Scars and all

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Scars and all

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Summary

Early in the morning, Shane discovers a part of Ilya he never wanted to imagine. They work through it together <3

Notes

TW: references to past self-harm/scars & suicide; not graphic just btw!

Sorry this is emo as hell hope someone enjoys it!

Chapter 1: Ilya

Over the course of his life, people often asked Ilya what mattered most to him.

“Ilya Rozanov, what is your priority heading into a new season, as you continue a career that has already been so successful?”

Ilya didn’t know the word priority at first, but upon some research, he found that it meant they wanted to know what he cared about. For many years, the answer had been easy.

“Hockey.”

Since he was a boy, little mattered to him except hockey. His mother mattered, more than anything, but she died and left him with images that would never leave him. Her body, limp in bed. Her eyes, staring back at him. After his mother, his list of things that mattered shortened to two: hockey and sex.

Sex was something that let him forget. He didn’t have to think about how terrible he felt when someone was inside of him, bringing out feelings he was usually never capable of. The sensation of being wanted, and the physical proof in front of him gave Ilya a high that couldn’t be found elsewhere.

Of course he liked things. He liked cigarettes and Svetlana and how the audience roared when he scored the winning goal. But if someone asked Ilya what got him out of bed in the morning, the answer was pretty limited.

Ilya was proud to say his list had changed in recent years. It was now three items long: Hockey, sex, and Shane Hollander.

What had started as casual hookups between Shane and Ilya had morphed into the single most important thing to Ilya. When he opened his eyes in the morning he immediately searched for the deep brown ones that usually greeted him, crinkled from the soft smile Shane had. Days where Ilya woke up alone were, without fail, the hardest. He had a hard time finding a reason to get out of bed when he didn’t have something pushing him to. No hockey or Shane meant there was nothing that needed him. So why waste what little energy he had?

But Ilya, having been official with Shane for over three years now, was content to keep getting his happiness from his partner. He didn’t like to think of who he was before, and he definitely didn’t want Shane to know that version of him. Secrets were hard, but what Shane didn’t know couldn’t hurt him. Right?

Chapter 2: Shane

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

One of Shane's favorite versions of Ilya was early in the morning. Ilya had a habit of searching for Shane immediately upon waking up, and Shane was always quick to reassure him of his presence. Once Ilya realized his partner was there, his whole face and body changed. His shoulders relaxed, his eyes got a sparkle reserved just for him, and he immediately sought contact from Shane.

This morning in particular, Ilya was being extra adoring. He was peppering kisses all along Shane's body, worshipping him with his mouth. He wasn't crazed or frantic, instead taking his time. Shane felt like he had been laying there for hours, when in reality it had only been around 30 minutes since they had woken up. Ilya wasn't letting any part of Shane go unnoticed. He had started low, and had slowly worked his way up to his midriff and torso. There were a few hockey scars along Shane's body, specifically near his stomach and collarbones, and Ilya was lingering on these spots the longest.

He didn't say it, but Shane knew Ilya was trying to instill that every part of him was perfect. Ilya knew Shane was insecure, it wasn't a well-hidden secret, but Shane still struggled to talk about it. Ilya knew Shane didn't want to address it in so many words, so he did what he knew how to do. He showed his affection physically.

His lips seemed to speak the words Shane needed to hear without uttering a sound. Every part of you is beautiful. Every part of you deserves my love.

As Ilya traced his lips along an extra sensitive spot by Shane's collarbone, Shane had an urge. It took him by surprise and he couldn't believe he had never thought of it before.

"I need to do this to you. I need to do it now."

Shane's words broke the lull that had fallen between them, and Ilya cast a bemused glance at Shane from the seemingly random declaration.

"But I am having so much fun with you. Why stop what is so good?"

As Ilya said this, he dragged his tongue along Shane's sternum, causing Shane to hum in pleasure. He knew Ilya was trying to distract him, and Ilya could tell it was working.

"I want to explore you too. I want to worship you like you worship me. моя красивая Ilya."

Shane knew Russian was the way to get Ilya to relent, and he was right. At the sound of the Russian words rolling off his tongue, Ilya gave a mock glare to Shane but stopped the movements of his tongue.

Shane almost wanted to protest, missing the sensation at once, but then he remembered his original mission: to show Ilya the love Shane suspected he craved on an innate level. He had been neglected for a better part of his life and although Ilya wouldn't admit it, he craved warmth and comfort just as much as he craved sex.

Shane started with Ilya's face, causing the other man to snort.

"Shane, I think this part of my body knows your mouth pretty well. The only other part of me you know better is my dick. But that is not what you want to explore, because you want to torture me."

Ilya fake glared at Shane, sticking his bottom lip out to pout—which Shane promptly kissed. Ilya was right though, Shane knew his face so well he could probably draw it with his eyes closed. The curve of his brow, the fullness of his lips.

Shane shook his head. Ilya had managed to distract him. Again. More determined than before, Shane planted gentle kisses on Ilya's shoulders and down his arms. He looked up at Ilya as he traced his tattoo with his mouth, and the look he was greeted with made this little exercise worth it. Ilya was looking down at him with such fondness, such gentle care, that Shane could feel his heart melting.

"What are you looking at? Keep going, you are almost to my favorite part."

Ilya waggled his eyebrows and gestured downward, to which Shane rolled his eyes. He knew it was a joke between them that only held a small portion of their whole truth.

Shane decided he was sick of being played with by Ilya, and wanted to play a little prank of his own. Without any warning, he moved himself down to Ilya's thighs. Ilya lit up in excitement in more ways than one.

"I knew you couldn't resist me. I am too hard to resist."

Shane didn't disagree, but he thought the satisfaction of playing with Ilya would be a lot more fun than what they usually did at least, right now.

Shane began to kiss the top of Ilya's thigh, gentle and slow. He slowly opened Ilya's legs to put his lips to the inside of Ilya's thigh, which was already eliciting a groan from the man. Shane worked his way inwards, when he felt something that made him pause. He opened his eyes, and was horrified at what he saw.
He had been by this part of Ilya so many times, but usually he was so caught up in the other part, that he had never bothered to really look at the inside of Ilya's thigh. Looking closer, he felt a pit begin to form in his stomach.

Noticing the pause, Ilya looked down at Shane with confusion.

"What is it? Why did you stop?"

Shane felt his heart shatter when he finally put the pieces together of what he was seeing. Rows of scars, perfectly symmetrical, lined the inside of Ilya's thigh. Some were deep and rugged, others were thin and faint. It seemed like most had been gone over several times, maybe over many years.

Shane pulled his head back, and it was then, when Ilya saw the look in his eyes, that Ilya realized what exactly Shane had seen. He jerked back fully, flinching away from Shane.

"It is nothing, Shane. Maybe we should get up."

Ilya tried to pull away and get out of bed, but Shane, flooded with emotion, grabbed his shoulders and pushed him down. But Shane was stubborn and a little naive. He hoped that maybe it was an accident. In his heart though, he knew.

"Ilya, did you do this to yourself?"

Ilya looked like he wanted to be anywhere but there, but nodded imperceptibly. He was done lying to Shane it seemed. Shane tried to be angry that Ilya hadn't told him, but he mostly felt confused and heartbroken he hadn't known.

"I love you so much, and I am not judging you. But I want to understand when you did this, and why you did this."

Shane tried to keep the emotion out of his voice, trying not to scare Ilya off, but he couldn't stop his voice from cracking on the why. His beautiful, perfect boyfriend had done this to himself. And he needed to understand.

"It was a long time ago. Before us. Nothing for you to worry about."

Ilya tried to be indifferent, but Shane could tell he was shaken from being exposed in such a vulnerable way. Ilya didn't like to talk about his past, and Shane was asking him to uncover a part so raw that even almost 10 years into knowing each other, Ilya had never told Shane about this.

They were both sitting on the bed now, Ilya avoiding eye contact and looking around the room like he might be able to make a run for it. Shane scooted closer to the man, and joined their hands together. He began to rub soothing circles near Ilya's thumb, hoping to offer a semblance of comfort.

"Just tell me what you're thinking. Please."

Ilya gripped Shane's hands tightly, like he was hanging on for dear life. His face had lost some color ever since Shane's discovery and his eyes were red-rimmed. He had a scared quality about them, almost like a cornered animal. He spoke robotically.

“It was in Russia. Growing up it was hard to be with my family, but my mom made it okay. When she died, I felt like all the sad she had got passed on to me. And I didn’t have anywhere to put it all.”

Shane nodded reassuringly, knowing how Ilya’s mom’s depression had affected him. However, he never could have imagined the extent of it, and what it would drive Ilya to do.

“She had been hurting herself for years, but chose the pills as the way to go. When I asked her about the scars, she said it was just something to feel better. And after she was gone, I wanted to feel close to her again. And I wanted to feel better. So I did it too. It was stupid and I’m not proud of it.”

Shane felt torn up hearing Ilya talk about himself like that, but knew now wasn’t the time to change the other man’s mind.

“How old were you? For how long?”

Shane didn’t want to ask but he had to know. Was Ilya hurting himself when he had met Shane for the first time? Shane felt sick at the thought.

“The first time was right after my mother died. It wasn’t bad at first, but over time I wanted to do it more and more. Whenever I missed her, I did it. I wanted to feel the inside hurt on the outside. I couldn’t see the sad, so I wanted to make it real. I know it is dumb, but it helped for a time. I didn’t know it was bad until my teammate told me he hurt himself, and was going to therapy to fix it.”

Shane nodded encouragingly, prompting Ilya to continue.

“It was for many years. I didn’t know how to stop so the answer to your question is yes, when we met I was still hurting myself. It is not your fault you did not know, until now no one has known.”

Shane tried to feel grateful that Ilya was opening up to him now, but he was just so sad that Ilya had felt like that for so long.

He didn’t even realize he had started to cry until he felt Ilya wipe a tear away with his thumb.

“Do not cry моя любовь. It was a long time ago, and I do not do it anymore.”

Shane couldn’t help but smile slightly as Ilya comforted him. Even as Shane tried to be there for Ilya, he couldn’t help but be coddled by his boyfriend.

“You aren’t supposed to be comforting me. I just want to help you.”

“And you do help me. Everyday you wake up next to me helps me. When you smile and laugh and show me how much you love me. It helps. I cannot say I am always happy, but you make me happy.”

Shane felt his heart warming and could see Ilya lowering his walls, but was still troubled by this revelation—and that Ilya didn’t think it was important enough to tell him.

“Why didn’t you tell me? You knew I would not judge you. I love you more than anything, and I want to know every part of you. Good or bad.”

Despite his sincerity, Ilya couldn’t help but retort back,

“I do not have any bad parts. You know this. I am Ilya Rozanav, and all my parts are good.”

He winked at Shane as the other man blushed furiously. Shane would not let himself be deterred so he raised a questioning eyebrow at Ilya until he relented.

“I was ashamed. I did not like the idea of being weak and doing something that could get in the way of my skating. But I could not stop for a long time, and didn’t want you to feel heavy because of it. I stopped a few years after we met when I realized hurting myself was only making me feel worse. I knew I was fucked up, I didn’t need any more proof.”

Shane had grabbed Ilya’s hands again and tugged him closer so Ilya was basically sitting on his lap. Even though Ilya was tall and broad, he had managed to fold himself in a way that allowed him to nestle to his boyfriend’s chest.

“Ilya, you have nothing to be ashamed of. I am so sorry you ever felt like you couldn’t talk to me, but I am so glad you did. I know that must’ve been really scary and I am so proud of you. I love you, and this does not change that. It must have been so lonely, being in pain without anyone to help you, so I am sorry for that too. You are not alone in this anymore, and I want to be here on the best and worst days.”

Ilya had squeezed his eyes shut as a few tears slipped down his cheeks at Shane’s confession. Shane just tugged Ilya impossibly closer, and the two men embraced as Ilya buried his head in the crook of his neck and cried silently.

They stayed like this for a few minutes until Ilya pulled away and scrubbed at his eyes, eager to erase the evidence. Shane gently brushed his curls from his forehead and held Ilya’s cheeks in his hands.

“If you ever feel like doing that again, I want you to tell me. I don’t care what time it is, where we are in the world, and what is going on, I want you to call me or text me or find me. You are not alone anymore, and I love you too much to not be there for you. And if you do it again, Ilya, it's okay. I don’t want that, but I would rather you tell me than keep it from me. I won’t be mad. Just be honest with me, please?”

Ilya nodded vigorously and put his head back into Shane’s neck, seeking physical contact now more than ever. Shane had one more request before he moved on from this news.

“Can I ask you something? And it’s okay to say no.”

Ilya nodded in response to Shane’s question and looked at him with hesitance in his eyes. Nevertheless, Shane pushed forward and continued.

“Can I see them again? Not to judge, I just want to see how beautiful you are. All of you.”

Shane wanted Ilya to know that no matter the scars on his body that he was perfect to Shane, and nothing could change that.

“I don’t know why you want to see, but okay. I will open my legs for you, Hollander.”

Ilya seemed almost back to his former self, but his hands still shook slightly as he lowered himself back and propped up. Shane resumed the position he was in before, but this time he saw the scars glaring back at him. He hated them, because they represented a time in Ilya’s life when the darkness seemed safer than the light. He also loved them because they proved that despite every challenge and difficulty, Ilya had pushed on and chosen to continue living, even when it felt impossible.

Shane lowered his head again, and this time, placed soft kisses on the inside of Ilya’s thighs, over his scars.

“What are you doing? I am not pretty down there. You don’t have to.”

Shane simply looked up and shushed Ilya. He continued to press his love into the man who had been through so much and still came out on the other side.

“I want to. Every part of you is beautiful and perfect. I want to worship it all. Thank you for showing me you.”

Shane put his lips to the deeper scars a few more times, making sure to take his time and whisper soft comforts to Ilya, especially because of the vulnerable position he was in. Eventually, Shane pulled back and reached up to give Ilya a kiss on the lips.

“Thank you for letting me do that. There is not one part of your body I do not love, scars and all.”

Ilya responded by pulling Shane closer and deepening the kiss, until they were both laying back down, tangled up in each other.

“Thank you, Shane. You make me safe when no one else can. I am glad you know, because you can see that you have made me better. I might feel like that again, but I have you now. So thank you.”

Shane didn’t need Ilya’s thanks, but the praise rolling from his tongue filled Shane with happy butterflies, and brought the two boys even closer, until every part of them was intertwined.

Even though Ilya and Shane were both far from perfect, they loved each other endlessly. As they laid back down to rest together, Shane muttered a few words to his boyfriend as they drifted back into sleep.

“I love you, Ilya. Scars and all. Nothing can change that.”

And as Ilya went to sleep, he couldn’t help the soft smile that lit up his face as he imagined Shane repairing the wounds that had formed so deeply so many years ago.

Chapter End Notes

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