

To the Bone

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To the Bone

by [mcshrug](#)

Summary

Shane's injury recovery isn't going all that well. Good thing Ilya knows how to get his mind off of it.

Notes

I accidentally put a lot more sex than hockey in this one. I'm as disappointed as you are, I'm sure.

Shane isn't great at sitting around and doing nothing.

That's pretty much the only justification he has for why he's sitting here on the leather couch in his Montreal apartment with his right arm in a sling, staring down at the shattered television remote at his feet.

It's just that it's been *so long* since Shane had the shoulder surgery, and his arm is still in this stupid sling, and he hasn't been cleared to travel with his team, and he was getting annoyed by his parents so he insisted on getting back to his own apartment only to find he's annoyed by being alone.

He's also tapering down off the pain meds, and the doctor had warned Shane that would cause some bad mood swings, but he hadn't thought they would be *this* bad.

And the Voyageurs are playing fucking terrible hockey.

Shane looks away from the broken remote, back up at the television. The officials have dropped the puck again. The Voyageurs, having just given up three goals in the last five minutes, has already gotten once more hemmed into their own zone.

Shane's right shoulder is starting to hurt. There are plastic shards scattered across the coffee table from where he'd used his good arm to bash the remote against the edge.

*

Hours later, Shane is still on the couch, eyes open but unfocused on whatever random game is playing on mute. He's slumped onto his side, good arm jammed beneath him and bad one cradled over his ribs, when his phone buzzes against the couch cushion beneath his cheek.

Groggily, Shane peels his face away from the leather, squints down at the screen.

It's a text from Lily. *Awake?*

Shane frowns. They've been texting occasionally, on and off, since the surgery, but it's a weird thing to ask. The Voyageurs aren't even getting back from the West Coast until next week. It's not like either Ilya or the Bears would have any reason to be in Montreal.

It's not like Ilya would have any reason to call Shane just to chat.

Shane sits up on the couch, rubbing his good hand over his eyes for a moment before reaching down to grab the phone and poke one-handed at the keyboard. *Yes. Why?*

The typing bubble appears, pulses there for a moment, disappears again. Shane taps his fingers against the side of his phone and waits.

Eventually, the text pops up at the bottom of the screen. *Can I come up?*

Shane's eyes shoot all the way open. He blinks hard, squints down at the screen to make sure he's reading it correctly.

He looks sharply up at the television. For the first time he notices what game is on. It's the Bears, and they're playing in Ottawa.

It must be a replay from earlier that night.

Shane's fingers dart over the keyboard. *You're in Mtl??*

While he waits for a reply, Shane does the math. A six o'clock puck drop, back in Ottawa. Three hours for the game. Two for a drive to Montreal, maybe one and a half if you're speeding.

When he checks his phone again, he sees it's close to one in the morning.

The buzzer for Shane's front door goes off.

*

When Shane opens his door, he finds Rozanov leaning against the doorjamb, tapping at his phone.

He looks up, grins, pockets the phone. He's in a sheer button-down printed with tigers, unbuttoned low enough to show the sweat still gleaming in the hollow of his throat. It's unseasonably warm, for a spring night in Montreal, but it's not *that* warm.

When Shane moves his gaze upward, he sees Rozanov has all of his teeth in, and his lips are just a shade too red.

Shane frowns. "Get in," he says, and stands aside so that Rozanov can slip past. He gets a whiff of Rozanov's cologne and something alcoholic, something that stings Shane's nose, as he goes.

Shane shuts the door behind them, makes sure to latch it before turning around to watch Rozanov wander ahead of him down the hall. "I don't— didn't you play a game tonight?"

Rozanov has stepped into the living room, by then. He turns to look at what's on the television. "You watched," he says, turning with that full-toothed grin on his face to see Shane follow him into the room.

The fingers of Shane's right hand curl around the edge of his sling. "It's just replays," he says, stiffly. "Why are you in Montreal?"

Rozanov shrugs. "Guy on team, he has girl here. She wanted to meet, go to club. And he has fast car."

Rozanov had dressed up nicely, slicked his hair back, dabbed on cologne. He had put in his fake front tooth. He had wanted to look pretty. He had succeeded.

He hadn't told Shane he was coming. Maybe he had wanted to see if he got a better offer at the club, first.

"Sounds like fun," Shane says.

He doesn't do a very good job of sounding like he means it, if the way Rozanov snorts as he turns back to the television is any indication. "How is shoulder?"

"Not great," Shane says. He doesn't follow Rozanov's gaze to the TV, watches the broadcast paint shifting blocks of blue and white over the planes of Rozanov's face instead.

"Teammates say, 'Is serious, must be, if Hollander gets surgery in spring, when Montreal still maybe in playoffs,'" Rozanov says. He's still looking at the television.

"They won't get in if they keep playing the way they played tonight," Shane mutters.

It's starting to irritate Shane, the way Rozanov isn't looking at him, like whatever's on the TV could be that much more fascinating. "It hurts, still?"

"Obviously," Shane says.

Rozanov says, "Did you see my goal tonight?"

Shane frowns. "No."

"You want to watch? Is coming up, I think."

"Not really," says Shane. There are spikes of pain beginning to radiate up from his shoulder and into the top of his spine. He shouldn't have been lying on the couch with his back twisted like that. "I'm sorry. I'll be right back."

He pads back down the hall in the dark, not bothering to flick on the lights as he turns into the bathroom to pull open the mirror above the sink. He digs around in the cabinet behind it for a moment until his fingers find the pill bottle.

Shane retreats back down the hall and into the living room, where Rozanov is still standing in front of the TV.

He can feel Rozanov's eyes on the side of his face, but he doesn't say anything as he passes in front of the television on his way to the kitchen. There Shane grabs a glass, shoves it under the tap, and tosses the two pills he's tipped into his palm into his mouth before gulping down water.

When Shane sets the glass down, he finds Rozanov has followed him into the kitchen and is watching him from the other side of the counter. Shane can't parse his expression, but whatever it is, it's at least no longer a grin.

Shane manages a smile. "Sorry. You should've stayed at the club."

Rozanov tips his head to the side, just slightly. "Why?"

“I’m sure the girls there are more fun than me,” Shane says. “I’m not— I’m not really sure I’m up for anything, tonight.”

Rozanov smiles. It’s nicer, somehow, than the smile he’d offered when Shane had first opened the door. “You want shower?”

Shane shifts uncertainly on his feet. “I’m not— did you understand what I meant? I don’t know if I want to have sex.”

“Yes, I understand,” Rozanov says. “Is not what I asked.”

Shane hesitates. “Yeah,” he says, after a moment. “Yeah, a shower might be nice.”

Rozanov heads to the bathroom first, flicks on all the lights, cranks the shower on and undresses quickly outside of the glass stall. He’s naked by the time Shane is finished closing the bathroom door behind them.

Shane watches as Rozanov slides open the door to the shower, leans in, sticks an arm inside to test the temperature of the water. It’s strange to see him naked when he’s not hard. His ass looks so round, when he’s bending over like that.

Shane looks away. He’s going to look like a hypocrite, if he starts getting turned on now. “You could take out the tooth,” he says, before he can overthink it.

Rozanov straightens up, turns back to Shane. He’s wearing that same unreadable expression.

“I mean, if you wanted,” Shane says. “If it’s more comfortable.”

“Ah, yes,” says Rozanov. “Comfortable.” He reaches one hand up and into his mouth, wiggles his fingers around behind his teeth. When he lowers the hand again, there’s once more a gap at the front.

Rozanov reaches for the toilet paper, tears off a square, folds the tooth inside of it. Places the bundle on the bathroom counter. He turns, pulls open the door, and climbs into the shower.

Once he’s inside, and the door is slid shut behind him, Rozanov turns to stare at Shane through the glass. “What,” he says, over the pounding of the water. “You shower with clothes on?”

“No,” Shane says. He pulls off his sweatpants first, because that’s the easy part. Then the sling, and the t-shirt, carefully shrugged off over his injured arm.

Once he’s naked Shane holds his right arm in close, folded across his belly, and steps toward the shower. Ilya slides the door back open as he approaches.

Shane had thought it might be awkward, even though the shower is spacious, and he’d sprung for the rainfall showerhead so the water would come down from a big silver square set into the ceiling.

But it's impossible for it to be awkward when there's no hesitation from Ilya, who is already putting his hands on Shane, one on the back of Shane's neck, the other on his waist. He's turning Shane gently around, putting Shane's back to him, guiding Shane to step backward until the water is hitting his spine.

Ilya removes his hand from the back of Shane's neck. There's a squeak, as he presses his hand into the trigger beneath the shampoo bottle set in the wall.

His fingers return, then, to curl over the back of Shane's head. He slides soapy fingers under Shane's wet hair, presses them firmly into Shane's scalp.

Shane shuts his eyes. He lets himself lean into the touch.

Ilya removes his grip from Shane's waist so that he can get both hands Shane's hair, slowly massaging the shampoo into Shane's scalp. The warm water is beating gently down on Shane's head, everywhere Ilya's fingers aren't reaching. The sharp pain in Shane's shoulder is fading to a dull twinge.

It's the best Shane's felt since— well, he can't even think of when he last felt this good. Certainly not since October. Definitely not since that hit in Columbus.

Rozanov's voice is low, when he speaks behind Shane. "Shoulder feels better?"

"Yeah," Shane says, eyes still shut. "A lot better. I love drugs."

Rozanov's laugh is quiet. He gives his fingers one last scrub along Shane's scalp. "Lean back," he says, tapping lightly at Shane's good shoulder.

Shane shifts obediently backward, into the spray. Rozanov cup a hand over his brow, helps shield his eyes from the soapy water.

Then Rozanov stands Shane upright. There's another squeak of a pump-bottle. Rozanov's hands smell like Shane's cedar-scented body wash when he places them gently between Shane's shoulder blades, careful to avoid the edges of the waterproof bandages still sealed over the surgery scar. "Is hard to reach, here?" he asks.

"Yeah," Shane agrees. "Being injured *sucks*."

Rozanov laughs again, starts circling his hands. Shane can't help but arch a little into it. "You like to complain, on drugs," he says.

"I do not," Shane grumbles, attempting to push back into Rozanov's touch.

"Yes, you do. Sober Shane Hollander, he is so, what is word? Stoic."

Shane's eyes pop open. "That's a good word," he admits.

"Yes," Rozanov says. Shane can't help but shiver as Rozanov's soapy hands drag down to his lower back before curling around to his belly. "Drugged Shane, though, he whines."

“I do not,” Shane says again.

His tone is getting breathless. It’s hard for not to, when Rozanov’s hands are rubbing slowly up his belly until they’re cupping over his chest. There’s a callous on the butt of his right palm, right where Rozanov grips the top of his stick. Shane can’t help but twitch when it scrapes over his nipple.

“Drugged Shane texts me. He says, ‘It hurts.’” Rozanov’s voice is getting lower. He’s pressing his chest into Shane’s spine. He lifts his hands, gets them around the top of Shane’s arms, smooths downwards until he his fingers are circled over Shane’s wrists. “He says, ‘I can’t even jerk off.’”

Shane twitches, hard, against Rozanov’s grip.

Rozanov says in his ear, “Is true? You can’t?”

“I can kind of manage, with my left hand,” Shane says, through gritted teeth. “But it’s not—*good*.”

Rozanov hums. “How long, since you managed?”

Shane’s heart is beating so forcefully he’s slightly concerned Rozanov might be able to feel it thudding through his spine. “Um,” he says, weakly. “A week and a half?”

Rozanov is silent, for a moment. His soapy fingers curl over Shane’s hands, trace over his palms until Shane is shivering in his grip. He cranes his face around to try and get to Rozanov’s mouth.

But Rozanov is stepping away, peeling his arms back. He keeps Shane in place by curling one gentle hand over the back of his neck.

Shane stops, breathing hard, and turns his head back to face front. He squeezes his eyes shut again. He listens to the squeak of the body wash bottle as Rozanov pumps more into his hand.

Rozanov drapes himself once over Shane’s back, wraps his soapy hands around the front of Shane’s thighs. “Is shame,” he says.

Shane opens his eyes. He looks down to see where Ilya’s hands, spread wide over his thighs, are framing his half-hard dick. “What is?” he asks, weakly.

“That you are not ‘up for anything.’”

Shane’s mouth drops open. “Fuck *off*.”

“What? Is what sober Shane said, yes?” Ilya smooths his hands down Shane’s thighs. He folds down behind Shane, crouches to rub body wash over Shane’s knees, down over his shins and behind his calves, rising to get behind his knees and up and up until his hands close over Shane’s ass in such a tight, sudden double squeeze it makes Shane gasp and jerk in his grasp.

Ilya releases him, pulling away again. Shane can hear the smile in his voice when he says, "Lean back."

Shane is still scowling when he obeys. He forgets to close his mouth in time, so he's spluttering a little as Ilya uses his firm, gentle grip to get each of Shane's limbs under the spray.

Ilya presses up close to Shane's good shoulder and pulls him in tight, so they're both beneath the rainfall. He presses his face to the side of Shane's, fits his mouth to Shane's left ear. Says, so low it's barely more than hot breath, "I want to bite."

Shane's good arm snakes around behind him, gropes backward until he gets a fistful of Ilya's hair. "Please," he whispers.

Ilya pulls back against Shane's grip. One of his hands slides away from Shane's waist. Shane feels those fingers touch the back of his neck and smooth upward, pushing Shane's wet hair out of the way.

Ilya leans in. He closes his teeth lightly over the nape of Shane's neck.

Shane goes very, very still. He hadn't even realized how loudly he'd been panting until he stops breathing, and the echoes cut off, and all that's left is the sound of the water hitting the tile and his pounding of his rabbiting heart.

Ilya bites down, hard.

A weak noise emerges from Shane's throat. His fingers spasm where they're still locked into Ilya's hair.

It's like the last bit of pain leeches out from his shoulder and into the skin clamped between Ilya's teeth.

Shane doesn't realize how boneless he's gone until Ilya gives a muffled laugh behind him and gets his hand under Shane's good arm. Even through the rainfall, Shane can hear the wet sound of Ilya's mouth disengaging from the back of Shane's neck. "Whoa, whoa, whoa," he says, hoisting Shane up with the grip on his armpit. "Don't fall."

Shane tilts his head forward, hopes for Ilya's teeth back. "You'll catch me."

"Ah, no, will slip," Ilya says. There's a hand on the side of Shane's face, just for a moment, a there-and-gone rub of Ilya's thumb over his wet cheek. And then Ilya is gently guiding Shane forward, pulling the shower door open for him. "You dry off. I finish, follow, yes?"

"Yes," says Shane. The back of his neck feels cold where Ilya's mouth had been. He stumbles on his first step outside the shower, rights himself in order to pull a towel off the rack and pull it upward for a clumsy left-handed scrub of his hair.

"Hollander?"

Shane looks up. Ilya has closed the shower door behind Shane. He's looking at Shane through the fogged-up glass.

"Weeks? This is true?"

It takes Shane a moment to realize what he's talking about. "I said a week and a half," he grumbles.

Even the rough outline of Ilya through the steam is eye-catching, the broad slope of his shoulders, the tapered line of his waist. "Go to bedroom," he tells Shane through the glass. "Wait."

Shane goes.

*

Shane remembers feeling anxious, when the buzzer had first rung, about the state of his apartment, the mess in his bedroom.

He can't find it in him to care anymore. He just climbs into the unmade bed, careful not to jostle his shoulder as he lies down his back. He folds his hands over his stomach, and waits.

He can't say how much time has passed before Ilya is looming over him, obscuring the ceiling from his view. His curls hang damply down around his face. His wet lips are slightly parted, as he stares down at Shane. He smells like Shane's body wash, now, not like the club, not like people Shane doesn't know.

Shane smiles, reaches for Ilya with his good hand.

Ilya, still standing by the side of the bed, leans over Shane. He brings his face closer, and closer, until Shane obediently opens his mouth. Then Ilya ducks in and closes his teeth over Shane's lower lip.

Shane grunts, louder than he'd meant to.

Ilya releases Shane. He leans over, bites gently at one side of Shane's jaw, then the other.

He pulls away, rounds the bed, clammers carefully onto the duvet. He knee-walks slowly across the mattress, like he's attempting not to jostle Shane.

Shane waits as if he's been pinned to the other side.

Ilya smiles, his white teeth flashing around the gap. He kneels beside Shane, leans down, and bites gently into Shane's right pec.

Shane arches into the press of Ilya's teeth so forcefully he can feel his shoulder twinge, even through his medicated haze.

Ilya must have sensed it, or maybe Shane made some involuntary sound, because he immediately releases Shane and rises, looking alert.

“My shoulder,” Shane whispers. “I just moved it too much. Don’t stop.”

Ilya gives him a disapproving look. “Be *still*,” he says, chiding. And he folds back in and closes his mouth over Shane’s left nipple.

He sucks, slowly at first, then with increasing pressure as Shane shivers and twitches and fights to keep his back flat on the bed. And then Ilya bites, hard.

It’s like all of the air has been punched out of Shane’s lungs. Shane forgets about carefully holding his right shoulder off the mattress, goes completely flat, stares up at the ceiling and gasps at the way he can feel the individual pressure from each of Ilya’s remaining teeth.

He has a brief, shivery image of what they must look like, Shane limp and belly-up on the mattress, Ilya crouched over him like a predator over kill.

Ilya’s mouth makes another wet sound as he pulls away from Shane. Shane abruptly cranes his neck up from the duvet.

Gasps, when he sees the broken ring of tooth marks around his nipple.

When Shane drags his eyes away from the mark, he finds Ilya is looking at it too, with his pupils wide and his mouth wet and open. After a moment, he looks up to meet Shane’s gaze.

“You want sex,” Ilya says.

“Jesus, *yes*,” Shane says. “Obviously.”

“You say, in kitchen—”

“I’ve changed my mind, Rozanov, for fuck’s sake.”

Ilya hums. He reaches out and drags a slow finger around the wet ring of tooth marks on Shane’s chest. Shane twitches upward into the touch. “I don’t know,” he says. “Sober Shane said no.”

“They’re painkillers, not fucking—” Shane can barely think, when Rozanov’s finger is moving so lightly over his skin. “LSD, or something.”

Rozanov stops moving his finger. He tilts his head. “LSD,” he repeats.

“I don’t want to talk about drugs,” Shane hisses. “I want you to suck my dick.”

Sometimes, when Rozanov smiles— like right then, looking down at Shane with his finger petting over the tooth marks in Shane’s chest— it’s like it goes wider than he means for it to, just for a moment, before he pulls it back in at the corners. “See,” he says. “He whines.”

Shane doesn’t have time to protest before Ilya gets his hand under Shane’s good shoulder, gently helps him shuffle further up the bed until his back is propped up against the pillows by the headboard. Then Ilya’s crawling back down the mattress so that he can duck under Shane’s legs.

Ilya hooks Shane's knees over his shoulders, rises up from between Shane's thighs to smile at him. "Hi," he says.

"Hi," Shane echoes, and tips his hips up, tries to get his dick closer to Ilya's mouth.

Ilya smiles and pulls back, just a little, to avoid it. "Greedy," he says.

"Please," Shane whispers.

"Whiny," Ilya says, like he's delighted to point it out.

Shane is getting more and more lightheaded. He feels like he's not quite tethered to the bed, like he might float away altogether if Ilya's not careful. He can't decide if he would rather have Ilya's mouth on his dick or Ilya's teeth in his skin.

Ilya wraps his hands under Shane's thighs as he studies his Shane's dick. It's fully hard, now, despite not yet having been touched.

Ilya looks satisfied to see it twitch under his gaze. "You look very nice," he says, not taking his eyes away. "I like it. You should go weeks without touching, more often."

"A week and a half," Shane groans.

Ilya smiles. He purses his lips for a moment, moves his cheeks a little. He opens his mouth wide to show Shane a mouthful of saliva.

He leans down, lets his open mouth hang over Shane's dick.

The spit hangs there from Ilya's bottom lip, suspended in the air for one long moment.

And the quivering edge of the drip reaches the head of Shane's dick.

Shane's hips try to twitch upward, but Ilya tightens his grips on Shane's thighs and doesn't let them. He just holds Shane there and watches his spit slide slowly down the side of Shane's dick.

"Rozanov," Shane gasps. His dick flexes into empty air.

Ilya ignores him. He's clamped his mouth shut. His cheek is moving again.

He parts his lips and lets another mouthful of spit fall.

Shane stares, open-mouthed, as his dick twitches up and into the dribble. It's close to unbearable, the warm slide of it, and the utter the lack of pressure. The lack of *bite*.

He can feel Ilya's spit starting to pool at the base of his dick. The light-headedness is getting worse.

Ilya leans in again. Shane's eyes stutter closed. He gets ready for the warm grip of Ilya's lips around his cock. He imagines the pressure so vividly he actually thinks, for a moment, it's

happening.

Instead, Shane finds himself with teeth snapped shut high up on his inner thigh.

Shane's eyes snap open.

It's the hardest bite yet, and it *hurts*, a deep hot ache that feels like it seeps all the way down to Shane's bones.

Shane has just sunk into the mattress with all his muscles loose and his mind empty except for the pain when Ilya relaxes his jaw, removes his teeth, and moves up to sink his soft mouth over Shane's dick.

It's so slick, the slide down, with all the saliva to ease the way.

Shane barely even gets any time to enjoy the heat and the pressure. He feels the roof of Ilya's mouth scrape over the head of his cock just once before his vision goes white and he gives it up, groaning, lost.

Ilya doesn't take him deep. He just wraps his lips over his teeth, presses them tight around Shane's pulsing dick, lets the head flex come onto his tongue.

Shane shudders. He gives one final buck upward into Ilya's grip, and collapses back against the duvet.

Ilya slowly pulls his mouth away. He's holding his lips pursed tightly together as he pushes Shane's legs further apart, rises with his gaze intent. He crawls upward over Shane's torso, gets his face close to Shane's, hovers his closed mouth over Shane's lips. He braces one hand on the pillow beside Shane's head.

His other hand rises up, taps Shane on the side of the jaw.

Shane shudders. He opens his mouth.

Ilya parts his lips.

The mouthful is thick, and still warm, when it drips down onto Shane's tongue.

Shane tries to moan. It comes out as more of a gurgle, with his mouth open like this.

Ilya collapses onto Shane, seemingly so he can stop bracing himself in order to free his hand to clamp onto the other side of Shane's face. He pushes his thumbs, hard, into the hinges on either side of Shane's jaw. He forces Shane's mouth open wider.

He leans in close and spits the rest onto Shane's tongue.

Ilya pulls back and studies Shane. He's still holding Shane's mouth open. His pupils are blown wide as he takes one hand away from Shane's jaw, reaches down. Shane feels the back of Ilya's knuckles bump against the bite on his thigh as Ilya grabs himself.

“Open,” Ilya grunts. His hand starts moving. His knuckles knock into Shane’s thigh. “Open, keep open. Don’t close.”

Shane’s jaw is starting to ache. His lips are trembling.

Ilya’s breath puffs out across Shane’s chin as he starts to pant. His hand is moving faster. His face is getting red. His eyes are pinned on Shane’s open mouth. He’s muttering to himself, like he’s forgotten he’s still saying it, “Open, open, don’t—” and his eyes are going thin and he’s not speaking English anymore, he’s grunting something in Russian, and he’s pressing himself into Shane, dipping down to lick into Shane’s mouth as his hips shudder into Shane’s body.

Shane closes his eyes and sucks on Ilya’s tongue. His good hand comes up, clutches at the small of Ilya’s back to pull him close.

Ilya’s tongue is still in his mouth when Shane finally swallows.

*

It’s Ilya who leads Shane into the bathroom, afterward. It’s Ilya who digs around in Shane’s cabinet until he finds the mouthwash, Ilya who retrieves Shane’s sling from where it’s been discarded on the pile of his clothes on the rack, Ilya who helps fit it back around Shane’s arm.

Shane is all but useless. He feels like there’s cotton wrapped around his mind. When he rises from spitting out the mouthwash into the sink, he catches his reflection in the mirror and notices his eyelids are hanging half-shut.

There’s a gap, then. Shane goes from studying himself in the mirror to staring up at his bedroom ceiling. He’s back on his bed. He’s in soft sweatpants, this time, with his sling-wrapped arm draped over his belly. He doesn’t remember returning to the bedroom, doesn’t remember getting dressed.

When he twists his head to look around for Ilya, it takes Shane a moment to find him, sitting upright against the pillows, wearing a pair of Shane’s sweatpants. He’s looking at his phone. He’s not touching Shane.

Shane shuffles closer, groaning a little as he jars his shoulder.

Ilya looks up. “Careful,” he says, lifting his arm so that Shane can curl in under it and lay his head in Ilya’s lap.

One of Ilya’s hands curls into Shane’s hair. The other extends in front of him, holds the phone in front of his face.

Shane squints against the glare. “What?” he mumbles.

Ilya presses the play button in the center of the screen.

The Ottawa rink pops up. The score in the top corner of the broadcast says 1-1. The home team has just lost the puck in their own zone, and a Bears defender has it. Shane sees

Rozanov at the blue line, ready to be sprung on a breakaway.

Shane says, "You're joking."

"Hockey is serious, Hollander," chides Ilya. "Not joke." He lifts his hand out of Shane's hair to point at the left side of the screen, as if Shane had somehow missed No. 81.

The defenseman's pass hits Rozanov's stick. Rozanov bursts into the zone. The Ottawa defender starts out a step behind him and never has a chance to catch up.

Rozanov goes to swing wide left around the goalie, makes the goalie bite hard into a split. That's when Rozanov lets the puck go with a soft little poke, right between the goalie's spreading pads.

Shane looks away as Rozanov jumps into his teammate's arms to celebrate. "Ottawa's defense is awful," he says. "They pinch way too aggressively."

Rozanov's hand curls around to the back of Shane's neck. He gives it an admonishing squeeze.

"And it was a good goal," Shane admits, pushing back into the pressure. "You've got soft hands. You're fast."

"You will be faster," Rozanov says, "when you are back."

Shane's glad Rozanov can't see his face, can't catch the tears prickling at the corners of his eyes before Shane shuts them. "Yeah," he says.

"You will," Rozanov says. "We will race, make sure."

"You'd better not let me win," Shane mumbles.

"I will not," Rozanov says. "Promise." And he gets his thumb right into the center of the bruise that must be blooming on Shane's nape.

*

It's some time later, when Shane opens his eyes and notices he's the only one in the bed.

When Shane twists his head to look around for Ilya, it takes a moment to find him. He's standing at the foot of the bed, silhouetted by the lamplight, twisting his watch on.

He's back in that tiger-printed button-down and jeans.

It's like the wrap around Shane's mind suddenly unravels. Shane sits upright, too quickly, rapidly enough to jar his shoulder. As he winces, he looks toward the curtains drawn over the window and sees it's still dark outside.

"Whoa," says Ilya, looking up from his watch. "Careful."

"You're going," Shane says.

Ilya tugs carefully at the cuff of his shirt sleeve, like it's taking serious concentration to pull it into place. He's frowning when he finally looks up to meet Shane's eyes. "Teammate texted. Ready to pick up."

"Here?"

"On next block. I will walk."

Shane's fingers curl around the edge of his sling. He gropes desperately for something to say that won't sound pathetic. He lands on, "Didn't they come to see girls? It's normal to stay the night with girls, right?"

Shane must have come short of the not-pathetic mark. The look Ilya gives him is just barely short of pitying. "Just hooking up," he says. "We are the single guys, on the team."

"Right," Shane says. "Just hooking up." He rises, goes to swing his legs out of bed.

"You should sleep," Ilya says, frowning as he watches Shane.

Shane's shoulder is already starting to ache. It must be at least another few hours until he's allowed to take his next dose. There's very little chance he's getting any more sleep, tonight, now that the brain fog's cleared.

Shane doesn't say any of that to Ilya. It's probably a lot more complaining than the other Bears guys do with their hookups. He just rises his feet to the carpet and says, "I'll walk you out."

The muted television is still playing highlights into the silent living room. Rozanov pauses on his way through, looks down at the broken remote still on the floor.

"Accidentally dropped it," Shane mutters.

Rozanov hesitates for just a beat too long before he says, "Okay." He steps over the broken shards of plastic on his way into the front hall.

Shane leans his good shoulder against the wall, crosses his good arm over the sling as he watches Rozanov pat himself down for his wallet and his phone and his keys. Then Rozanov straightens up, nods at Shane. "Goodbye," he says.

"Goodbye," Shane says.

He hadn't been sure, until Rozanov leaned in, that he would be getting a kiss. He can't help the way his eyes flutter when he feels Rozanov's warm mouth against his.

It's soft, almost chaste. Rozanov pulls away for a moment before leaning back in to close teeth gently over Shane's lower lip.

Shane's eyes creep all the way shut. He lets Rozanov hold him there like that for a long moment, until Rozanov loosens the grip of his teeth, bussing a closed-mouth kiss over Shane's chin, and pulls back.

Rozanov is still looking at Shane's mouth when he says, again, "Goodbye." And then Rozanov turning around, pulling the latch, opening Shane's door. He doesn't look back over his shoulder before shutting it gently behind him.

Shane reaches up one hand, touches his lower lip. He reaches out and flips the latch back over the door.

*

Shane is back on the couch, staring dead-eyed at a screen that he's switched to baseball replays but somehow isn't finding any less exhausting, when his phone buzzes against the coffee table.

He leans forward, reaches out his good arm to pick it up. There's a text from Lily on the screen. All it says is, *My tooth!!!!*

Shane stares at the message without understanding for a moment. His eyes widen. He hefts himself up from the couch and pads back down to the hall to the bathroom.

When he flicks the light on, he sees the folded lump of paper beside the right-side sink, right where Rozanov had placed it so carefully before stepping into the shower.

Shane laughs out loud. He claps a hand over his mouth to stifle it, as if there's anyone else there to watch him make a fool of himself. He thinks about how he can't remember how long it's been since he last laughed as he lifts up the phone. *Are you coming back to get it?*

I am in Ottawa!!!

Do you have extras?

No!!!!

Shane catches his reflection in the mirror, notices how wide his grin has gotten. Makes a face at himself, flicks the light off, and wanders back down the hall in the dark, texting one-handed as he goes. *You're going to scare off all the girls in the clubs.*

The screen lights up with an incoming call from Lily.

Shane bites his lip, hits accept, presses the phone to his ear.

Ilya says, his voice quiet, "This was your plan, yes? Whole time?"

Shane grins. He reaches over to switch off the lamp in the living room. "What, to steal your tooth?"

"Yes," Ilya says. "And scare away girls in clubs."

Shane pins the phone between his good shoulder and cheek so that he can bend down, pick up the broken remote, and depress the power button. Nothing happens. He places it down on the coffee table, reaches around behind the television to grope for the switch. “You caught me,” he says. “So, you made it back?”

The television fuzzes to black, leaving Shane standing in total darkness. He blinks a little, forcing his eyes to adjust, before padding back into his bedroom.

Ilya is saying in his ear, “Yes. In hotel, now, in Ottawa. Four hours until alarm.”

“Maybe you should have gone to bed earlier,” Shane suggests, leaning over one bedside table to flick one lamp off, then rounding the mattress to get to the other.

Something about the echo of Ilya’s voice makes Shane think he’s calling from a bathroom. He wonders if Ilya’s in a shared hotel room, if there’s a teammate on the other side of the wall, if maybe that’s he’s keeping his voice so low.

Ilya is still murmuring when he tells Shane, “Thank you for advice.”

“You’re welcome,” says Shane. He climbs awkwardly into bed, holding himself stiffly to keep his bad shoulder off the mattress while his other hand rises up to clamp the phone to the side of his face. “Sleep is important.”

“I think you are happy you stole tooth,” Ilya says.

Shane wedges the phone back between his shoulder and cheek so he can reach down to grope for the duvet, pull it clumsily up over his chest and shoulders. “Yeah?” he says, settling back into the pillow. “Why’s that?”

The phone tips away from Shane’s cheek, falls onto the pillow beside him. He can still hear the rumble of Ilya’s voice. “I don’t know, Hollander,” Ilya is saying. “You are weird one, not me.”

“Yeah,” Shane says, letting his eyes slide closed. “You’re not weird at all.”

“Maybe you want tooth for necklace,” Ilya says.

“That would be a freaky necklace,” Shane mumbles into the dark behind his eyelids.

“It is okay,” Ilya says. “You can sleep.”

“I’m not gonna sleep,” murmurs Shane. “I haven’t been able to sleep that much lately, not since...” It’s warm, beneath the duvet, in the quiet and the dark. The bite mark on the back of his neck is pulsing gently, as if Ilya’s teeth are still in it.

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