shane’s face haunts him—he wishes he could erase each and every one. “It would only be for the passport.” Ilya explains, sitting up, knowing he fucked up, not exactly knowing how to take it back.

“Okay.” Shane mutters, eyes shining with unshed tears. “Okay. It’s a good idea. Excuse me for a second?” He stands, but a tear falls before he can get away from Ilya. Instinct makes him call out to him in Russian, then as he stands he calls out properly,

“No, Shane. *Shane*.” Ilya feels terrible—no, Ilya feels desperate.

“M’okay. M’sorry.” Shane hiccups as Ilya catches up to him, a gentle hand on his shoulder.

“I am the one who is sorry. You welcome me into your home, into—“ *Your heart*. “and I have been careless. Shane, please look at me.” But Shane’s locked up tight, eyes shut as tears stream down his face, shaking his head. He doesn’t even want to look at Ilya, *fuck*. He does let Ilya lure him back onto the couch, sit him down. Shane tries to wipe at his own face, but Ilya stops him. He kneels on the floor before Shane, reaching up to clean them himself, forcing himself to look at what he’s done. *I’ll do better. I’ll do better by you, moy lyubimy, I swear it.*

Shane tries to speak, a sound starting with an m sound. It breaks Ilya’s heart.

“Shane, please do not say sorry.” Shane’s nostrils flare with emotion, a tell of how much he is holding back, something Ilya’s learned over the years. He holds his love’s face between his hands, looking up at him. His entire world. How had he ever lived without him? How will he do it after these two weeks have passed? Ilya doesn’t know. Doesn’t want to think about it. “Will you look at me? Please?” Shane breathes deeply a few times, which Ilya mimics to encourage him to continue. A breathing technique Shane had taught him in Tampa, something Shane’s mother had taught him and now Ilya knew to do. He wishes Shane were

in his lap like he had been back then. They understood each other better by touch, by feeling —but this would do for now.

“I don’t want—“ Shane’s eyes open, devastating in a way Ilya had never experienced before him. God, he is the most beautiful thing Ilya has ever seen. “Don’t want you to think I can’t handle it. I can.” *Shane, always strong, selfless, perfect. From the first moment we met.*

“I spoke out of, how you say, out of place? Out of turn? I shouldn’t have said. This is time for us and I—“ He sighs, thumbs caressing Shane’s freckles, such tiny things and how they owned Ilya. “I am sorry. If you spoke of marrying—“ the thought of Shane being anyone else’s makes his stomach turn. “I would be upset too. I am sorry, okay?” *Ya khochu tebya. Ya khochu zhenit'sya na tebe i provesti s toboy ostatok zhizni. Kak by ya khotel tebe eto skazat'. Kak by ya khotel tebe skazat', chto ostavil by vso, yesli by ty byla moim budushchim.*

Shane’s eyes fill again and Ilya can’t believe he keeps fucking up. He curses himself and brings their foreheads together, hoping if Shane can’t believe him, then maybe he can feel him. Understand everything Ilya can’t say.

“It’s okay, Ilya. It’s—“ Shane holds him too, bringing their lips together. It soothes Ilya’s thoughts, feeling their lips move against each other in familiar patterns, their tongues speaking a language words could never convey. “You like women. You can marry for real—still get the passport.”

Ilya shakes his head, kissing him once more, unable to believe this man. Always selfless, always willing to think of Ilya before himself.

“I just have one problem.”

“A problem?”

“I like women and they like me. They love me. Probably could find one to marry. They are everywhere—“

Shane pulls away a fraction and it feels like a continent as he says, “Sounds rough.”

“Shane, listen.” Shane looks at him, facial expression hardened into something else like anger. Ilya loves him. God, he loves him so much.

“But I am always thinking of this slow fucking hockey player with beautiful freckles.” Ilya feigns annoyance, watching realization—and relief—wash over Shane’s pretty features. “And a weak backhand.” For good measure, of course. He makes sure Shane understands it’s a joke, no mind games, no cause for overthinking.

“A *weak* backhand?” Shane scoffs, a smile on his full mouth. Ilya wants so deeply, like it’s the first time.

“Yes, very weak.” Ilya says before pressing another kiss to Shane’s mouth because he can’t help it and all of this, all of him is his for two weeks.

“He’s so boring and he drives this terrible car.” Shane kisses him this time, biting down on Ilya’s bottom lip as payback. Ilya groans, his body responding as Shane’s thighs open to bring them even closer together.

“It’s a *normal* car.” His love argues. Ilya takes him in, smiling, the upset behind them and shakes his head. So fond. So incredibly fond of this man.

“And the real problem is, I am always wishing that these women I like—that these women I should consider to marry—were him.” Shane’s eyes shift in a second, no more upset, no more mirth. Ilya’s knees ache and his chest does too, all for Shane. He’d hurt a lifetime for Shane. It’d be worth every single second.

“Don’t marry Svetlana.” It’s determination, the look in his love’s eyes. Breathtaking and all-encompassing. Looks he’s seen plenty of times—during face-offs, when he’s riding Ilya for all he’s worth, when he’s plotting. Ilya loves that look. It was the same one he got when they first met, the look that made Ilya fall in love with him. “Just don’t. I know it wouldn’t be for love or whatever. Just don’t. We can figure something else out, okay?” Shane’s voice breaks, taking with it every wall Ilya had ever attempted to put up between them. Ilya had spent most

of a decade hiding behind walls Shane had no trouble shattering with just one look in those eyes, one flush behind his freckles, a single murmur of Ilya's name out of his perfect mouth. Ilya looks at him now and thinks, *enough. No more hiding. Not from you.*

"Okay." Ilya whispers because he would give Shane the world. He *should* give Shane the world. He will.

"C'mere. Your knees must hurt like hell." Shane whispers, his tone shifting in a way that has Ilya's blood singing.

"Mm, no. Russian knees are tough." Ilya said defensively, just to watch him smile again. It works and he feels so, so lucky. "The toughest."

"Oh yeah?" Shane licks his delectable mouth. Ilya pouts because of their banter and because he wants to be the one licking his mouth, devouring it.

"I will show you. I will show you what these knees can do." Ilya jokes, picking him up from the couch, relishing in Shane's chuckle. His knees are sore, but he accommodates Shane's weight easily. If not for hockey, Ilya will never allow his body to grow so weak as to never be able to carry this man. He loved to do it, loves how Shane's body instinctively wraps around his, arms around his shoulders, legs around his hips. The warmth of their bodies, together as they always should be, the familiarity.

Home.

They risk a tiny kiss as Ilya walks blindly towards the ensuite. "Can those knees still fuck me into the mattress, sir?" Shane, the one person in the world tailored to fulfill his every sexual desire, whispers, almost shy as if he hadn't just dictated how Ilya would put them both to bed, expeditiously.

Still, Ilya's heart stutters in his chest and out of his mouth in a laugh that joins Shane's in another searing kiss. His cock is rock hard when he pins Shane down onto their—Shane's bed.

“Is that how you ask for things, Hollander?” Ilya demands against Shane’s full mouth before taking it in a filthy kiss, open-mouthed, spit-slick, tongue fucking deep into his welcoming mouth. Just the way Shane likes.

“Please?” Ilya rewards him with a kiss to his neck, a bite to the delicious place where his neck curves into his shoulder. “Please fuck me with your creaky knees, sir.” And through their haze of arousal and the rasp in Shane’s voice, Ilya only just about raises his head to make their eyes meet before they are bursting into fits of uncontrollable laughter.

So if you were to ask Ilya Rozanov when was the first time he had been aware of having made a mistake, he wouldn’t know what to tell you. The better question would be, when was the last. But the best question would be whether or not he would do better. Whether or not he would *try*.

And as he looks down at Shane, flushed down to his chest, tears of laughter in his eyes, hands caressing Ilya’s arms like he is something precious, Ilya thinks, *of course. Fuck, of course I’ll try.*

Ilya would try, try, *try*.

Ilya would make sure to succeed. For him.

End Notes

Translation: I want you. I want to marry you and spend the rest of my life with you. How can I tell you this? How can I tell you that I would leave everything if you were my future?

If it's really wrong please correct me.

i also don't want you to think i think ilya's always fucking up…i just kind of wrote it as a character study, the turmoil inside him as a consequence of having an abusive parent. our boy is just trying his best and life is really hard. for both of them.

title from crux by djo.

Thank you 🩷

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