

Not Enough For You

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Not Enough For You

by [ompalompap](#)

Summary

“You fainted,” Ilya says. “You barely eat. And now you are-“ He gestures vaguely at the mirror, at Shane, at everything. “Explain.”

Shane swallows. His heart is pounding again, but this time it’s not dizziness, it’s fear. Real, gut-deep fear.

“I didn’t mean for it to happen,” he says. “I just... I needed to get better.”

Ilya’s brow furrows. “You are the best center in the league.”

Shane laughs weakly. “Yeah. On the ice.”

Shane struggles with the hate he’s receiving online. He limits his eating, he overworks, trying to prove to the world, and himself, that he deserves Ilya.

Notes

OMG WE’RE GETTING A THRID HOLLANOV BOOK! I’m freaking out, I’m so happy!

I really hope ‘Unrivaled’ will explore Shane’s mental health, especially his relationship with food. Thought I’d write this sad fic exploring some of it!

<3

The comments find Shane anyway.

He tells himself they won't. He deletes the apps from his phone before road trips, keeps notifications off, asks the team PR guy to filter what gets forwarded to him. He's been dealing with media his whole career; he knows how to compartmentalize.

He's good at it. He's always been good at putting his head down and skating harder.

But the internet has a way of seeping through cracks you didn't know were there.

It's little things at first. A teammate scrolling through his phone on the bus, snorting softly before catching himself and saying, "Sorry, man," too quickly.

A reporter asking Ilya, smiling, charming, effortless, about fans instead of about the power play, about whether marriage has "changed his image."

A headline Shane doesn't click but still reads in his peripheral vision: **ROZANOV THE HEARTTHROB—WHAT'S THE APPEAL?**

He tells himself not to look. He looks anyway. They talk about his face. His nose. His hairline, which he'd never thought about until now. They post side-by-side photos, Shane squinting in the sun, mouthguard half out, next to Ilya in a tailored suit, and circle him in red like it's a mistake someone forgot to erase.

He looks like that?

Let's be honest, Ilya could do so much better.

Rozanov's always been a ladies' man.

This won't last.

That one sticks the worst, like a hook under his ribs.

Ilya is beautiful in a way that feels unfair. He always has been. Shane has loved that about him for years, loved watching heads turn, loved the private pride of knowing that Ilya chose him anyway. But pride is fragile when it's being chipped at from a thousand anonymous angles.

Shane scrolls until his eyes burn, until the words start blurring together, until his chest feels tight in a way that has nothing to do with conditioning.

He locks his phone and sets it face-down.

At the rink, he keeps it together. He always does. He tapes his stick, goes through his stretches, listens to Ilya chirp someone across the room in Russian, loud and theatrical.

There's laughter. There's normalcy. Shane smiles when he's supposed to. He feels like he's performing himself.

The game is loud, electric. Their names are announced together now, and the cheer still swells in a way that makes Shane's throat close if he thinks about it too long. Most nights, it's enough. Most nights, he can hold onto that sound like a life raft.

Tonight, it cracks.

They're lining up for a faceoff in the second period when it happens. There's a lull, just a breath between noise, and a voice slices through it, sharp and clear from somewhere behind the glass.

"Hey Hollander! Enjoy it while it lasts, Rozanov will get bored of you soon enough!"

The words hit with surgical precision.

There's laughter, scattered and ugly. Booing, too louder, thank God, but Shane barely hears it. His ears ring. His hands feel too big inside his gloves, clumsy and disconnected. For a split second, he forgets how to breathe.

He doesn't look at Ilya. He can't. He stares straight ahead, jaw locked, eyes fixed on a spot on the boards where the paint is chipped.

He counts his breaths like he's back in juniors, trying not to throw up before a big game.

The puck drops. Shane plays. Of course he does. After, he tells himself it didn't matter. He tells himself the cheers outweighed it, that security probably escorted the guy out, that he's heard worse things yelled about his skating, his contracts, his stick choices. He tells himself this is just noise.

But later, in the quiet of their hotel room, the words echo louder.

Dinner arrives, room service, something Ilya ordered without asking, because he knows Shane always forgets to eat on game nights.

The smell makes Shane's stomach twist. He picks at it instead, pushes food around his plate, tells himself he'll eat later. He tells himself he's just not hungry.

In the mirror, under the too-bright bathroom lights, he turns sideways. Sucks in his stomach without meaning to. He's not fat, he has got abs for God's sake.

Still, his mind races. He wonders, absurdly, if this is what they mean. If there's something obvious he's been missing all along.

The next day, he skips breakfast. Then lunch. He tells himself it's about speed, about feeling lighter on the ice. He's always been disciplined; this isn't new. This is just... focus. Control.

But when he catches Ilya watching him with a faint frown as Shane waves off the pre-practice snacks, something sharp twists in his chest. Guilt, maybe. Or fear. Or both.

He scrolls again that night, even though he promised himself he wouldn't. The comments are still there, multiplying like they feed on attention.

He's punching way above his weight.

Give it a season.

Rozanov's not going to stay tied down to that.

He's not even attractive.

Disgusting.

Shane sets his phone down with shaking hands and presses his palms flat against the bed, breathing hard. His body feels wrong, too heavy and too hollow all at once. He feels sixteen again, awkward and unsure, except now the whole world seems to have an opinion on whether he's worth loving.

Shane doesn't hear Ilya come out of the bathroom at first. He's too focused on the sound of his own breathing, on the way his chest refuses to settle, like his lungs missed a memo about being safe.

The mattress dips beside him.

"There you are," Ilya says softly, voice still warm from the shower, from normalcy. He smells like soap and clean cotton and something familiar enough that it almost hurts. "You weren't at dinner tonight."

Shane drags a hand over his face and forces a shrug. "Just tired."

It sounds flimsy the second it leaves his mouth.

Ilya doesn't call him on it right away. He never does. He lies back instead, propped on one elbow, studying Shane with that quiet, assessing look he gets when he's on the ice reading a play before it develops.

Shane keeps his eyes fixed on the headboard, like if he doesn't meet Ilya's gaze, none of this can be real.

"You barely ate today," Ilya says eventually, careful, casual. "And you didn't chirp back at me once today. I am wounded."

Shane lets out a breath that might pass for a laugh if someone's not listening too closely. "Guess miracles do happen."

Ilya smiles, but it doesn't quite reach his eyes. He shifts closer, thigh warm and solid against Shane's.

The contact makes something in Shane's chest tighten, an instinctive flinch he hates himself for.

“You okay?” Ilya asks. There it is. Gentle. Open. Dangerous.

Shane swallows. His phone is still on the bed near his hand, screen dark but heavy, like it’s humming with all the things he hasn’t said. He reaches for it, then stops, fingers curling into the sheets instead.

“Yeah,” he says too quickly. “I’m fine.”

Ilya hums, unconvinced. He reaches out, thumb brushing over Shane’s knuckles, slow and grounding. “You don’t feel fine.”

Shane pulls his hand back before he can stop himself. The movement is small, but it lands between them like a dropped glass.

“I said I’m okay,” he snaps, sharper than he means to. Immediately regrets it. His shoulders tense, bracing for something, Ilya’s hurt, maybe, or confusion, but Ilya just goes still.

For a moment, neither of them speaks.

Ilya lies back fully this time, staring up at the ceiling, hands folded loosely over his stomach. “Okay,” he says quietly. “I hear you.”

The words aren’t angry. That somehow makes it worse. Shane turns onto his side, facing away, curling in on himself without meaning to. He presses his knees up, trying to take up less space.

His mind keeps replaying the same images, comments stacked on comments, that voice from the stands, the way the words get bored of you had sounded so certain.

Behind him, Ilya shifts closer, careful not to crowd him. He doesn’t touch, not yet. Just presence. Heat. Breathing in sync, eventually.

“I know that...” Ilya says after a while, voice low in the dark, “people have been very loud lately.”

Shane’s jaw tightens. He stares at the wall, at the faint reflection of city lights bleeding through the curtains. “They always are.”

“Now more than ever,” Ilya hums, pushing on. “Are you okay?”

Silence stretches. Shane’s throat burns. He tells himself not to say anything else. He tells himself to let it pass. He’s good at that. He’s built a career on it.

But his body betrays him. His breathing goes uneven again, shallow and quick, and he hates that Ilya can hear it.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” Shane says, quieter now. “Not tonight.”

Ilya exhales slowly, like he’s filing that away rather than pushing against it. “Okay,” he says again. “We don’t have to.”

A pause.

“But I’m here,” Ilya adds, softer. “I’m always here, sweetheart.”

Shane closes his eyes, pressing his forehead into the pillow. His chest aches with everything he’s holding back, with the fear that if he opens his mouth, all of it will spill out, messy and unflattering and impossible to put back.

The practice starts like any other. Shane feels off the moment he steps onto the ice, lightheaded, edges a little too sharp under his skates, but he tells himself it’s just nerves, just a bad night of sleep.

He’s had worse days. He always pushes through worse days.

Halfway through drills, the world tilts.

It’s subtle at first, like someone has nudged the horizon. The boards blur. The noise dulls, stretching and warping.

Shane tries to shake it off, digs his toe pick in to stop, but his legs don’t listen. There’s a sudden, sickening weightlessness, like missing a step on a staircase.

“Shane?”

That’s Ilya’s voice. Alarmed. Close. Then nothing. When he comes to, he’s on his back, staring up at the arena lights. They’re too bright, halos bleeding into one another.

Someone’s calling his name. A hand is gripping his shoulder, firm and unmistakably Ilya’s.

“What happened?” Shane croaks.

Relief floods Ilya’s face so fast it’s almost painful to see.

“You scared the shit out of me,” he says, voice rough, accent thicker than usual. “You just-went down.”

Shane blinks, embarrassed heat creeping up his neck. “I’m fine.”

Ilya’s expression hardens instantly. “No,” he says. “You are not.”

They pull him off the ice anyway. The trainer asks questions. Shane answers them automatically, insists he just needs fluids, insists he can skate tomorrow.

Ilya doesn’t say much, but he doesn’t take his hands off Shane the entire time, hand pressed against Shane’s back like he’s anchoring him to the planet.

They don't go back to the rink that day.

Ilya drives them home in silence, knuckles white on the steering wheel. Shane watches the city slide by, guilt churning low in his stomach.

He knows this look. He's seen it after bad hits, bad calls, bad nights where Ilya couldn't protect him on the ice.

This is worse.

At the house, Shane heads straight for the bathroom under the pretense of showering. He strips, stands in front of the mirror instead.

The overhead light is unforgiving. He turns sideways again. Pinches at skin he's never thought twice about before. His reflection looks small, pale, wrong.

He doesn't hear Ilya until he's already there.

"What are you doing?"

Shane flinches. His hands drop instantly, like he's been caught stealing.

"Nothing," he says, too fast, reaching for a towel. "Just- checking something."

Ilya closes the door behind him. Quietly. Deliberately. He doesn't raise his voice, doesn't accuse, but his eyes are sharp with worry now, dark and searching.

"You fainted," Ilya says. "You barely eat. And now you are-" He gestures vaguely at the mirror, at Shane, at everything. "Explain."

Shane swallows. His heart is pounding again, but this time it's not dizziness, it's fear. Real, gut-deep fear.

"I didn't mean for it to happen," he says. "I just... I needed to get better."

Ilya's brow furrows. "You are the best center in the league."

Shane laughs weakly. "Yeah. On the ice."

The words hang between them, heavy.

"I see the comments," Shane admits finally, staring at the sink instead of at Ilya. "I try not to, but they're everywhere. People keep saying you'll leave. That you could have anyone. That I'm-" His voice breaks despite his best effort. "That I don't make sense."

Ilya steps closer. Shane can feel him now, warm and solid at his back, but he still can't turn around.

"I just don't want to be the reason you regret any of this," Shane continues, rushing now, like if he stops he won't be able to start again. "I don't want people to look at you and think you

settled for less. I don't want you to wake up one day and realize they were right."

He finally looks up, catches his own eyes in the mirror, red-rimmed, terrified.

"I don't think I deserve you," he says.

Ilya's reaction is immediate.

He takes Shane's face in both hands and turns him gently but firmly away from the mirror. "Fuck Shane. Do not say that," he says, voice low and shaking with something fierce. "Do not ever say that."

Shane's breath stutters. "Ilya--"

"I chose you," Ilya says. "Every day. When it was hard. When it was dangerous. When it would have been easier to walk away. I chose you when no one knew, and I choose you now when everyone does." He presses his forehead to Shane's. "You do not get to decide you are unworthy of my love. That is my decision. And I am very confident in it."

Tears spill before Shane can stop them. Silent, humiliating, unstoppable. He grips Ilya's shirt like it's the only thing keeping him upright.

"Im sorry, I- I know. I'm just scared," Shane whispers.

"I know," Ilya says, softer now, one hand sliding up to cradle the back of Shane's head. "But starving yourself is not protection. It is hurting someone I love. I hate seeing you like this."

Shane nods shakily, ashamed. Ilya kisses Shane's temple, then his cheek, then the corner of his mouth, soft, grounding touches.

"Come," he says gently. "Sit. Let me take care of you for a minute."

"I'm not hungry," Shane whispers, voice small and wrecked.

"I know," Ilya says, brushing his thumb under Shane's eye. "You still need to eat."

In the kitchen, everything is quiet and steady. Ilya moves with care, like he's afraid of startling Shane back into pieces.

The food is simple and warm, set down in front of him without ceremony. Ilya sits close, knees touching, anchoring him there.

"Together," he says.

Shane hesitates, then takes a bite. His hands tremble, but the food settles something deep in his chest. He takes another. Then another. The tightness eases, just a little.

Ilya eats too, matching him, never rushing, never looking away.

“They don’t know what we have, they don’t understand,” Ilya says quietly between bites.

“You are my everything Shane, my love, my life. That will never, ever change.”

Shane swallows hard. He nods, blinking back fresh tears, and keeps eating, this time not to be better, not to be smaller, but because the man across from him loves him, and because, finally, that feels like enough.

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