Everyone Loves a Losing Dog

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Everyone Loves a Losing Dog

by Stormcursed

Summary

Three times Ilya was definitely not jealous about Rose Landry, and one time he didn't have to be. (3+1)

Notes

Thank you Jupes for betareading this, and honestly, listening to me lose my mind about these pair of idiots. I wouldn't be as eloquent in English without your help.

There's one fantasy that includes Rose/Shane/Ilya. It's focused on Shane, but it's there. Jealousy can really make people do unhinged things.

Shane has a praise kink, and guess what? The author does too.

1.

Ilya Rozanov is not jealous, Russians do not do that. Jealousy is only for weak men, for men that are scared of losing something they have. And Ilya doesn't have anything to *lose*. Nothing that has ever been his, or should've been, or ever will be his.

Hollander is dating a famous actress and it's fine, it's cool, all good and *dandy* and whatever Americans say. Hollander is dating an actress and there are pictures everywhere of them going out, eating out, having a big ass white cake that makes Ilya think about them getting married and he wants to punch the wall. The actress is pretty, at least, Rose Landry. She's pretty and she has pretty big blue eyes (did Shane pick out a girl whose eyes remind him of Ilya?) and she looks at Shane like he's given her the moon and the stars and the sun. She looks at him in the pictures like she wants to get married, and she even lights up every time any media dares to interview her after the hockey game. She even blushes a little bit when every reporter calls Shane "her boyfriend."

Ilya is not jealous, because Russians do not do that. But he can't help himself imagining Shane in between her thighs. Would he sigh against her skin and whimper and whine like he did when he gave Ilya a blowjob? Would he smile, hooded-eyed and lopsidedly, almost like he was out of a dream, after making her finish with his tongue? Would he let her manhandle him, grab him by his chin and make him open his mouth? Would he—

Ilya feels his cock twitch. Would Shane ask her to fuck him? Ilya is no stranger to the concept of pegging, because he's been around hockey players all his goddammed life and if there's something they like to do is to find new ways to call each other gay. Even when they're married. Especially if they're married to a woman.

Would Shane ask Rose to fuck him? Would he lay on his stomach like he did the first time with Ilya, or would he make her stay still while he rode her cock? The image makes Ilya both want to touch his ragging hard-on and vomit. At the same time.

Because Ilya is weak, because Boston makes him weak enough to make him act out, he finds himself grabbing his phone from the nightstand and opening his last messages from Jane—a cheap consolation, honestly. He can hear Shane's Canadian accent curling around every message, every joke, even every emoji. It's stupid.

He touches his cock with his other hand, slowing, touching it over the underwear until he's completely hard. He's horny but not useless, and it's easy to type "shan-" on Google Images before he's been bombarded with pictures of him. He adds "Calvin Klein" by the end of the sentence, because if he has to see one more picture of Shane—of *Hollander* with Rose, he will actually throw up. He feels the jealousy roil in his stomach, hot and low.

He looks happy. Cheerful. Content.

Google gives him exactly what he wants, candid picture after picture of Shane half naked, bare and hairless chest shining for the camera, oil over his nipples. Ilya can almost hear his thoughts, how uncomfortable he probably was, pouting his lips every time they had to pour

more oil over his chest. Shane can pretend to like something in front of the cameras, to be that kind of man, but he can grow uncomfortable fast.

Not on his knees, though. Never on his knees. With his mouth open and his eyes shining excitedly, with his cheeks and ears pink. Waiting like a dog for Rozanov to take the reins.

The memory is almost haunting, filling his senses while he circles his hand around the head of his leaking cock. Touching himself like this is not enough, but it will have to be because Shane is not there. He won't be *here* again, not like this, not until he breaks up with Rose. He's on the screen, smiling shyly for the camera; and he's on every newspaper and magazine headline with her; looking *almost* happy next to Rose, face plastered in high resolution.

Fuck, if only Ilya could stop thinking about that.

Shane on his knees, back curling wonderfully, while he waits for Rose to fuck him. A big, blue dildo—Montreal's blue—teasing his ass, moving slowly. The strap-on is attached to Rose's tiny hips, and she's naked. Ilya can almost taste the sweat out of her skin, how nervous she'd be.

Ilya could understand her anxiety, honestly, because having someone like Hollander on his knees and waiting is a view. Someone as strong, as independent, as lovely, waiting to have sex with the *new love of his life*. It used to make Ilya feel powerful. It probably would, too, make her feel powerful. Like she’s at the top of the world.

Shane would moan the moment the dildo would get inside him, staying still until all of the length got inside, and then he'd push his hips back to start fucking himself like he can't really help it. His wonderful, muscular back would shake, struggling to keep the position until he's whimpering and begging, such a mess with a dick inside. Such a mess, only for Ilya. Only for Rozanov.

For Rose, too. Because she might not have experience with this, with Shane vulnerable and wonderful and so perceptive, but she should know how to move, and even if she doesn’t, well, she’ll probably realize soon enough that Shane can do all the work if there's a willing body right behind him.

Ilya feels a pang inside his chest, pressure on his sternum.

Would Rose know how to hold Shane while he's rubbing himself against her cock? Would she realise how desperate and submissive Shane gets when he's about to orgasm? Opening his mouth to let out pretty moans. Would he moan her surname? Or would he feel safe enough, good enough, *in love* enough to say her name?

The thought makes Ilya tighten his touch on his cock, handjob becoming messy with every passing second.

He closes his eyes once again, and allows himself to get engulfed into the fantasy.

Rose, still naked, laying on the bed while Shane rides the dildo. He looks so pretty like this, so boyishly handsome that Ilya would love to ruin him. And slowly but surely, he appears in

the scene, kneeling right beside Shane and grabbing him by his chin to make him look at Ilya.

Shane looks like he's about to cry, eyes filled with tears. His whole face lights up when he sees, actually *sees*, Ilya.

(The image is contradictory, because last time they were together, Shane told him he couldn't do this, he couldn't stay, couldn't even *say* his name. The message, although not clear, it's as clear as water for Ilya: Shane cannot love him.)

But this Shane, *his* Shane looks like a kicked puppy until his lips curl up in a bright smile. Then he's leaning over where Ilya is, throwing his full body weight over him to kiss him. For a moment, Rose disappears, and the jealousy, and all the emotions that have been tangling inside Ilya's chest because he's being kissed by Shane and that's enough.

Ilya drops his phone on the bed to take his right hand to his lips, as if he were really being kissed. Hungrily, like this Shane wants to memorize how his mouth tastes. Even in his memory, and even like this, in a fantasy, Ilya cannot stop thinking about Shane's lips, and how sweetly he kisses Ilya, how willing he always is to open his mouth. It's addicting.

Then they seem to all remember what they were doing, because Shane moves his hips down to get more dildo inside, impaling himself impossibly deeper, cheeks growing maroon and his dick shining with precum. That's how he usually gets under Ilya's attentive hands.

Ilya cannot stop staring at Shane, at how drunk in pleasure and lust he looks like, now bouncing on Rose's hips and humping over her naked and skinny body. They're both sweating, Shane more than she is, but for a moment they look like they escaped from a dream. Rose's tits bounce too with every strong movement.

This is Ilya's fantasy, so Shane doesn't open his eyes to take her tits with his hands and touch them, or take them to his mouth and suck, neither moves with effort to get a kiss from her.

He does that with Ilya. His voice and whines are getting out in tiny puppy breaths now, not really moving a lot but rubbing himself off. He opens his big brown eyes to stare at Ilya.

"Please," he says, voice deep. He's nearly begging.

"What do you want, Hollander?"

"Please, *please* make me cum," Shane begs. His hair is short enough that it doesn't cover his eyes, but he's really trying to hide away from Ilya's attentive stare. He's unable to do so, trapped between Rose's still body and Ilya.

Ilya curls his hand around Shane's dick, pumping it with gusto until he's screaming and saying something in the lines of "oh, God," and "Jesus."

Ilya has to bite his tongue not to say, "not Jesus, just me." Instead he says: "Come for me, Shane."

He does just that, cum ejecting from his dick to Rose's chest and face. He's so *obedient*. He's always been so obedient. Such a good boy just for Ilya.

And for Rose, now.

The feeling makes everything inside Ilya's chest finally crumble, something falling into place. Hollan—Shane, his sweet Shane, now belongs to her.

Ilya comes either way, with both of his hands between his legs, left one touching his balls while the other doesn't stop. Cum gets on his naked chest, on his happy trail, on his cock.

Tears also come, swelling his eyes and then falling down his cheeks. This—Hollander's satisfied sigh, eyes flickering with something like affection, blush reaching his chest even after cumming, the way he'd melt on the mattress until he got what he wanted, a good teddy bear hug—will never be his again. It belongs to another. It will be someone else's.

Jealousy is only for weak men, and Ilya is, unfortunately, fucking weak.

2.

Jealousy is for men that are scared of losing something they have. Ilya doesn't have anything to lose, because Hollander was never his to begin with. Because owning him would have meant their little *rendezvous*—and the word is foul in his mouth, bitter and thick—their *meet-cute* was nothing to Shane, after all.

Hollander had never belonged to anyone, much less to Rozanov. Ownership was for pets, for good dogs that got to enjoy lazy summer afternoons being cared for, expensive collars on their necks. Shane had never been a dog, but he was still good at following orders. Ilya had never been his owner, his handler, but Shane had been happy as his dog.

Right?

With his eyes filled with unshed tears, looking up at Ilya's face and waiting for his instructions. With his legs open and his cock hard, leaking precum inside his underwear. Waiting for commands to follow, to be good, to be Ilya's good boy. Had you asked him that night, he would've said that Shane *wanted* to be his dog.

Ilya could, potentially, avoid carnal temptations by focusing on hockey. He could focus on his father and his good-for-nothing brother and his wife; he could focus on Russia and the half of his heart that will always be trapped in that country. Focus on the emptiness that seems to haunt his soul since he was twelve, that weight that seems to follow him everywhere. There's no real time to think about that, to unpack all that baggage, and to be honest Ilya doesn't really want to think about that.

Thinking about Shane's freckles is so much easier. The image of them is seared in Ilya's mind, following him like a ghost wherever he goes.

Recalling the last picture the media has spread of Shane doesn't make Ilya's spiraling about him any easier. Last picture that became the hot topic was one with Shane walking out from a

high-profile restaurant (their words, not Ilya's) with a big red lipstick stain on the underside of his jawline. The claim is undeniable—out there for everyone to see. Maybe the worst part about the picture is not that it's everywhere, but that Ilya recognizes *affection* in his eyes.

The fact that he can recognize that emotion from a blurry picture should scare him, but it doesn't. Maybe because he's been accumulating facts about Shane Hollander inside his brain since the day they met—how he plays with his own hands when he's anxious, how he stays still before reacting when people speak to him, how he blinks fast when he's in front of big, bright lights—everything, and even more, has been taking space on his mind like there's nobody's business. It should scare him. It should make him feel stupid, but Ilya finds himself being the abandoned dog in the snow, collar-less and small.

The claim is out there for everyone to see, for everyone to realize Shane Hollander now has a girl at home. The stain is a violent red, shiny, almost glossy. Ilya can visualize Rose reapplying her lipstick on the bathroom, waiting until the last second shared with Shane to grab him by his chin and tilt his head up to kiss his neck. He can even hear the loud *smooch* sound. It disgusts him.

Not as much as knowing he was never allowed to leave such an obnoxious mark. Shane, Mister English Dictionary, would probably call what he's feeling something more specific, something like aversion, or distaste, or loathing (he's been reading Shane's interviews), but Ilya feels physically ill. Nausea, like he's about to get sick.

Not last time they had sex, because that one had been a fiasco, but the one before that, Ilya had tried marking Shane. He had started leaving feather-like kisses on his neck, drawing a path down from his ears to his shoulders, and then going up. Up and down, until Shane was a whimpering mess. Then, Ilya had closed his mouth over one tiny spot right under his ear, sticking his teeth softly, and Shane whined like he had been punched.

Sensitive, then.

"Wa-wait, Rozanov. No bites."

"Oww, you don't want your other girlfriends to find out?" Oh, the memory now burns Ilya. Shane had grown exponentially pinker, getting into shades closer to red, blush extending to his chest.

But he didn't shy away from his glance, he just nodded and said, "no bites, Rozanov."

Ilya is a fucking great lover. Or at least was one to Shane, being always a gentleman, making Shane cum before he ever got inside, opening him up with delicate, sweet movements even when he was begging for his cock. Notably in those moments, Ilya would take his sweet time with him. Kiss his freckles, suck and nibble his nipples, massage his legs until he was panting, draw constellations with his moles. Make him beg. Make him come under his skilled hands and his mouth and his fingers. Make him cum over and over again until his legs were shaking, until he couldn't say anything but simple sentences, pupils dilated and lost. Gone for a few minutes in wonderful quietness.

Ilya wonders if Rose Landry can make him feel like that, can make him stop counting orgasms and wake up with a limp. Rose might have left a claim on him, but… Ilya can only hope he left his mark on Hollander, too.

Hollander and not Shane in a moment like this one, where Ilya's had more vodka that he probably should've, one half-smoked cigarette waiting for him on his nightstand because he needs that distance. *Hollander* because he probably enjoyed toying with Rozanov the hockey player, the athlete, the warm body; but *Ilya* was where he drew the line. *Hollander* played him like a fucking orchestral instrument, and now he is lodged in his throat like cheap tobacco.

Stuck in his throat. He's unable to cough it out, cough and spit him *out*. Shane was someone Ilya remembered with fondness, but he must remember that Hollander was never *his* to *lose*.

3.

Here's the thing: Shane should have never been his, and he will never, ever be Ilya's again. It is easier to make this real *now* than to wait and accept it later, panting, alive with desire.

It's a fact. He's not even going to fight against the truth, the crushing reality of knowing when he's lost. The bar is overwhelming loud, but Ilya is not going to pay attention to that, or the way alcohol and fucking someone inside a dirty bathroom sounded tempting five minutes ago. Five minutes ago, where this bar in Montreal was the perfect excuse to get wasted and forget the fact that his chest hurts and not because he's been smoking like a chimney, which he hasn't been doing, thank you for asking. He is still an athlete and he can't afford to ruin himself before All-Stars, not even when his lungs are begging for mercy.

Five minutes ago, before he saw Hollander kissing and touching Rose in the distance. Whiskey is not enough, tequila is not fucking enough, Rozanov needs at least a quarter of a bottle of vodka to deal with the image. And bleach to erase it from his eyes.

Shane looks good. *That* breaks him more than anything else. He looks uncomfortable, but that's not surprising—he's never been fond of places like this one, with loud music and blinding lights, without the space to breathe. Even uncomfortable, even trapped between Rose and one guy that has been touching his back like it's an Olympic sport, Shane looks good. Pretty, even, flushed between bodies and with his cheeks a healthy pink.

Ilya feels like a fucking mess on this cheap cheetah-print shirt he remembers buying with Svetlana in Russia last summer, drowning in cologne and whiskey. He's cheap like this, malleable, compliant to anyone who would allow him to fuck them tonight. Fuck them, he doesn't want to be touched, because tonight Ilya is an open wound and the only way to patch his chest up is by getting his dick wet. Maybe if he closes his eyes, he can imagine whatever body he has under him or against a wall or over his legs is Shane.

Instead of actually getting that, Rozanov gets to watch how Shane looks at him while he kisses a pretty woman, a woman that allows him to bite her neck and suck her lobe and still stare at Hollander, who's staring at him. It's wicked, it's addictive, and Ilya had forgotten how much Shane's attention makes him horny. He finds himself unable to think.

Maybe that's why he ends up walking himself to the nearest open store, a shady place that sells Montreal's Hockey t-shirts and cheap pizza and a few options of soda. Ilya ends up with a big Neapolitan pizza on one hand, a cold Coke under his shoulder and one Hollander-24 Montreal Hockey t-shirt inside a plastic bag that makes the whole ordeal look like he's about to take trash out. The quality is, at best, questionable, and they swore it was signed by Shane himself, but the ink bled and it just looks like a tiny black circle.

Rozanov doesn't really seem to care. Not like he will wear this outside, or ever. Not like it will matter in the long run, honestly. His shared hotel room is empty, as he already knew—some things just don't change, get your playmates drunk and they'll struggle to disentangle from a woman's legs. His hotel room is empty, and he doesn't have to pretend to care about the cheap pizza, or the plastic bottle of Coke; he just leaves them at view, for whichever tragic soul who will clean this room tomorrow.

He's only interested in the cheap 24-Montreal t-shirt. It smells funny, like it hasn't been washed in at least a month, but the texture is similar enough. The feeling of having something to put on that has Shane's name makes Ilya feel clinically insane, like he is putting a mark on himself, lashing himself like the dog he identifies as. Sometimes.

Right now, this t-shirt and the big bed and the alcohol that is still making his veins buzz, is enough. If he can't have Shane, if he doesn't stand any kind of chance in this fight, well, at least he'll always have his fantasies. He'll have his memories, the way Shane would whine his surname like it was a blessing, hip dips perfect to grab and move and manhandle him to a better position. A better angle, better ways to trigger a new way for Hollander to moan his name. Intoxicating though it was, Shane's still stuck in this throat like cheap tobacco and inside his skin like a tattoo. A wound Ilya won't let heal.

Ilya closes his eyes, and thinks about Hollander. Thinks about his huge shoulders, muscular back, about his first time taking Ilya's cock. The way he had deflowered him in every way a person could be deflowered; but more so, how Rozanov had shown him how good he could feel, how nice it was to be taken care of, to be tended to and get his wounds licked and closed by careful hands. Was that true, or just another goddamned delusion to feel better about himself?

By this time of the night, Shane is probably fucking Rose. He can almost picture it: Hollander, naked and all over Rose, who's as equally naked and with her legs open. Looking up with that love-sick glance she loves to create for the picture, for the cameras, and for her *boyfriend*.

Ilya touches his aching cock, only bothering to move his erection out of his underwear. He's not going to last long. He's not going to *last* while thinking about this, even when his fantasy makes him want to tear his dick off his body. Women are hot, okay? Shane is hotter. Shane has always been hotter, even in this pseudo-fantasy-nightmare.

He gets his phone, blinded by jealousy and something closer to fury. He doesn't bother looking for pictures, or rereading old texts, a testimony of what he once had. Instead, he sits up and puts the shirt over his almost-naked legs, showing off the number and the surname that's on the back of the fabric. It looks almost… good, on his skin. It feels right. It feels *wrong*. It feels like it shouldn't matter, it shouldn't fit, it shouldn't feel as good as it does.

Ilya stops thinking, and angles his phone to show his legs and his hard, leaking cock. If Shane fucking Hollander is fucking Rose, he is going to ruin his night now. He is going to show him why being with her will never be enough, even when self-hatred seems to try to take him under its spell.

"You like this, don't you, Hollander?" Ilya says as soon as he hits the recording button. "You like this, nine inches, just for you. I want to fuck you. I want to fuck you so bad." He feels stupid doing this, with one hand on his cock and barely moving it. But then he closes his eyes and imagines Shane sitting, or standing in front of him, or laying on the empty bed. Staring hungrily at his cock.

He'd probably blush first in that adorable kind of way he has, frowning a little bit while he takes the whole picture: Ilya, naked and with a cheap imitation of his sweatshirt on his legs. He'd probably chuckle, saying something like, "I didn't think I'd see the day of you wearing Montreal's colors."

Ilya smirks and tightens his grip on his cock, every movement creating more friction. He'd have a pre-established answer, of course, and he has to stop himself from saying it out loud. Because if Shane was there, in this room with him, Ilya would say: 'one time only, Hollander. Just for you. Claiming your number for me.'

Instead, he whines to the mic, "does your girlfriend know you like me to cum inside you?" The question is vicious, cruel. Terrible. Because they both share the secret, the details of their love affair that shouldn't have happened but that is now really fucking real and it's ruining Ilya's life. "Does she know how much you like begging for cock?"

Ilya remembers Shane opening his mouth just to take his cock for the first time, for all the times he's given him a blowjob. He's pliable while on his knees, easy to touch and easy to please, and *so* vulnerable. So beautiful with tears in his eyes and a vacant expression on his face that only shows how content Shane really is while doing this. While having sex with him.

Or how content he *used* to be.

Rose might have him now in between her sheets, but Ilya had him *first* and Shane will never forget the feeling of Rozanov's dick deep inside his throat. Rose might make him eat her out, but Ilya taught him how to take fingers inside his mouth first, how to suck, and how to relax his jaw. How to hold. How to wait. How to breathe through his nose.

"You're mine, Hollander," Ilya says, moving his hand fast enough that he knows the camera won't really catch the whole movement. "Mine, mine, mine." He's babbling, whispering, whining, crying, begging. He comes on Shane's t-shirt imitation Montreal shirt, and by the

time he’s done cleaning his cum on the fabric, he stops recording and takes one picture. It’s an indulgence.

He swears he’s going to delete the video and the photo tomorrow.

But instead, he has the guts to send the picture. The picture is sent, and Ilya is about to pat himself on the back for such a heroic deed, when he sees three dots on his chat with *Jane*. Blinks *on-off-on-off* for enough seconds that Ilya panics and deletes the image.

There you go. Problem solved forever.

Jane
what was that?

Lily
Ничего. Иди трахни свою девушку, Шанэ. (Nothing. Go fuck your girlfriend, Shane)

Jane
fuck you

+1

The news are plastered in every magazine of the country, with bold and in all caps, *IS THIS THE END OF THE ROMANCE OF THE DECADE?* The photo behind the text shows one Rose Landry leaving a restaurant alone while Shane looks at her in the picture next to it, with tears in his eyes. It's not high quality, probably taken with a phone, but it’s obvious that they were breaking up.

Everyone talks about it in the Bears changing room, how this is their only chance to beat Shane now that his heart is broken. They talk and whisper and speculate if Rose broke up with him because he wasn't good enough in bed, if he was a bad boyfriend, if fame scared him. They talk about Rose being a goddess, a beauty only found once in a lifetime, and how she probably lowered her standards to date Hollander.

Ilya doesn't share the sentiment, honestly.

Shane is one boring Canadian, yes; but he's also funny in his own way, obsessive and neurotic and anxious. Caring. Attentive. Observant. Clever inside and out of the ring.

If the rumors are true, is Ilya going to take the chance to be with Shane again? He's not thinking about claims, ownerships, belonging to him. He was never owned by Shane, but it's not a lie, either. It's a complex middle point where Ilya hasn't been able to think about anyone else in months, no woman is attractive enough to pique his interest, because he's always thinking about Hollander's stupid lips and expressive eyes and freckles.

It feels like an illness he can't really sweat out, the kind of illness that stays, that spreads, that sticks on the brain and will never leave. One more fracture on Ilya's persona, one more emotional *turmoil* to add to the list he keeps building up inside his head with all the stupid details about Shane Hollander and how that makes *him* feel.

Ilya is weak.

Ilya is being weak but the idea of spending time with Shane in Florida warms all his chest up, like summer after the cruelest of winters. The idea of sharing the same colored shirt, same team, same goal, is dizzying in the best of ways. Shane is a machine, Shane is the best hockey player Ilya has ever known. Because he is weak and his emotions are out of control, and since he misses Shane like a sickly lung begs for another hit, inviting him to his room is the only logical option.

+1.5

Fucking in a hotel room is always a pleasant experience, at least for Ilya, who’s not used to soft sheets and Shane’s presence. Getting used to it would imply he could have this *forever*, and soft sheets be damned, Ilya would love to get used to Shane being in his life. Instead of focusing on that, or the way he should definitely stop thinking about *forever* when Ilya is terrified of the possibility of a future by his side; he just kisses Shane until he’s a puddle of goop and easy smiles.

Ilya grabs Shane by his neck, not choking him but keeping him locked in position, holding him still. Holding him steady. Making him wear his hands like a collar, like a mark, like a tattoo Ilya wishes he could burn on his skin and keep for forever, but he can’t. He can't leave any kind of mark or bite or bruise because people might never find out why Montreal’s 24 has a bruise on his thigh, but Shane will.

Shane will remember. And Ilya knows he can’t do it, anyway, despite himself, despite his weakness. He can’t do *this*. He can’t believe, even for a moment, that he deserves to *have*. Ilya will have to break Shane’s heart soon, and break his own heart too.

Shane moans under his lips when Ilya sucks him off, and it tastes like he’s indulging one last time in an addiction he has to tape off. Indulge in this possessiveness, bask in the feeling of owning Shane one last time. This won’t be the last time. Next time will be the last.

Next time, he will leave hickeys.

+2

Next time finds Ilya on Shane's bed in his cottage by the countryside, afternoon sun lighting Shane's soft features. This time around the weight of the world doesn't feel so heavy on Ilya's shoulders anymore, and he allows himself to dream, to hope, to long for his own future. He bites Shane's neck, sucking until his teeth are imprinted and now there's a big, lovely hickey decorating pale skin.

"You didn't use to do that before," Shane recalls afterwards, soft and pliable and warm on Ilya's chest.

"Hmm?"

"Leave hickeys."

"I wasn't… I didn't own you, Shane," Ilya's voice is quiet, not ashamed, but he feels the sickness pry at him again. The festering. It doesn't leave him alone, even now.

"I wanted you to."

"You *asked* me not to leave bites, so I don't leave bites. See? I'm a gentleman."

"When?" Shane's eyes pick up to look at Ilya's, looking confused, lips pursing together in concentration to listen.

"Sorry?"

"When did I ask you not to leave hickeys?"

"Montreal. Your apartment."

"That was four years ago," Shane says flippantly, as if it hasn't ruled Ilya's head for years and years.

"*Da*. You asked for no bites."

Shane smiles in that soft, almost imperceptible way he does when he's analyzing something but also overwhelmed by emotion. The feeling reaches his eyes in just a second, and that's a record. A good record.

"You can mark me up, you know. We have all summer."

"Ah, so you don't want people to know? To see that you are mine?"

Shane smirks, looking proud and happy and a little smug. Like a dog proud of walking by its owner's side, even if Ilya feels more like the dog than the handler.

Nevertheless, Ilya feels like he's already won. He doesn't need a leash, a collar, one hundred hickeys on Shane's neck (even though he does look pretty like that, with tiny pink and red and purple marks on his shoulders and throat and nape and thighs, now that Ilya is allowed to leave a claim) to know Shane is *his*. He is now his. His to keep. His jealousy didn't make him

weak, it made him brave—willing to push himself past his limits, to wait for Shane all this time. It made him human then, it makes him human now.

It makes him Shane's winning dog.

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