dust bunnies

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/79024196.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander & Hayden Pike, Shane Hollander & Jackie Pike, Ilya Rozanov & Svetlana Vetrova, David Hollander & Shane Hollander & Yuna Hollander
Characters:	Shane Hollander, Ilya Rozanov, David Hollander, Yuna Hollander, Hayden Pike, Jackie Pike, Svetlana Vetrova
Additional Tags:	Autistic Shane Hollander, Soft Dom Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander Walks Ilya Rozanov Like A Dog, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Love Confessions, Social Media, Rumors, Coming Out, Texting, Panic Attacks, Platonic Relationships, Possessive Behavior, Phone Sex, Dirty Talk, Spit Kink, Power Play, Oral Sex, Face-Fucking, gratuitous use of the word fuck, Experimental Style, POV Multiple, Autism, Rough Sex, Puppy Play
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-02-06 Words: 37,065 Chapters: 1/1

dust bunnies

by ghosttotheparty

Summary

> “I’m right here. And you are okay, and you are safe, and healthy, and you are at home, yes? It is quiet, and nobody is there, nobody is bothering you. And the world is full of stupid idiots, but you are not one of them. And I am here. When you need me, I am here.”
>
> ---
>
> or: The whole world thinks Shane is gay because of some stupid internet rumors, and he doesn't even have to confirm it. He's losing control of his entire life and he needs somewhere to put what little he does have.
>
> Ilya has open hands.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Shane leaves his phone in his bedroom.

It's in his backpack, shoved under some clothes, tucked away where he'd have to rummage to find it just to suppress the urge. He hasn't opened it since last night, since he got to his parents' house. He's gotten texts, he's been tweeted at and tagged in countless posts, and he can't fucking stand it anymore.

So he's on the sofa, tucked into his favorite corner and watching the Rangers and the Landslides, and really, it's a pitiful game. The last of the season for the Rangers and maybe their worst one yet. It's background noise right now.

His dad is watching the game too, muttering comments to Shane occasionally as though it matters, as though Shane is actually watching, as though either of them is actually interested.

And his mother.

She's pacing, walking around the living room behind the sofa so she's not in the way, where she tends to pace and lean and stress when they're watching Shane's team compete. She's got her phone out, and she's scrolling, shaking her head and muttering to herself.

"Shane, honey," she says finally, leaning against the back of the sofa to look down at Shane, who looks up at her tiredly. "Do you even know how this all started? Where did this come from?"

He looks back at the television. Someone's trying to argue with the ref. He can feel David looking at him too, quiet but curious.

"I, uhm." He has to pause, his voice too soft from disuse, clearing his throat and swallowing. "I went to a party with the guys after our last game, and… Some girl asked if I wanted to— to go upstairs with her," he says awkwardly. "And I said no."

"And, what, she just started walking around and telling people you're gay?" Yuna says, standing up straight and tossing a hand.

Shane nods slowly, exhaling.

"I guess."

"That's so…"

"Yeah."

"Okay," Yuna says with a sigh, looking back at her phone and shaking her head again. Shane closes his eyes, ignoring the tightness in his throat. "The league hasn't said anything about it, and there's nothing on the Voyagers' socials, it seems like it's just fan speculation right now. Well, there's a post or two by other players— not Voyagers— but that doesn't matter."

Shane nods absently, rubbing his cheek.

The guys have texted him. The groupchat's blown up, Shane's notifications flooded with questions of *Where did this even come from?* and laughing emojis because, yes, of course this is the funniest thing they've ever heard.

"People want you to make a statement," Yuna continues, back to pacing. "But that doesn't seem necessary, unless you want to— I can draft something for you to post on Twitter about the importance of allyship—"

Shane's head is shaking without his permission.

"— and how, as an ally, you do not feel insulted by these rumors but want to set the record straight, and there is a place for everybody on the ice—"

"It's true."

His mouth moves without his permission, and he kind of feels like he's dying. His chest is too tight, and he can't really see the television screen clearly, because his eyes have flooded with tears.

Yuna falls quiet, and David turns to look at Shane again.

He feels so small. He's got his knees drawn to his chest like he's trying to disappear, like he's trying to shrink so the sofa will draw him into it to join the loose change and lost pens and dust bunnies he belongs with. No such luck. He remains there, solid and infuriatingly corporeal under his parents' gazes.

"What's that, honey?" Yuna says, but it sounds like she heard him perfectly well. Her voice is soft, and in his peripheral vision, Shane sees her lower her phone, tucking it into her pocket.

"I'm…"

His throat closes. He exhales tightly, squeezing his eyes shut and letting his head fall to rest on his knees. The room falls silent— David mutes the television, but he hasn't turned it off. Shane can still see the vague glow of the screen in the dark room. He lets out a weak humming groan, absent and involuntary, and this hasn't happened in a while. He hasn't felt so fucking out of control in years— he's gotten so much better at maintaining his grip on reality, on his fucking life, and this…

His fingers are slipping.

He's rocking back and forth, but he barely notices it, and somewhere in the back of his mind he feels the sofa shift under Yuna's weight as she sits next to him, far enough away that she isn't touching him, which he appreciates. She knows him. He'd shove her off if she tried to touch him.

"I'm, uhm. I'm gay," he finally gets out, his voice squeaky and broken. "I didn't— I didn't tell her, I— I've never told anyone, but she just…"

"She made an assumption," Yuna says softly. "That wasn't fair of her."

Shane shakes his head, pressing the curve of his kneecap into his eye. He can't fucking breathe, but he can't bear to stand up, to open his posture to let air into his lungs.

"Shane, honey."

He shakes his head again, exhaling sharply. He can practically hear their eye contact over the top of his head, can practically feel that their eyes are wide and worried and shining, reflecting the stupid game on the TV.

"Hey," David says softly. His voice is like it always is, low and soft and gentle like everything is perfectly fine, like Shane is fine and nothing has changed. "You need to breathe, Shane."

"Can't."

"I know," David says. "Just try, son."

He tries. Tucks a hand between his knees and his chest to rub at it, scraping away the pressure that's keeping his lungs compacted. His parents are quiet, waiting patiently like they always used to when he got like this. He swears under his breath, burying his fingers in his hair, tugging sharply, and then he's hitting the heels of his hands against his head like he's trying to smack everything out of his skull.

"No— Shane, no— no hitting—"

He forces himself off the sofa, eyes cracking open just enough to see the living room a little. It's dim, lit up by the lamps on either side of the sofa, glowing warm and golden, and the television, glowing icy white. His entire body is trembling. He tries to shake the tremble away, throwing his hands in the air, flinging them, but it doesn't go away. His chest is too tight.

It's quiet except for his breathing— sharp and loud and rough in his dry throat, and some distant humming sound that he doesn't realize is him. He's rocking back and forth on the balls of his feet like he's going to take off running, his hands clenching into fists, nails digging into his palms so hard it hurts. He barely feels it.

This hasn't happened in a while. He doesn't really remember the last time, not clearly, but it was in his apartment in Montreal— he was alone, which made it better and even more unbearable simultaneously. Nobody saw it, but the loneliness was crushing.

He's crying, and the sting in his eyes, the hotcold tracks down his face, the tightness in his throat— none of it fucking helps. Crying is supposed to be a release, is supposed to lessen some of the weight, but it never seems to. He fucking hates crying.

"Sorry," he chokes, *whines,* his face scrunching up, fists clenching tight. "I'm—"

"You don't have to be sorry," David's voice says softly. "You're okay."

He wipes his cheeks, covers his face, and he tries to breathe, but it doesn't work. He presses the heels of his hands into his eyes, groaning before he mutters a soft, "Okay," under his

breath.

And then he says it again, and again, and again, and it's not even a word anymore, it doesn't *mean* anything, but he keeps saying it, and keeps saying it, and keeps saying it.

He's stepping back and forth the way he used to during presentations in school— he only realized he did it when a teacher told him to stop because it made her feel seasick.

He uncovers his face with a rough groan, and he can hear his mother exhale shakily behind him. His eyes crack open.

The screen is bright and it hurts a little, but he keeps looking. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he knows it's fucking stupid, that there's something fundamentally *wrong* with him, because his eyes follow the puck across the screen, and he watches, and keeps watching, and keeps watching, and his breathing slows.

His parents wait.

They always wait, and Shane is always grateful, even while he hates himself.

His breathing slows, and he blinks tears out of his eyes. A score by the Landslides by Bingham with an assist by Byrne. A close up on Scott Hunter shaking his head, looking at the ice like it's wronged him. Someone in the audience cheering and pointing into the camera while holding up the front of their shirt, adorned with the Landslides logo.

"Do you want an ice pack?" Yuna asks softly after a while. Shane blinks, exhaling shakily, letting his nails dig into his palms before he nods. "Okay, honey."

It only takes her a moment, but Shane is briefly alone with his father. He can feel him looking at him, watching him instead of the Landslides' celebrations, and Shane wants to peel his skin off. It feels like it's on backwards, like it's inside out, too tight and too loose, like it isn't his. He squeezes his eyes shut for a moment before he looks back at the television.

"Forehead?" Yuna asks when she returns. Shane nods again, turning toward her, and she's gentle with it, pressing the ice pack to his forehead like it's bruised, like Shane's skull might fracture under her touch. He exhales, soaking it in, the cold against his skin. "Shane, honey."

Shane shakes his head half-heartedly.

"Honey," she says again, voice soft. "Listen to me."

"Mom…"

"It's okay," she says, and her voice is suddenly broken, thin in her throat, and Shane's eyes tear open to look at her. Her eyes are glistening, reflecting gold and silver, and she looks devastated, *anguished*, like she's in physical pain, and Shane is *hurting* her. He shakes his head again, eyes burning so harshly it hurts, reaching for her. "It is, baby, it's okay."

"Mom—"

“Shane, listen to me,” she says firmly, and he closes his eyes again, nodding, listening. His face is hot even with the ice pack above his eyes, and he can’t stand this. “None of it matters right now.”

“Mom—”

“It *doesn’t,*” she says, her other hand coming to hold the side of his face. “None of it matters, okay? Not hockey, not the Voyagers, not Twitter, *none* of it, Shane.”

He’s a grown man. He knows he is. He owns his own home, and his own car, and he buys his own plane tickets when he has to, and he drinks alcohol— sometimes— and his best friend is married with four children. He’s an adult.

But his mother is cradling him, whispering to him, and everything in him aches, and he’s crying, and he’s little again.

His knees weaken, and Yuna wraps an arm around his waist, murmuring something that he doesn’t really hear as she guides him over to the sofa. The ice pack falls from his forehead for a moment before David is taking it from Yuna’s hand, moving closer to Shane to hold it to his head.

He opens his eyes, looking down at Yuna. She’s sitting seiza at his feet, looking up at him like he’s pitiful, like she’s pitiful too, and his chest tightens. He might have a heart attack— but that’s entirely unlikely, isn’t it? He’s perfectly healthy as far as he knows— aside from *this*— and he’s young. It’s not a heart attack. It’s just…

He hurts.

“Mama…”

David’s free hand runs over his back gently, and he exhales, nodding when he sees David in his periphery, tilting his head to look at his face.

“Shane,” Yuna says firmly, her voice thick, reaching up for his hands. He lets her take them, lets her rub at his palms like she’s trying to erase the crescent moons of his nail prints. “My baby.”

He ducks his head, presses more firmly against the ice pack. If it wasn’t wrapped in a towel, it would hurt.

“We love you,” Yuna says slowly, intently, like she worries Shane might miss it. “We love you, *so, so much*. You know that?”

He nods weakly, squeezing more tears out of his eyes, sniffling.

“Nothing will ever change that,” she continues, rubbing her thumbs over his palms. “Absolutely nothing *could* ever change that, Shane, you are…”

She stops, face tensing, jaw clenching as she swallows and blinks her eyes, looking back and forth between Shane’s like she’s trying to use telepathy.

“Shane,” David says softly. Yuna’s eyes look at him briefly before she looks back at Shane, and Shane nods, closing his eyes so he doesn’t have to see the tears fall from his mother’s eyes. “You are our pride and joy, you understand that? We are—“

His voice cuts off, and Shane’s never seen his father cry, and he doesn’t right now. He keeps his eyes shut tight, keeps his head ducked so the ice pack is firm against him, and he doesn’t look, doesn’t look, doesn’t look. But he hears it, hears his father’s voice go tight and weak, strained like he’s forcing it out.

“We are so fucking proud of you, Shane,” David says. Shane doesn’t even remember the last time he heard his father swear. “So, *so* fucking proud. For everything, Shane, I can’t even put it into words.”

“Baby, if you tell us right now you wanna quit hockey and— and take up… pottery,” Yuna says, squeezing Shane’s hands. “We’ll buy you a kiln, we’ll put it right here.”

Shane laughs inexplicably, shaking his head, because it’s ridiculous, and he hears Yuna laugh a little too, her hands squeezing again.

“We want you to be happy, Shane,” she says gently, thumbs running over Shane’s knuckles so lightly it’s like she thinks they’re bruised. “We want you to be happy, and we want you to be safe—“

“As safe as you can be while doing competitive hockey,” David interjects, and Shane lets out another wet laugh as Yuna says, “Well, yeah.”

They fall quiet. Shane sniffles. Lets go of Yuna's hand to wipe his face with the end of his sleeve. David rubs his back and presses the ice pack to his skin, sliding it to his cheeks and chin, and Shane lets him, tilting his head back and exhaling slowly.

“Good breath,” Yuna says softly, and Shane smiles weakly.

He takes another breath, forcing it to be slow and steady, nodding when David tentatively removes the ice pack from his face. Yuna squeezes his hands again when he sniffles, taking a hiccuping breath.

“I, uhm…” He pauses, his mouth twisting, eyes fluttering. “I don’t know what to do.”

“You don’t have to,” David says softly, his hands running firmly across the top of Shane’s back. It’s warm even through the fabric of Shane’s hoodie, and it feels steady, feels solid. Shane feels small again, like he’s seven years old, wobbling on his ice skates and watching his parents ahead of him, holding their hands out to him. Shane is David’s height now, but in his mind, he still has to look up to see his face. “You don’t have to figure anything out right now, Shane.”

“But I— I feel like I need to,” Shane says. His voice is rough. “I need…”

“Shane,” Yuna says, tugging his hands a little. “You don’t have to figure anything out right now. We’ll figure it out together later, okay?”

Together.

Shane's eyes sting, and he blinks them rapidly, lips pursing to stop the quiver.

"We'll do whatever you need," Yuna says, nodding. "But the season's over, and you don't have any planned appearances coming up, and you have time to decide, okay? You can think about it, we'll be right here."

"I'm sorry," he chokes weakly, the tears finally escaping again. They burn, and he hates it. Yuna is already protesting, shaking her head, and David's hand comes to a stop at the back of his neck, squeezing gently, firmly, but Shane closes his eyes again. "I'm sorry, I— I tried, I really tried to be normal, I'm sorry —"

"Shane, baby," Yuna interrupts as David is murmuring Shane's name with her, lifting onto her knees and lifting Shane's hands with her cradling them. "Stop, honey, you don't—" She stops. One of her hands reaches out for Shane's hair, running through it gently. "You don't have anything to apologize for, Shane, you have done *nothing* wrong."

He doesn't respond. He's crying, and he hates himself. He does.

He's thought it before, plenty of times, and he's felt it before, maybe perpetually throughout his life, but *this*. What the *fuck* is his problem? He's a grown fucking man, and he needs his mom to hold his hands and his dad to hold a fucking ice pack to his face to calm down. He needs to watch fucking hockey and clench his fists and hit his hands against his head or his legs or his chest until they leave bruises in their wake. He doesn't often go to parties because they make his head hurt and because he's always so exhausted the next day he can barely get out of bed even though he's never been hungover in his life— he doesn't drink enough for that, too scared of doing something stupid, too scared of vomiting.

He's fucking gay. He's tried not to be, he really has— he's tried kissing girls, tried dating them as a teenager, he's tried just ignoring it all, putting on the impression that hockey is his one true love, that he's too focussed on it to afford being distracted by something like romance or sex. But none of it has ever worked. He likes boys, likes *men*, like Ilya fucking Rozanov with his smooth accent and fluffy curls and sharp smile. He likes sex, likes *cock,* likes *getting fucked*, and he really was prepared to spend his life like this— pretending and hiding and lying and living a secret life under hotel bedsheets and pseudonymed texts. He was prepared to only let himself *be* behind closed doors, in the throes of passion and in the mouth of his lover, mid-orgasm.

And one stupid fucking rumor has thrown it all away, has him spiralling to the depths of *somewhere* in the space between his parents' bodies, and—

"I hate myself," he chokes weakly, his voice barely even audible to himself, and he's startled by Yuna's hands releasing his and reaching for his face, pulling so he looks at her, so their eyes meet. Hers are glassy, but narrowed under furrowed eyebrows, intent and serious.

"Don't you talk about my child like that," she says, voice shaking, "Don't you dare."

He chokes out an apology, but he doesn't know what the apology is for. If he regrets saying that, talking about her child, or if he's apologising for *this*.

He cries, and he cries, and Yuna hugs him, arms around his neck so his face can tuck under her jaw like he's small, like he's a baby. He can hear her crying over his own sobs, and he can feel David next to him, shaking as he rubs Shane's back again, and he thinks this might be hell. Hurting his parents.

But he also doesn't think he'd rather be anywhere else right now, and he doesn't want them to ever let go.

frankie!! #24 *@h0llanderluvrboi*
hey do we even fucking know where this rumor started or are we just running with something baseless and completely not any of our business
💬 **12** 🔄 **2.5K** ❤️**8K**

|

replying to @h0llanderluvrboi
sam 🍁 *@v0yag3r5*
the streets are saying he didn't hook up with some girl at a party so Obviously He Must Be Gay 😃
💬**2** 🔄 **1** ❤️**182**

|

replying to *@v0yag3r5*
frankie!! #24 *@h0llanderluvrboi*
i am going to commit homicide.
💬 🔄 ❤️**197**

Savannah M Leclerc ♡ *@savmarleclerc*

Hi Shane, I know you probably don't want to hear from me but I really wanted to reach out and apologize. I told some friends at the party that you declined my advances and a few of them started joking that you might be gay, and I should have shut that down immediately, and I am so, so, so sorry that I didn't, and it's spiralled into all of this.

I also just wanted to tell you that if you are gay, it's totally cool, and even if you aren't, I'm so down to help you out however you need, like if you want me to come forward that I was the one that hit on you and I can say that I was really drunk and that's why you rejected me, or I can say that you were just on your way out and you needed to catch your cab or something. Obviously you don't need to have had a reason to not have sex with someone, but it might help people online finally shut the hell up.

Again, I am so fucking sorry that this is happening to you. You don't deserve it at all, and I'm here for whatever you need.
Read

He doesn't answer any of the texts from the guys. He doesn't even open the group chat, or even the messages that Hayden has sent, or the ones that Jackie has sent, or the ones that Rozanov has sent.

But he scrolls through his notifications. It's a terrible idea, but it's quiet, and it's dark, and his parents are asleep, and his phone is right there.

Jackie 💜
Hi, sweetie, Hayden said he hasn't heard from you and I just wanted to check in. Ignore all the shit online. Hayd and I are here if you need anything or if you want to talk. Also we have squishy babies that provide substantial emotional support.

Hayd
Let me know if you need anything

Lily
are you okay?

Hayd
The guys are being stupid. I can have a talk with them if you want.

Hayd
Hey man you doing okay? Haven't heard from you since the party.

Lily
nevermind i look into it
is very stupid

Lily
your name is trending on twitter. did something happen?

His entire body hurts. He's laying down, pillow tucked under his chest, folded so he can rest his face on it as he scrolls through, scanning the messages from the guys. It makes his stomach twist.

How likely is it that it's true?

I mean if any of us were a fruit i think it would be Hollander

woooaaahhh

isn't that like super offensive?

idk, maybe we should ask Hollander?

lmaooo

Barbeau it looks like you're really trying to get Hollander's attention. hmm…

doubt Barbeau would be top of Hollanders list

You guys are fucking insufferable, they're just rumours on twitter. nobody should ever listen to anything people say on twitter.

i mean there is some basis for it, though, isn't there? i don't think i've ever seen Hollander with a chick.

what does it fucking matter?

Shane wants to say something, but he doesn't know what. His parents told him to take his time, to think it through, and he knows he should. There are consequences to everything. If he comes out, it could fuck his entire career up. It could ruin his life. If he denies it, he's a liar, If he pretends to have a girlfriend, tells people that he's straight, that he's an *ally,* he would just be pushing himself deeper into the closet, hiding in the dark like a shirt he hasn't worn since he was a teenager, like dust and lint.

He kind of wants to disappear. To bury himself under his blankets and let the dark absorb him,

He opens Lily's texts instead.

Lily

your name is trending on twitter. did something happen?
nevermind i look into it
is very stupid

Lily
are you okay?

He hesitates, rereading the last one. He can practically hear Rozanov's voice saying it, voice hesitant and careful. Shane's thumbs hover over the keyboard of his phone. And then he swipes out of the chat and opens Hayden's.

Hayd
Let me know if you need anything

He hesitates, watching the cursor blink at him before he types.

Shane
I'm okay, don't really feel like talking
Tell Jackie I appreciate her message and I would love squishy baby emotional support
I'll call you guys later.

And then he opens Rozanov's again.

Jane
I hate the internet and I hate my team
Except Hayden.

It only takes a few seconds for Rozanov to respond, and the appearance of the shifting dots catches Shane off-guard. He almost exits the chat by instinct, but he stays, resting his head on his arm and watching until a message comes through.

Lily
Your team sucks for many reasons
What are they saying?

Jane
Stupid shit. It's like they don't know I'm also in the group chat and can see everything they're saying.

Lily
Hayden is good though?

Jane
Yeah he told them off.
And texted me to check in.
His wife texted me too.

Lily
That is good
Do you want to talk?

Jane
Not really
But also yes.
I don't know

Lily
We can just text if it is easier

Jane
Yeah
I just

Shane stares at his phone, thumbs hovering, dancing in the air. His head kind of hurts. He's had two water bottles since he stopped crying, but it aches, and it'll ache tomorrow too.

He calls Rozanov with a sharp exhale, shutting his eyes and relaxing onto his arm. It's stupid, really fucking stupid— they don't *call,* they don't *talk*— but Rozanov answers within one ring.

"This is not texting."

Shane smiles against his arm. Rozanov's voice is soft, like he knows Shane's head hurts, and it's smooth, and Shane wants to listen to him talk until he falls asleep.

He doesn't say that.

"I didn't know how to say it."

"Say what?"

Shane exhales. He hears something move in the background on Rozanov's end, something tousling like he's laying down, but he sounds awake. Not at all like it's almost three in the morning.

"I came out to my parents," Shane says. Rozanov is quiet.

"How… was that?"

"Uhm." Shane laughs. It sounds almost hysterical, and he presses his face into his arm for a moment. "I don't know."

"What did they say?" Rozanov says. He sounds serious, almost upset.

"They're cool," Shane says quickly, lifting his head so his voice isn't muffled. "They— They're supportive. It was just… hard."

"Okay," Rozanov says, his voice softer. "That is good." He's quiet for a moment. "Do you want to talk about it?"

"Uhm…" He hesitates, because where the fuck is he supposed to start?

He's quiet for too long.

Rozanov waits for him.

"I don't really… I don't really talk about this," Shane starts, mumbling a little before he catches it and opens his jaw, stretching it so Rozanov can understand him. "Like. Ever. It's not… I don't know how people would— would react, or what they'd say, or…"

"Hollander," Rozanov says. "You are aware that I know you are gay, yes?"

"It's not that," Shane says with a scoff. "Asshole."

"Okay. Continue."

He can practically see the wave of Rozanov's hand.

"I'm, uhm. I'm autistic," Shane says. "Uhm. I was diagnosed when I was ten, but I never… I've never brought it up. I've seen some people saying online that they— they think I'm autistic or— or I seem like I am, which, yeah, but nobody actually *knows* except my parents, and I…"

He trails off. Rozanov is quiet before,

"Okay."

"I…" Shane takes a slow breath. His heart is beating too fast. "I had a meltdown today. It was… bad. I haven't had one in a while, and I just—"

He cuts off, his throat tightening, eyes stinging.

"What is meltdown?" Rozanov asks hesitantly. "I don't know what…"

"Uh." Shane sighs, blinking his eyes. He hugs the pillow to himself. "It's… It's kind of like a panic attack. Uhm, have you…"

"Yes," Rozanov says softly, almost whispering, and it kind of breaks Shane's heart, thinking about Rozanov like that.

"It's kind of like that," he says. "But, like, more. I, uhm…" He pauses. Swallows. "I have a tendency to hurt myself during it. Not, like— it's not on purpose, I'm not, like, trying to hurt myself, I just…"

"How?" Rozanov asks. "How do you hurt yourself?"

And Shane actually doesn't mind telling him.

"I hit myself," he says quietly. "My head, usually, but I— I've gotten better at not… doing that. I have, uhm, coping strategies."

Rozanov is quiet again, and Shane hates that he wonders it at all, but he wonders if it makes Rozanov's heart hurt too, thinking about Shane like that. Thinking about Shane hurting himself.

"What… causes it?" Rozanov asks finally. "Or is it different all the time?"

"Uhm," Shane sighs. "When I was a kid, it was… overstimulation, mostly. If it was too loud, or too hot or bright or… If I was overwhelmed. Sometimes if my— my routine was messed up, especially if I didn't know ahead of time. Like, if I was told we would be going somewhere and I would have to get up earlier or we would have dinner later, I would be fine, but, like… I hate surprises."

Rozanov hums quietly, listening.

"And change," Shane continues quietly. "And, uhm."

His throat tightens again, and he pauses, swallowing, biting his lip as though Rozanov can see it quivering.

"I need to— to be in control of things," he says finally, voice tilting like he's asking a question. "In my life? Which, that— it sounds bad, like I like being in control, but, like, I— I'm strict with what I eat, and my schedule and routines, and I…"

He stops, choking out a weak sob. He clutches the phone to his ear, aching as he turns onto his side, curling into himself. He hears Rozanov say something softly, but he either doesn't hear it clearly or he can't understand it.

"I like being ready for things," he says, his voice shaking. "I like knowing things ahead of time and being able to prepare for things, and I— I couldn't prepare for this, Ilya, I didn't wanna come out yet—"

"Fuck, Hollander," Rozanov says. His voice is hushed. "Breathe for me, okay?"

Shane nods absently, squeezing his eyes shut and taking a slow breath.

"That's good," Rozanov says softly as Shane breathes slowly. "You are okay."

"'M okay," Shane mumbles. "I'm fucking tired."

"Do you want me to let you go?" Rozanov asks. "So you can get sleep?"

"No," Shane says almost petulantly. "I don't… I don't think I'll be able to sleep if I tried."

"Okay," Rozanov says softly, and then he's quiet for a few moments, breathing steadily into the phone before he says, "I am sorry this is happening to you, Hollander."

Shane sniffles. His arm tucks against his chest, gripping the end of his blanket tightly, and he holds his phone tightly, like someone is going to try and take it away from him.

"I'm so fucking lonely," he breathes.

He doesn't recognize his own voice, weak and fragile in his throat, thin like glass. It doesn't sound like him at all, but it also sounds just like him. Weak and fragile.

He hears Rozanov exhale shakily.

"Where are you?" he asks.

"My parents' place," Shane says. "In Ottawa."

"Do you want me to come?" Rozanov asks. It makes Shane's eyes open and look at the dark. "I will get on next flight to Ottawa right now, I swear to God."

Shane lets out a burst of laughter, rolling back into his front and tucking the pillow against his face.

"No," he says, voice lighter. "I'm fine. And also at my *parents'*."

"What, you did not tell them about me?"

"I did not tell my parents about my seven year fuck buddy, no."

"Fuck buddy," Rozanov says, slow like he's feeling the words out. "I like that."

"Where are you?" Shane asks curiously. The Bears' last game was the day after the Voyagers'. "Boston?"

"Ah, no," Rozanov says, voice softening like he's shy suddenly. "I am in Moscow."

Shane blinks, squinting at the window above his bed.

"Thought you were staying in Boston over the summer," he says. "You mentioned it a while ago."

"Yes, that was plan," Rozanov says before he sighs. "I am not here for long time. Is just the, uhm… reading of will?"

"Oh."

"Is fine," Rozanov says like it's no big deal. "I will be back soon. Then we will be in same time zone."

Shane scoffs, glancing back at the window, at the sliver of the sky that he can see above the trees.

"'S true." He's quiet for a moment. He wonders if Rozanov is in his room, if he's looking out a window too, and he hates himself for thinking it. Fucking cliche. "Are you doing okay?"

"Yes, I am okay," Rozanov says a little too quickly.

"Rozanov."

“Hollander.”

“…Tell me the truth?”

Rozanov sighs. It causes some kind of static over the phone, like his mouth is too close to it, but Shane doesn’t really mind it. He wants him as close as he can be right now, and he wishes, suddenly, that he had something of Rozanov’s— a shirt or a hoodie, something he can hold. And smell.

Fucking cliche.

“I hate my brother,” Rozanov says finally. “I hate seeing him, and he hates seeing me, and he is angry at me all the time. I am… I am little nervous about the will. I do not know what our father left us. He did not like either of us very much.”

He laughs a little, humourless. Shane frowns.

“But I saw my niece one more time,” Rozanov continues. “I got coffee with my, uhm, sister-in-law. That is right?”

“Mhmm.”

“She brought my niece.”

“How is she?”

“Little.”

Shane laughs lightly. He sounds so fond.

“How old is she?”

“Ten months. And half.”

“Aw. What’s her name?”

“Anfisa,” Rozanov murmurs. “Flower.”

“That’s really cute,” Shane says.

“Mm. My brother had no part in naming her.”

Shane is quiet, fighting the random, inexplicable urge to ask Rozanov if he wants children someday, if he wants to be a dad. He would be a good dad, Shane thinks. Every time Shane’s seen him interacting with kids, it’s made his chest feel warm— the way he’s so gentle, lifting them up for pictures, jostling them in ways that makes them giggle, the way he teases them, so sarcastic they have no choice but to laugh and call him silly.

“What else have you been up to?” Shane asks before he can stay silent for too long, disappearing into the memory of seeing Rozanov cradling a toddler in a picture online,

beaming at the Bears' logo on the baby's onesie.

"Hanging out with Sveta," Rozanov says. "She came to be my, uhm, emotional support. And, uhm… I went to visit my mother."

Shane nods, finally closing his eyes and pausing before he can say something stupid like *How is she?*

"…Will you tell me about her?" he whispers.

Rozanov hums.

"Svetlana Vetrova is menace to society—"

Shane interrupts with another laugh.

"I meant your mom, Roz."

"Yeah, I know, Hollander."

"You don't have to talk about her," Shane says. "If you don't want to."

"Is okay," Rozanov whispers. "She was… She was also menace. She liked Sveta."

"Did you look like her?" Shane asks curiously.

"I think so," Rozanov murmurs. "I get my spots from her. And curls. It is weird seeing pictures of her in this house, because we… I see my face in them. I think I have her, uhm. Cheeks? Like how we smile?"

"She must have been beautiful."

"Ah, very smooth."

Shane can hear Rozanov's smile in his voice, and it makes him feel soft. He smiles against his arm.

"She was," Rozanov says softly. "She did not think she was, but she was very beautiful. Even when she was sad."

Shane doesn't say anything about how Rozanov is the same way. Even the way his eyes glisten is pretty.

"What is Mrs Hollander like?" Rozanov asks. Shane scoffs.

"My mom?"

"Well you do not have wife, no?"

It reminds Shane.

He'll never have a wife. He'll never *want* a wife.

His stomach twists.

"My mom is…" He blinks, hesitating. It would be stupid if he cried right now, talking about his perfectly healthy and living mother when Rozanov just talked about his dead one without a waver of his voice. "She's so great."

He laughs almost deliriously, shaking his head.

"And your father?"

"Also really great, I…" He swallows the lump in his throat. "I'm really lucky."

"You are," Rozanov says softly. Shane winces.

He wants to share it with him in a weird way, wants Yuna and David to hold Rozanov like they held Shane today, wants them to be able to put Rozanov back together if he falls apart.

"Sorry."

"No," Rozanov says, and Shane can practically hear him shake his head. "Is good. I am glad you have them. It makes me happy to think about."

Shane fights a smile before it occurs to him that Ilya can't see him. He grins at the ceiling.

"You're sweet."

"No, I am not."

"But you are."

"Incorrect."

They go back and forth for too long, arguing like children, bickering, until Shane knows that Rozanov knows that he's smiling, until he knows Rozanov is smiling too, grinning probably. He probably looks like his mom.

Laura 🏒🥅 | **check pinned** *@lauraunderground*
so like. it’s true right. we all know it's true.
💬 **9** 🔄 **70** ❤️**37**

|

replying to @lauraunderground
cj *@us3rn4m3cj*
i <3 vagueposting
💬 🔄 **1** ❤️**8**

replying to @lauraunderground
stacys mom *@watchinghockeyrn*
who gives a shit if it is? its literally none of our business AND its not something hollander spoke about openly or of his own accord. why cant everyone just leave him the fuck alone
💬 **2** 🔄 **9** ❤️**27**

|

replying to @watchinghockeyrn
cj *@us3rn4m3cj*
i still dont know whats going on someone help me
💬**1** 🔄 ❤️**1**

replying to @watchinghockeyrn
Laura 🏒🥅 | **check pinned** *@lauraunderground*
bro do you rly think hollander is seeing ANY of these posts?? ‘leave him alone’ like im @ ing him or dming him. he posts on twitter like once a year. he’s a public figure. people speculate about public figures. thats how the world goes
💬 **2** 🔄 **1** ❤️**2**

replying to @lauraunderground
bayani ⭐ he/him *@bayanibutifiwasinsane*
you gotta deactivate
💬 🔄 **2** ❤️**35**

#1 shane hollander defender *@mistertwentyfour*
i can't stand you people this is now a shane hollander fanpage idc. if you don't like it get out of my house
💬 🔄 **198** ❤️**219**

Shane doesn't respond to Jackie's message, but he tells her when he's on his way to see them.

Shane!
Hey is it cool if I stop by later today?

Jackie 💜
Yes of course!! I will start cleaning the living room.

Shane!
No need, I already know the truth

Hayden is cleaning up from lunch when Shane arrives, and Jackie, as typical, pushes Amber into Hayden's arms to answer the door first, to fling it open with an excited gasp like she didn't already know Shane was coming to see them. It always makes Shane laugh lightly, always makes his expression lighten. He hugs Jackie back when she pulls him into her arms.

He's a good hugger. She and Hayden have talked about it, the way Shane squeezes like he's about to lift you up, the way his shoulders hunch a little like he's holding back, like he's resisting an urge. It's always warm and soft and cozy, and when Jackie said she wanted to live in Shane's arms, Hayden couldn't even disagree.

The hug lingers right in the doorway, like Shane has been waiting for it, like neither of them wants to let go, and Jackie lets it. She runs a hand over the top of Shane's head, swaying with him, and something is wrong. Of course something is wrong.

She has Twitter. She follows what people say about her boys' team.

"How are your parents?" she asks when they finally separate, stepping aside for him to come in. She watches him toe his shoes off even though they've told him he doesn't really have to.

It's kind of cute, the way he nudges them into place, neatly sorted amongst the disaster of mismatched kids' shoes, kicked into a pile by the door.

"Uh, they're good," he says lightly. Too lightly.

He greets Hayden with a one-armed hug, face lightening when Hayden knocks their heads together, and he looks down at Amber, a smile lighting up his face. He's precious.

"Hi-i-i," he coos at her, wiggling his fingers. She doesn't react, staring up at him unblinkingly like always. "Where are the kids?"

"Arthur's taking a nap," Hayden says, leaning against the counter, turning Amber so she's facing away from him, eyes still trained on Shane. "The twins are at a birthday party sleepover thing."

"That's why it's so quiet."

"Yeah."

They lapse into silence, except a light snort from Shane when he meets Amber's eyes.

"Uhm," Shane says finally. "Can we… Can we sit?"

"Yeah, 'course," Hayden says, turning to

lead them into the living room. Amber reaches for Jackie as he's passing her, and Jackie takes her easily, scooping her into her arms. She's warm.

They sit. Jackie had attempted to clean up the living room, but there isn't much to show for it. There are toys scattered around the floor, most of them nudged out of the way, in the general direction of the kids' labelled baskets.

Shane sits in the armchair across from the sofa, shy like he doesn't hang out here all the time, like he hasn't lounged on the floor for the girls to cover his face in sparkly stickers.

It's quiet, awkward, and Jackie feels like Shane's mother, looking at him over the coffee table, cradling a baby that Shane glances at.

"So, uhm," he starts quietly. His hands hang in his lap, nails picking absently at himself. "You guys have seen… everything. Online."

"We've been ignoring it," Hayden says firmly. Shane looks at him, nodding a little, lips quirking into a hesitant smile.

"I appreciate it," he says softly. "Uhm."

"Do you— Do you know where it came from?" Jackie asks, bouncing Amber on her knee. "Who started it?"

Which sounds horrifically juvenile, really.

“Kind of,” Shane says. “Uhm. At the party after our last game, someone— a— a girl— came up and, like…flirted with me? And asked if I wanted to go upstairs with her?”

Jackie nods, listening intently, bouncing her knee and letting Amber grab at her fingers.

“I said no, and she was… fine. Uhm.”

“She started telling people you’re…” Hayden trails off. Jackie glances at him.

“No,” Shane says, shaking his head, furrowing his eyebrows like he’s doing this all wrong, like he wants to start over. “No, she— she actually reached out to me online, she, uhm… She told her friends I said no, and they started joking that I…” He pauses, gesturing vaguely before he shakes his head again, dismissing it. “It just— It just made its way online and it spiralled, and she apologized and offered to help, it was… It was nice.”

Jackie nods. Hayden is quiet.

Shane takes a deep breath that trembles on its way out.

“I, uhm…” He swallows. His fingers tangle together so tightly his skin whitens. “I just wanted to— to talk to you guys.”

He goes quiet again, his lip caught between his teeth, and Jackie’s heart hurts. Hayden’s hand touches her back lightly, like he feels it too. Amber tugs Jackie’s hand to her mouth, gnawing at her finger, and Jackie looks down at her before she stands, rounding the table as Shane looks up at her.

“Here, hold this.”

Shane lets out a laugh, lifting his hands to let Jackie deposit Amber into them, and Amber goes easily, letting go of Jackie’s finger to grab at Shane’s. Jackie goes to sit back down, watching fondly as Shane adjusts Amber in his lap, looking down at her with a soft smile, letting her gnaw on his finger with a slight grimace.

“Talk to us,” Jackie says softly. He looks up at her, and his smile falters, fades into something soft and scared. She nods. “Go ahead.”

His eyes flicker back and forth between them, and it settles over the whole room. They know. He knows they know, and they know he knows they know. There’s no other reason he would have to have such a formal sit down with them.

He swallows. Looks back at Amber.

“It’s just a stupid rumor,” he says softly. “But I…”

Hayden’s hand rests on Jackie’s back, his thumb brushing back and forth gently, absently.

“I’m gay,” Shane says quietly, shrugging a shoulder. His thumb caresses Amber’s cheek. “And I don’t— I don’t know where to go from here, with… everything online, and my career, and…”

He stops again, mouth twisting, shaking his head like he's trying to get rid of a thought.

"But I— I came out to my parents," he continues, still looking down at Amber. "And I… I love you guys. You're my best friends. So…"

His voice wobbles as he speaks. Jackie's entire body aches, and her throat tightens, and Jesus, she fucking *loves* him. She's so *fond* of him. And Hayden is too, she knows he is. He talks about Shane all the time.

They've talked about this too. About how Shane's never showed any interest in any of Jackie's friends, how he's never seemed to want to date or hook up with anyone.

"Shane," Hayden says.

"Yup," Shane says tightly, eyes trained on Amber's head like he's tracing the swirl of her hair.

"We love you," Hayden says firmly. "A lot. And this doesn't change anything."

Shane is quiet for a moment before he nods.

"I know."

"And we'll help you out however you need," Hayden adds. Jackie nods. "Whatever you wanna do, we're with you."

Shane smiles a little, rubbing his thumb over the back of Amber's hand as she clings to his finger.

"I don't know what I'm gonna do yet," he says quietly. "My parents… told me to think about it. Take my time. But every time I think about it I kinda get stuck and— and panic a little."

"Do you want us to help you brainstorm?" Jackie offers. Shane looks up at her. His eyes are shining, tears threatening to spill as he smiles.

"Maybe later," he says softly. She nods.

"Can I… ask questions?" Hayden asks hesitantly. Shane scoffs, adjusting Amber when she leans back and slides over his leg.

"Go ahead."

"Are you seeing anyone?" Hayden asks. It comes out quickly, like he's been holding it back, and Jackie and Shane let out simultaneous laughs.

"Uh…" Shane sighs, lifting a hand to rub his cheek before he reaches back down to tickle his fingertips over Amber's belly. "Kind of. It's… It's casual. And he's not out, so it's… It's really low-key."

“How long have you guys been seeing each other?” Hayden asks. “Wait, is this why you kept ignoring me trying to set you up with Jackie’s friends?”

“Well. Among other reasons. I have a type, Hayden.”

Jackie closes her eyes and shakes her head. She hears Shane laugh. It’s a beautiful sound.

“What’s your type?” Hayden asks. Jackie opens her eyes to look at Shane, whose cheeks are pink now.

“Uh. Men?”

Hayden waves his hand in a *Come on* gesture.

“How many guys have you been with?” Jackie asks, watching Shane’s cheeks brighten, ignoring Hayden. “If you don’t mind me asking.”

“Oh, just…” He trails off, shaking his head a little. Shrugging.

Jackie’s eyes widen.

“Just the one?”

He’s silent, lips pressing together as he meets Jackie’s eyes. Her jaw drops as she grins.

“Wait, you didn’t answer me,” Hayden says, moving to sit on the edge of the sofa like he’s trying to be as close as he can to Shane. “How long have you guys been… hooking up?”

“Yeah, uh.” Shane looks away. His cheeks are almost *red* now, and Jackie’s known that he’s shy, he’s always been like this. Reserved. Private. “Since… Just before rookie year.”

Silence.

Jackie stares at Shane. Hayden also stares at Shane. Shane watches Amber, lips pursing to suppress a smile before he finally looks up at them like he’s nervous.

“Shane,” Jackie says. “That’s a boyfriend.”

Shane is already shaking his head.

“It’s not… We’re not, like, exclusive,” he says. “It’s— It’s casual.”

“*Rookie year?*” Hayden says. “Shane.”

“I know—“

“Wait, is it another player?” Hayden asks. Jackie looks at Shane. He’s red. The tips of his ears are almost glowing.

“I’m not giving you a name,” he says firmly. “Or a team name. But. Yes.”

“Wow,” Jackie says slowly. “But he’s… No one knows about him?”

“Uh, except his— his best friend. Who’s… not in hockey.”

“And you.”

“…And me.”

“Do I know him?” Hayden asks. Shane grins before he subdues it, looking at Hayden.

“I’m not giving any hints, Hayd.”

Hayden throws himself against the back of the sofa with a groan, and Shane brightens with a laugh.

“Okay,” Jackie says. “So you’ve been hooking up non-exclusively with your not-boyfriend for almost a decade—“

“Jack—“

“Have you had any interest in anyone else?” she asks curiously, pointedly.

Shane takes a breath, looking away, his cheeks flushing again.

“I—“

“Wait, what about that chick you were always texting with?” Hayden interrupts. “You were always smiling at your phone, what was her…”

He trails off. Jackie looks at him with a raised eyebrow. He’s staring at Shane, and his eyes widen, and his head tilts.

“Oh,” he says.

Jackie looks back at Shane. He’s looking at Hayden, unblinking, cheeks bright.

“*Oh,”* Hayden says again, his voice strong. “*Him?”*

“I didn’t say anything,” Shane says, his volume matching Hayden’s, lifting a hand pointedly and holding Amber in place with the other. “And if you connected dots, I didn’t fucking lead you there—“

“*Him.”*

Hayden almost sounds angry. Jackie looks back and forth between the two of them. They kind of look like they’re using telepathy, communicating wordlessly.

“Okay,” Jackie says when it takes too long for them to even blink. “I’ll remind you that *I’m* not supposed to know, and if you start fighting, I’m going to figure it out. So let’s change the subject, yeah?”

They continue staring, until Hayden tears his eyes away, leaning against the arm of the sofa, burying his face in his hands with a groan.

“Hayden, be quiet,” Jackie says. “I’m sure he’s a very nice man.”

“He’s not,” the boys say simultaneously, Shane’s voice dry, Hayden’s muffled.

“Oh.”

“No, I mean—“ Shane shakes his head, waving a hand in the air. “He’s great, he’s really great, he just…”

“Is an asshole," Hayden says. Shane inhales, looking at Hayden for a moment before he meets Jackie’s eyes. He doesn’t disagree.

“Okay,” Jackie says, clapping her hands once. “Subject change. You’ve told your parents?”

“Uh, I— I haven’t told them about… him.” He glances at Hayden when he groans again. “But I came out to them.”

“How did that go?”

“Uh.” Shane sighs, moving Amber to hold her against his chest. She nuzzles against his shoulder, rubbing her face. “It was hard. But they’re okay with it, they— they’re supportive.”

Hayden lifts his head in Jackie’s periphery, but she doesn’t look at him, focusing on Shane and the way he runs a hand over Amber’s back.

“It wasn’t… how I wanted to do it,” he says, voice tight again before he clears his throat with a shake of his head. “But it’s done. Can’t change it now.”

It makes Jackie’s heart ache, the way he smiles all tight and forced, the way he shrugs a little before he lets his shoulders settle so Amber can relax against him, tucking into his neck. All the kids have seemed to like napping on Shane.

“It does kind of help that they know now,” Shane says, looking down at Amber, like he’s talking to himself, just thinking out loud. “It doesn’t feel as heavy. If that makes sense.”

“That makes sense,” Hayden says before Jackie can.

It does make sense.

Not that she can relate to it, obviously, but she has empathy. Compassion. She imagines having to hide something like that, something so big, tucking it away in her chest and pretending it doesn’t exist. Watching the world and the way it thinks about it. Being a fucking professional athlete, a *minority* professional athlete on top of it all.

Jesus, the questions Shane has to deal with, from reporters, from fans, from idiots online. Jackie often wonders how miserable he is— he keeps it all pushed down, buried somewhere

deep, answering questions with a polite smile and a light voice like none of it matters. But Jackie has seen it, the way the shine of his eyes dulls a little every time they ask something stupid, every time they compare him to someone he has nothing in common with except being *different.*

And now.

Rumors and *I heard*s and speculation. Discussion about how he's never dated anyone publicly, stories from girls that have tried, from people he went to school with. Stories about how he was always oblivious to the flirting, to the suggestive gazes and light touches. Stories about how he was different.

They keep talking. The conversation shifts like it always does, fading from Shane to his parents to their house, to the neighborhood, the weather, the Rangers' last game and their devastating loss, Scott Hunter, then to New York— the city— and then America as a country, then American politics, then Canadian politics, and then, just as all of their blood pressure is rising, the baby monitor lets out a staticky cry and Hayden gets up to get Arthur.

Arthur, who does his very best to lunge out of Hayden's arms when he spots Shane on the sofa. It makes Shane laugh and Hayden complain, and it makes Jackie happy. Arthur snuggles into Shane's chest, curling up tight like he always does, and Shane lets his head fall back against the sofa with a grin.

And it's so fucking cute that Jackie can't help but take a photo, and then another, zooming in on Shane's arms around their little bodies.

They lose track of time. They always do when Shane is hanging out with them, and when they have the babies with them. Shane likes to talk to them, and Jackie likes to watch— she takes more photos, and even some videos when Shane isn't looking, videos of him saying things like *Oh, I thought the same thing* and *You're so right, I don't know why people don't listen to you* in response to Arthur's babbled gibberish.

"Hey, babe," Hayden says after a while, looking at his phone screen. "It's past five, we should…"

"Oh, do you have plans?" Shane says, looking at them from where he's apparently having a staring contest with Amber. He loses. "I can head out."

"Hayden has plans," Jackie says.

"Uh, *we* are having dinner with my dad," Hayden says pointedly, raising his eyebrows at Jackie, who looks at him innocently.

"*You* are having dinner with your dad," she says before she lifts a hand and points to Shane. "It's girls' night."

Shane is quiet, looking at them as they stare at each other, and Hayden's jaw drops.

“What the fuck, Shane’s gay so he gets to be one of the girls?” he says defensively, gesturing toward Shane. Jackie holds back a laugh, watching him in amusement. They’ve bickered about this countless times, that Hayden can’t be one of the girls, that he can’t stick around for girls’ night. Jackie’s brought him leftovers, and even a margarita in a travel cup from her friends’ place on several occasions.

“Yes,” she says firmly. “We get to talk about boys. You’re one of the boys we talk about. You can’t be there.”

When she glances at Shane, he’s fighting a grin, but he can’t get it out of his eyes. He looks fucking delighted, and Jackie thinks she would lay her life down for him.

Hayden leaves after grumbling some more, smacking kisses to the babies’ heads and an extra one to Shane’s.

“Bring me a dessert,” Jackie calls as he’s stepping through the door, and he looks up to stick his tongue out at her. “Love you!”

“...Love you too.”

Silence falls when the door closes, and Shane looks at her over Amber’s head, letting himself beam now that Hayden isn’t here to see it. Jackie grins back, bouncing Arthur on her hip.

“So we’re gonna talk about boys?”

“Oh, yeah.”

They feed the babies first, swapping them so Shane is holding Arthur. Shane is used to Jackie nursing— he doesn’t even blink when she lifts her shirt up mid-sentence.

“Do you want kids someday?” she can’t help but ask, watching him gently scoop up the orange mush that’s slipped from Arthur’s lips. He glances at her, shrugging a little. He even moves his head the way Jackie does when she spoon-feeds the kids, lifting his chin like he’s trying to get Arthur to imitate him.

“I dunno,” he says lightly, pausing for Arthur to smack his lips. “Maybe. I like kids. My parents would probably like grandkids.”

“You’d be a great dad,” Jackie says, cradling the back of Amber’s head, glancing down at her. “Does your guy want kids?”

“The guy that I’m not dating?” he says dryly, holding the spoon for Arthur, who leans forward for it with his mouth open too widely. It makes Shane suppress a smile. “That one?”

“The only one,” Jackie says pointedly. “Have you talked about it?”

“No,” Shane scoffs. “Why the hell would we talk about having children?”

“I don’t know,” Jackie says slyly, shrugging. “If you’ve been seeing the guy for almost ten years, maybe it’s come up.”

"*Casually*. Having children is not casual."

"Don't I know it."

"Neither is discussing *having a future*," Shane adds, waving the tiny spoon in his hand like it's a wand, voice soft and dramatic. "'S… romantic."

"You guys aren't romantic?"

Shane is quiet, looking at Arthur intently, focusing. His eyebrows furrow when he's like this, concentrating, and it amuses Jackie, the way he makes the same expression whether he's training or feeding a baby.

"We're not supposed to be," he says quietly.

They're quiet until the babies are fed and burped, until Shane follows Jackie upstairs to give them baths, to put them to bed.

The silence with Shane is never bad. Jackie's hung out with some of Hayden's other friends, and it's usually kind of awkward— at least at the start— and if she's honest, sometimes it's even awkward with Jackie's own friends.

But with Shane, it's fine. The silence is calm, and there's never any pressure to open a conversation, to fill the quiet with Jackie's voice.

And then they go back to the kitchen after sneaking down the stairs as quietly as they can. Jackie makes some pasta, and she knows Shane doesn't usually do pasta, especially with a sauce like this, creamy and cheesy and actually yummy, but it's the off-season, and his entire life has been fucking up-ended. He can eat pasta.

He chops the vegetables. She puts on some music, something acoustic and soft, the volume low. She hums, and he sways with it even though he doesn't listen to music, which Jackie has never understood, and never will understand. The man works out more times in a week than Jackie has in the past month— which, actually, is perfectly fair, right, she's got two babies and two kids— and he does it *without music*. Fucking odd.

"Wine?" Jackie offers, already getting two glasses. She has to open a new bottle— she hasn't had wine in a while, or any alcohol, really. She's never been much of a drinker, but there should be alcohol at girls' night, shouldn't there? Wine, or margaritas, or some cocktail that's fruity and too sweet. Her friends are angels that have just as many mocktail recipes as cocktails so she could partake while pregnant.

"Uh…"

"It's the off-season…" she sing-songs, pouring a glass and looking up at him. He looks hesitant, glancing at the pasta on the stove before he cedes, shaking and then nodding his head, shrugging.

"Sure."

They sit in the living room. Shane takes the armchair again— it seems to be his favorite place to sit when he's visiting them.

"Okay," Jackie says like an announcement, shifting to cross her legs, cradling her bowl to herself. "Spill."

"Spill," Shane repeats slowly, looking at her wide-eyed. "What am I spilling?"

"We're talking about boys, Shane," Jackie says, waving her fork at him. "I wanna hear it all."

"It all," he repeats. "All… what?"

"Shane," Jackie says firmly. "You've been hooking up with this guy since *before your rookie year*, and you've never talked about it."

Shane looks at his pasta, twirling it around a fork like he's very intently avoiding her eyes.

"So spill."

"Uh…" He takes a breath, takes a bite of the pasta, and then he talks with his mouth full. It makes Jackie smile. "Where do I start? I've never gossiped about boys."

Jackie giggles, swaying back and forth happily.

"Okay, do we have a code name for this guy?"

"Uhm." He pauses to swallow. "His contact name on my phone is Lily."

"Lily," Jackie repeats, and Oh. Yeah. Okay. That Makes Sense.

Hayden's reaction to whatever realization he had, the outrage and following anguish. *He's an asshole*.

She hopes the connection isn't visible on her face.

"Tell me about the first time," she says, gesturing with her fork again before she takes a bite, slurping noodles into her mouth. She should have grabbed some napkins, but she doesn't feel like getting up. She wipes sauce off her chin and sucks it off her thumb.

"Uhm." He's so shy. It's cute. "We, uhm. We met in my hotel room."

"Okay," Jackie says perfectly calmly. She already has follow-up questions that she'll probably forget. Why Shane's room? Why not Lily's?

"We… hooked up," Shane says slowly. "Agreed we wouldn't tell anyone. He left."

"Shane," Jackie says, leaning forward, speaking around some noodles. "Babe. You are aware I don't believe in the concept of TMI, right? I want details."

Shane scoffs, looking away again, face a lovely shade between pink and red.

“Isn’t this the kind of stuff people aren’t supposed to talk about?” he asks, looking up at her. She makes a face.

“Not in *public*,” she says. “Or to people who don’t wanna hear it. I wanna hear it.”

He laughs, looking at the ceiling.

“Whatever you wanna share,” she says lightly, lifting her fork in surrender. “I wanna hear it. I’m not squeamish.”

He’s quiet, looking at his pasta, biting his lip, and she can practically see the gears turning in his head as he thinks, can practically see the thought process on his face. He’s suppressing a smile. He wants to talk about it, wants to tell *someone*.

“Okay, we— we gave each other blowjobs—”

Jackie interrupts with a squeal, and Shane laughs again, letting his fork fall into his bowl and covering his face with his hand.

“*And?”*

“And…” He shrugs, lifting a hand like he’s grasping for something to follow that up with. “I don’t fucking know, Jack, what am I supposed to say?”

“Was it good?” she says. “Did you like it? Is he good?”

“Yes,” Shane says emphatically. “Yes. And yes.” He looks at her, meets her eyes and stares until he breaks. “It was— It was my first time, right? And I was… nervous. But he…”

Jackie takes a bite of her pasta, watching him like she’s watching a soap opera, eyes wide.

“He kissed me,” Shane says, looking at the ground like he’s reminiscing. “And it was… it was really nice. Kind of, like… Got me out of my head. And he was— I could tell he was into it, which, I think, made it easier to just… Do what I wanted to. Do what felt good.”

He glances at her like he isn’t sure if that was too much, as though she wouldn’t sit here and listen to him discuss the logistics of prepping for anal.

And maybe it’s weird, but Jackie feels fucking proud of him.

For as long as she’s known him, he’s always been strict with what he does, what he indulges in. Food that tastes good, alcohol, *fun*. He barely lets anything in, anything he likes other than hockey, and to hear about *this*, about Shane having sex, having *fun,* and *letting himself—* it makes her happy.

“Did he know it was your first time with a guy?”

“Uh, yeah, he asked. I think I was kind of…” He trails off, staring blankly at the ground before his eyes widen comically. Jackie giggles. “He was really… nice.”

He gets shy about it. Jackie leans back to kick at him. She misses, but it gets the point across.

“We just did, uhm, mouth… stuff,” he says. She rolls her eyes dramatically, and he laughs before he continues. “But he… brought up the idea of— of fucking me.”

“Mhmm…”

“So we… we met up. He came to my place.”

“In Montreal?”

“Yeah.”

“Okay.”

“And, uhm.” He pauses, his mouth twisting as he thinks before it spreads into an absent smile. Jackie eats while she watches him, waiting patiently. “He checked in with me, like, a million times. It got *annoying*, Jackie. I got *annoyed.”*

She laughs, reaching for her wine.

“He— He checked that I still wanted to. And then when he was… Uhm.” His face flushes bright red, and Jackie grins. “Fingering me. And then before he… put it in.”

He’s glowing. Jackie’s face is sore.

“And then while he was fucking me,” Shane continues, looking intently at the ground. “And then we— we changed positions, and he checked again, and I—“

He tosses a hand, looking at Jackie like it’s insufferable. She giggles into her bowl.

“Like I wasn’t—“ He makes a face, hushing his voice a little. “Trying not to come.”

“So it was good?” Jackie laughs, watching Shane eat some more pasta, nodding.

“‘S always good,” he mumbles around his fork. “He’s… Yeah.”

He’s quiet some more. Jackie can see it on his face, the soft, almost blissful smile like he’s replaying something in his mind. She waits patiently, eating her lukewarm pasta.

“So it’s…” He starts slowly, hesitantly. “The sex is kind of… rough. That’s just— We both…”

“Mhmm.”

“And, like, one time he was fucking me, and he stopped really suddenly and kind of…” He gestures vaguely. “Manhandled me. Moved away and pulled me closer to him. And I was confused, you know, and he told me that I was… I was gonna hit my head on the headboard.”

He drops his hand.

“Stuff like that,” he says lightly. “Which, maybe is, like, bare minimum and I have low standards, but he… I don’t know. He pays attention.”

“Unfortunately, that is a low bar,” Jackie says. “But also. That’s nice.”

“Yeah.”

He eats some more pasta. Sips his wine.

“What?” Jackie asks finally. He looks at her.

“What what?”

“What are you not saying?” she asks, kicking at him again. Her toes just clip his shin, and he giggles, moving farther away.

“I don’t know.”

Jackie looks at him. His freckles look darker when he blushes, like the flush of his cheeks glows. It’s precious. She kind of wants to pinch him.

“You said you’re not supposed to be romantic,” she says finally. “What does that mean?”

Shane glances at her. Shrugs.

“I don’t know, we… It’s casual. We hook up. We make each other come. It’s not… anything more than that.”

Jackie can fill in the blanks, the words he’s not saying.

It’s not supposed to be anything more than that.

Shane pokes at his food, twirls it around his fork.

“If it could be more than that,” Jackie says, “would you want it?”

Shane stares at his bowl like he didn’t even hear her, quiet, breathing steadily until he looks up at her. His eyes are shining.

“I don’t know,” he says quietly. “Maybe?”

“You’re allowed to want that, you know.”

“I know,” Shane says, somehow nodding and shaking his head at the same time. “It’s just… I can want it. I can’t *have* it. So, just… What’s the point of wanting it?”

Jackie sighs slowly. Shane shrugs, smiling like it’s no big deal, but it doesn’t reach his eyes.

“What about him?” she asks. “Does he want it too?”

Shane shakes his head. And then shrugs.

“We don’t talk about it.”

“What do you talk about?”

“Uh. Hockey.” He shrugs again. “I don’t know. Whatever’s going on.”

“Have you guys talked about everyone online?”

“A little. He’s been… He’s been nice. Comforting. I can— I can tell he wants to help, but there isn’t really anything he can do, you know?”

“Except be there for you.”

Shane nods absently, looking down.

“He has been,” he says softly. “He’s… Uhm. He’s really good to me.”

His voice wavers, and he looks up at her, nodding resolutely, sniffling.

“Well,” Jackie says, watching as he very intently does not let any tears fall. “You can tell him — I don’t need his name or anything— that I am very grateful for him.”

Shane gives her a crooked smile, eyes fluttering.

“You’re a good friend, Jackie.”

“‘S what you deserve, babe,” she says, sipping her wine. “Good friends and good sex.”

“And the Stanley Cup.”

“And the Stanley fucking Cup.”

Their wine glasses clink. Shane’s face brightens beautifully. Jackie wants to squeeze him.

They’re in the living room when Hayden gets back. Shane is asleep, head against the back of the sofa, arms cradling Amber to his chest, lips parting, snoring softly. Jackie is rocking Arthur in her arms.

Hayden stops in the doorway, leaning against it to look at the scene in front of him. Empty bowls and wine glasses on the coffee table, a half-full bowl of grapes. Toys on the floor. Shane lounging, fingers stretched across Amber’s back, one of them hooked into her pink pacifier. He’s wearing one of Hayden’s shirts— Amber probably spit up on him at some point. Jackie sitting cross-legged on the sofa, patting Arthur’s bottom as he settles, looking up at Hayden patiently.

His heart feels full.

He meets Jackie’s eyes. She’s smiling, like she knows, and she probably does— She knows everything. It’s kind of scary sometimes.

He sits next to Jackie, leans to give her a kiss before he opens the box in his hands as quietly as he can. She’s already leaning, peeking into it— Cheesecake. She beams.

He feeds her with the little plastic fork in the box. She smiles constantly, and they look at Shane together, watching as Amber rises and falls on his chest steadily.

“Can you forgive him?” Jackie whispers. “For seeing whoever it is?”

Hayden takes a slow breath.

“Maybe.” He looks at her. “Did he tell you?”

She shakes her head.

“He told me a lot,” she says, smiling when he grimaces. “He didn’t give me a name. I might’ve worked it out, but I don’t want confirmation.”

He nods with a sigh.

“I can forgive him,” he says only a little begrudgingly. “As long as the guy's good to him.”

“He is,” Jackie says confidently. “He is.”

“Okay,” Hayden says. “Okay.”

Lily
How did it go?

Jane
Good, actually. Jackie wanted details lol
I didn't tell them your name but Hayden's figured us out. I think Jackie might have too.

Lily
Details like…

Jane
Sex
She doesn't believe in the concept of TMI.
Also
I told her about you and she wanted me to tell you that she's grateful for you.

Lily
I like this Jackie
I do not understand how she has a hundred children with Hayden

Jane
Four children.
Speaking of
[photo attached]
[photo attached]
[video attached]
delete those later
The older two were at a birthday party.

Lily
Hollander.

Jane
?

Lily
Do not do this to me.

Jane
??

Lily
I need to get you pregnant.

Jane
Oh my god
Fuck off

Lily
I need to try at least.
Fuck.
We would make cute babies.

Jane
You're actually ridiculous

Lily
This is perfectly reasonable reaction. Anybody would feel the same after seeing those pictures.
And that video.
How are you so cute?
You are intolerable. I cannot stand you.
Do you have any more pictures?

Jane
Oh my god

[photo attached]
[photo attached]

Lily
Hollander.
This is unacceptable.
How can you expect me to delete these.

Jane
lol

Lily
I am so serious. It might kill me.
Also cannot believe Hayden had any part in creating those babies. They are too cute. He is liar.

Jane
You're such an asshole.

Lily
And you can tell him I said so.

Jane
He's already worked out who 'Lily' is, I don't need to give him solid confirmation by telling him Lily insulted his integrity AND his looks.

Lily
)))

Shane Hollander ✓ *@shanehollanderhockeyplayer*
You all know I don't spend much time online, but this has all been hard to miss. Over the past few months, I've been tagged and mentioned in countless posts that have been pure speculation about my sexual orientation and identity, and I've been asked countless times to make a comment.

I'm a private person. I've never lived a public life, and I'm not going to change that now just because of some rumors. I can't stop people from speculating, and I don't expect it all to stop overnight (even though that would be nice), but I will say that I do not appreciate the questions, the prying, or the blatant disrespect of my privacy. I see many of the posts that are not initially meant for my eyes— including posts that read something like 'he's never going to see this' or 'it's not like I'm tagging him'— and the amount of people who act as though they are entitled to any part of my private life is largely discomforting.

I am a public figure, and I take my career and role in the public eye seriously, but I also take my privacy and the privacy of my loved ones seriously. I will stand for what I believe in and use my platform as a celebrity as best I can, but outside of hockey, I have a life that is my own and nobody else's, and nobody— especially not random people on the internet— is entitled to anything about me.

I won't be answering any questions about my private life from reporters or fans. I'm a hockey player, and I'm here to talk about hockey.

See you in October. 🏒✌️
💬 **1.7K** 🔄 **10.9K** ❤️**52K**

Charlie! she/they *@fucktheyankees*
‘you have the right to remain silent’ ass statement
💬**2** 🔄 **2** ❤️**23**

pret 🏒 (no relation to the cafe) *@bladesandblades*
I Will Neither Confirm Nor Deny
💬**4** 🔄 **7** ❤️**12**

they call me arlo *@hedoublehockeysticks*
LEAVE HIM ALOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOONE LEAVE HIM THE FUCK ALONE!
💬**1** 🔄 **72** ❤️**164**

Emma | she/her *@emmamayplayhockey*
okay but like thats not a “no, i’m not” so. he is, right?
💬**19** 🔄 **2** ❤️ **3**

|

replying to @emmamayplayhockey
franklin 🐢🥅 *@voyagersbutnot*
girl did you actually read the fucking post what is your problem
💬**3** 🔄 **1** ❤️**27**

replying to @emmamayplayhockey
sandy they/them *@vouyeageaurs*
You are fucking insufferable
💬**2** 🔄 ❤️**7**

replying to @emmamayplayhockey
bayani ⭐ he/him *@bayanibutifiwasinsane*
you gotta deactivate
💬 **1** 🔄 ❤️**12**

|

replying to @bayanibutifiwasinsane
lennie 💌 they *@shanehollandernothockeyplayer*
is this the only thing you ever post on twitter
💬**1** 🔄 ❤️**3**

|

replying to @shanehollandernothockeyplayer
bayani ⭐ he/him *@bayanibutifiwasinsane*
yea pretty much
💬**1** 🔄 ❤️**2**

|

replying to @bayanibutifiwasinsane
lennie 💌 they *@shanehollandernothockeyplayer*
will u marry me
💬 🔄 ❤️**1**

#1 shane hollander defender *@mistertwentyfour*
i'm so. look. it's a beautiful statement and it was very well phrased and everything he said was right. i'm just so sad that he feels the need to say anything at all. he shouldn't have to

defend himself against any of this shit. i'm sad.
💬**32** 🔄 **72** ❤️**127**

It's quiet. Ilya lets his feet rest on Svetlana's lap, swaying them back and forth in the air until she slaps one to make him stop. She doesn't even look away from her phone, and he snorts.

He can hear her breathing behind the music that's playing from the speaker on her bedside table— it's quiet music, something mellow and soft. He kind of feels like falling asleep, but he's scrolling the comments on Hollander's statement on Twitter instead. The comments, like usual, are full of fucking idiots. He's self-destructive, he knows it, and he doesn't exit the app even though he's just getting pissed off.

Stephen *@stephenbrunson1978*
We can read between the lines. There is no place for people like you on the ice. Get out of the way for real players.
💬**18** 🔄 **3** ❤️ **2**

|

replying to @stephenbrunson1978
sam 🍁 *@v0yag3r5*
'get out of the way' stephen you're talking to shane fucking hollander. Is it crack? Is that what you smoke?
💬**3** 🔄 **5** ❤️**32**

Brenda | ESU *@brenda_marie12*
Not reading all that. A post this long can only be confirmation.
💬**7** 🔄 ❤️ **1**

Landon *@landonlikeshockey*
He is clearly so desperate to not be cancelled. Just say yes or no and put it to rest.
💬**9** 🔄 **3** ❤️ **5**

Ilya scrolls, and he scrolls, and he scrolls, and he hates all of them.

Maybe not all of them. They're not all bad. There are plenty of people supporting him, telling him that they stand with him and his privacy, assuring him that nothing changes their allyship. Some of them assure him that it's perfectly fine if he *is* gay, that he deserves to say it openly.

Some of them are backhanded.

Some of them comment as though they're not making a direct response to Hollander's post, like he can't see them, or hear them, like he didn't say in the fucking post that he sees everything people say.

Ilya stifles a sigh, lips twisting, grimacing.

Sveta's hand lands on his foot again, resting on top of it gently— her hands are always warm, and it feels nice. She's quiet, looking down at her own phone until she says in smooth Russian, «How is Jane doing?»

Ilya looks past his phone to her, expression stilling. She's looking at her phone casually, thumb brushing over Ilya's foot lightly, like she didn't just ask something fucking insane.

«What?»

She looks at him, expression light, eyes wide and innocent.

«Your Jane,» she says, shaking her head like it's obvious. «How is your Jane doing?»

He stares. She stares back.

She's known about Jane for a while, and it's an unspoken thing between them that she knows Jane isn't *Jane*. She's never said anything about it, never asked anything that would prompt Ilya to tell her the truth, to tell her that he's been fucking Shane goddamn Hollander in secret for years.

«Fine,» he says, shrugging lazily. «I don't…»

She looks at him more intently, but he's always won staring contests with her. He's stubborn. He says she's weak-willed.

«Ilyusha,» she says, voice softening. «I'm not stupid, you know.»

«Sveta,» he says sarcastically, dryly. She says it's a defense mechanism for him, and she seems to think that right now too— her eyebrows raise, and her head tilts, and she looks like she'll sit here all night if she has to, hand resting on his foot, staring him down. Maybe he's the weak-willed one. «I know you're not stupid. That doesn't mean we have to talk about this shit.»

She exhales slowly.

«I've seen everything online,» she says softly. «And I want to know how he is doing.»

Ilya drops his head and looks at the ceiling just to avoid her eyes.

«Is he okay?» she asks. Her voice is quiet, like they're hiding away, tucked into some corner and desperate to not be found.

Ilya's chest feels tight. He supposes they are kind of like that, hidden and hiding. They're in fucking Moscow right now, and yeah, there are plenty of queer people around, but he feels fucking scared.

Not even really of Russia, or of the police, or of everything he should be scared of.

He's scared of his dead father.

Like Grigori is haunting him, following him around the moment his plane touches down in Russia, looking over his shoulder and glaring at him every time he gets butterflies.

His throat tightens. Sveta must see it from where she's leaning against the headboard of her bed, because she moves suddenly, the warmth of her hand fading from Ilya's foot, and she's stretching out on top of him, pressing him down into the fluffy comforter he's on. He exhales, letting her weight cover him, dropping his phone so he can wrap his arms around her.

«How is he?» she asks again, propping herself up on his chest with crossed arms. He sighs, looking down at her.

Jane
I deleted Twitter off my phone.

Lily
I saw your statement. It was good.
Are you okay?

Jane
Not really, no.
I'm stupid and I looked at a bunch of the comments before I got rid of the app, and now I'm crying and miserable and I hate everything.

Lily
Hollander
I am so sorry
You do not deserve this.
And you are not stupid. Is normal thing to do, look at comments.

Jane
I feel stupid.
Everyone knows I'm fucking gay, there was no point in saying anything.

Lily
There was point they do not need to know everything about you
Is your business and they all need to fuck off.
They do not know anything for sure. They think things and they say things but they do not know you. They are just stupid internet people.

Jane
I might as well have just said I am gay.

Lily
Shane.
You are not ready to come out and that is okay. You do not need to.
You are star hockey player, it does not matter if you are fucking gay or not, and your statement was very good at saying that. If people do not understand it or they do not respect it that is their fucking problem, yes? Not yours.

Jane
I feel so fucking stupid

Ilya swallows the lump in his throat. Sveta looks sad, gazing down at him, and it makes it worse.

«He is not good,» he breaks. «He is lonely, and he is sad, and he is fucking miserable, and I cannot do anything to help.»

Svetlana sighs softly, lips curving into a little frown. Ilya reaches up to wind one of her curls around his finger, watching it twist, warm and dark against his skin.

«You've talked to him?» she says quietly, watching his face like she's making sure he won't lie. He doesn't think he can lie right now.

«Yeah,» he says quietly. «He's spending the summer with his parents. We've been talking more than we usually do during the off-season.»

«How are *you* doing?»

Ilya looks at her. Meets her eyes and lets the curl slip away from his finger. He bites down on his lip when it threatens to quiver, shrugging a little. Sveta just looks at him.

Jane
I'm just so fucking tired.
Like I wanna go into hibernation

Lily
I think you are depressed, Shane
Have you talked to anybody about it? Your parents?

Jane
A little. Not much.
I'm kind of just hoping it goes away.
Which is stupid.

Lily
You are not stupid.

I am at meeting right now. Do you want me to call you when I get home?

Jane
I don't wanna bother you.

Lily
You do not bother me.
I will call you, yes?

Jane
Yes.

He fights the tears off as best he can, but it's no use. He blinks his eyes at the ceiling, exhaling shakily, and Svetlana wipes the tears away before they can even pass his temples, fingers light and gentle and tender.

«Tell me.»

Ilya turns his face into her hand.

«I hate it here,» he whispers. «I hate it here and I can't do anything to help him, and I feel fucking useless.»

«You are helping him,» Sveta says firmly, as though Shane's been talking to her. «You're making sure he isn't alone, right?»

Ilya sniffles, looking at the ceiling again.

«Babe.»

«Yeah,» he says shakily, lifting a hand to rub his face, to pinch between his eyes and squeeze them shut. «I just— I want to do more, and I can't, and it's killing me, and I swear my fucking father is watching me, and I—»

«Okay,» Svetlana interrupts softly. «Okay. Breathe.»

He breathes. She shifts to let his chest rise until it stops, and then she relaxes, pressing his chest down as he exhales. It helps. She knows him too well.

Much too well.

«Ilyusha,» she says softly when he's calm. «You're in love.»

He shakes his head at the ceiling. She reaches out, collapsing against him to grab his head and force it to nod. It makes him laugh.

«You’re in love,» she says again, voice lofty and teasing. «My Ilyusha, so soft-hearted.»

«Shut up,» he says halfheartedly. He wraps his arms around her and rolls them over, tucking his face into her hair, resting on top of her as their legs tangle. «Isn't it fucking stupid?»

«What’s stupid?»

He’s quiet for a moment, exhaling, burying himself in her neck until it’s dark. Her hand runs over his head, scratching at his curls, the other sliding over his back.

«Wanting,» he mumbles. «Something I can’t have.»

«No,» she says firmly. «It’s not stupid.»

She lets him cry.

He lets her hold him.

It’s kind of nice, really, letting himself go, letting her run her hands over his back and his head, through his hair, letting her turn to press a kiss to his forehead. He drifts a little, letting his eyes close, letting his breathing slow. When she speaks again, he can hear it through her skin, his ear pressed to her chest.

«Have you talked about it with him?»

«About what?» he asks, whispering.

«…Love.»

He’s quiet for a moment.

He goes completely still when he's thinking particularly hard. It's a habit Svetlana noticed when they were young, the way he freezes down to his eyes, staring blankly until he blinks.

He's still on her chest, hand stopping where it's been brushing over her arm lightly. She waits for him to move.

«Why would we talk about that?»

«To be on the same page, stupid.»

He's quiet again. His hand relaxes to rest on her arm, warm and a little rough with calluses.

«Even if we did, and even if he felt the same way, we couldn't do anything about it, could we?»

It doesn't sound like a question.

«Not if we're us,» he continues. «I'm me. He's him. What the fuck can we do?»

Svetlana hums, burying a hand in his hair and scratching his scalp the way he likes. She hates seeing him like this— not that she's seen him like this before. He's never been in love, not that she knows of, not like *this*. She can practically see the heartache on him, like he's painted in it.

«This fucking sucks.»

«It does,» she agrees. «But it's also good, right?»

«What the fuck is good about it?»

"…Shane?" Svetlana suggests quietly, intentionally dragging out the initial sound. She feels him freeze before he exhales slowly.

«He's good,» he says softly. «He's really good.»

«He seems so sweet,» Svetlana says lightly, grinning when Ilya groans against her, nodding.

«He is,» he mumbles, before he says in an even softer, almost absent voice, «My sweet boy.»

It makes Svetlana's chest clench around her heart, makes her want to cry. He sounds so pitiful, and he's never pitiful, not like this. It would be funny if he wasn't so miserable— Ilya fucking Rozanov, bad boy of the NHL, womanizer and man-whore, cigarette-smoking and vodka-drinking, apathetic and passive, losing his mind and his heart to Shane Hollander.

The sweetheart of Canadian hockey.

He's never gotten into a fight on the ice. He's never cursed into a reporter's microphone, not even by accident. He's never been anything past slightly tipsy in public, not at clubs or at parties, and he's never dated anyone publicly.

Really, he's everything Ilya isn't.

He's polite, and gentle— except on the ice. He's quiet, and reserved, and he does fucking yoga in the mornings according to ESPN. He fidgets when there are cameras on him, when he's bombarded with questions, and he thinks before he answers them.

He makes Ilya blush.

He makes him smile at his phone and teeth at the crucifix around his neck, makes him rub his cheek and tug his hair, and he makes him cry.

Svetlana hugs his neck tightly before releasing him, letting him roll to lay next to her, limbs tangled, eyes downcast. He looks so small when he's like this.

«She would have liked him,» he says quietly. «Mama.»

His eyes are gleaming. His throat bobs.

Svetlana pulls him closer, shifting so their foreheads press, and his hand slides under her shirt to her waist. Their eyelashes flutter together when their eyes close, and she feels Ilya's breath on her face as he exhales slowly.

«She would have liked you too,» she says softly. «You know that, right?»

He doesn't answer.

He won't talk about this right now, not like this— faces pressed, eyes wet. It's hard for him. The first time they talked about Irina after she died, they were drunk. He was drunker than her.

Their backs were pressed, sitting on the floor of Svetlana's bedroom, heads resting against one another, and his voice shook the whole night. He cried, but not because he let himself.

When he told Svetlana about Grigori's diagnosis, he didn't look at her. They were in the gym, and he was beating the absolute shit out of a punching bag. His knuckles were bruised and bloody by the time he let her pull him away. He didn't cry that night. He didn't seem like he needed to.

«Do you want to tell me about him?» Svetlana asks when they're quiet for a while.

"Hm?"

«Your Jane. Tell me about him.»

Ilya sighs. His nose nudges against hers, and his hand slides up her back to pull her closer. She lets him.

«He says *fuck* a lot.»

Svetlana laughs. She feels him laugh against her face, feels his nose scrunch a little against hers.

«He likes ginger ale,» he says. Svetlana already knows that, but she doesn't say anything. «He doesn't drink much, but he prefers gin. He likes green grapes, but only if they're cold. He doesn't like sleeping in t-shirts because they bunch up under his arms.»

Svetlana pulls away to see him clearly. His eyes are barely open, expression soft like he's wistful, like he's daydreaming. Svetlana doesn't think she's ever seen this expression on his face before. She watches, eyes wide, lips spreading into a smile. He doesn't seem to notice.

«He likes it rough,» he says quietly, and he probably shouldn't tell her that— Shane probably wouldn't appreciate it. But she's not going to tell him. «But… he also likes it when I kiss his neck really softly, and when I hold his hands.»

«What else?»

«He likes holding my hair,» he says, absently lifting a hand to his hair like he's trying to find Shane's hand there. «Tight, like he doesn't want me to get too far away.»

«Hot.»

«Yeah. Fuck.»

He rolls onto his back, looking up at the ceiling. Svetlana lets him go, lets his arm pull away from her waist and drape over his own torso, fingertips lingering on Svetlana. She sighs, tucking an arm under her head, reaching to his hair and twisting a curl around her finger.

«I've never seen you like this.»

He hums softly, the corner of his mouth twitching into a tiny smile.

«Like what? Hopeless?»

«No, I've seen you hopeless many times.»

He laughs, turning to glance at her, and she grins, letting go of his curl to poke his face a little too hard. He swats her hand away, looking back at the ceiling like it's interesting.

«Tender,» Svetlana whispers, brushing the back of her finger over his cheek.

He exhales slowly.

«He makes me feel tender.»

He gets the house. It's so stupid it's almost funny.

Polina is pissed, as expected, but Ilya is so fucking tired he doesn't spare her any of his— admittedly extensive— spare time. He doesn't look at her even though he can feel her eyes boring into him as he talks to the lawyer about selling.

He gets money, too. Which is fine.

Andrei gets the cars, which feels pointed in a way.

He doesn't know what he'd been expecting, really. Some stocks and a handwritten note that he's disappointing, signed by his father.

He also doesn't know what he's been *hoping* for. Maybe some heirlooms. Something of his mother's. He's tried to not let himself hope for it, for photo albums or keepsakes, for something that matters, or even something that *doesn't* matter. His father probably got rid of most of her things within the year. Polina probably got rid of the rest.

It's a waste of fucking time. He's tired.

It gets worse when he comes here— home, he guesses. (He hasn't felt at home here, though. Maybe ever.) He feels fucking empty. A walking shadow.

Svetlana notices. She tries to help, which he appreciates even though there isn't much she can actually do besides play with his hair and put food in his face so he eats.

She knows he likes the quiet. She sits with him in silence, laying with her legs across his lap on her phone, scrolling mindlessly. He's on Twitter again. Stupid.

His phone vibrates. His eyes jump to the notification at the top of the screen, hiding part of the stupid tweet he's reading.

Marly 🧸
Everything okay? Haven't heard from you in a while.

He ignores it. It's fucked up.

He lets his head fall back against the plush headboard, looking across the room. It's a nice hotel. He hates it, even though he's allowed to smoke.

He stares blankly for so long that his phone turns off. He sees it go dark in his periphery, but he doesn't care, vision blurring.

Until his phone vibrates again, startling him out of whatever trance he's in. He blinks, taking a breath, and he looks down at his phone, skimming the screen.

Jane
Are you busy rn?

He opens it without hesitating, typing *Never* before he deletes it and tries again, watching the screen intently as Shane reads it and responds.

Lily
No, are you okay?

Jane
Not really
I think I'm going to have a panic attack

"Fuck," he says out loud, sitting up, pushing Sveta's legs mindlessly. She lifts her head with a raised eyebrow. «You have to go, Sveta.»

«What?»

«It's…»

He trails off, already standing from the bed, fumbling with his phone as he calls Shane. Sveta watches until he's lifting the phone to his ear, and she seems to draw conclusions quickly.

«Is it Shane?»

«Yes, just…»

He gestures, shoos her in a way that's really quite rude but he can't feel bad about it when Shane's voice answers the phone shakily.

"Ilya?"

“Hi,” Ilya says softly, turning away from where Svetlana is grabbing her shoes and waving goodbye quickly, stumbling toward the door. “Talk to me, what’s happening?”

“I’m, uhm. I don’t know.”

“Where are you?”

“I’m— My apartment,” Shane says with an exhale. “In Montreal.”

“You’re not at your parents’?”

“I was, I— I had a meeting with my agent and my mom and I— I just wanted to be alone for a while, but I’m…”

Ilya distantly hears the door to the hotel room open and close. He glances outside; it’s still bright out, the sun just starting to dip, and they’re close to Sveta’s apartment. He chose this hotel for a reason.

“Okay,” Ilya says lightly. “Did something happen?”

“Just…”

Shane trails off, sniffling a little, and Ilya can practically see him looking up at the ceiling, blinking tears back, rubbing his face roughly.

“My agent thinks the statement wasn’t good enough,” he says shakily. “She wants to me post something else, and she tried drafting something, but my only fucking options are to lie or to come out, and I almost started fucking crying right in front of her, so my fucking *agent* knows I’m *gay—″*

“Shane,” Ilya interrupts as gently as he can, lifting a hand like he’s reaching for Shane’s chest. “Любимый, it’s okay, breathe for me.”

Shane falls quiet, and for a brief, horrifying moment Ilya thinks Shane somehow understood it, somehow knows just enough Russian to know what Ilya is saying to him. But he takes a slow breath, exhaling too close to the microphone. It crackles.

“Da, like that,” Ilya murmurs, nodding even though Shane can’t see him. “One more time, yes? Slow.”

Shane breathes again. Slow and steady and careful, just like Ilya said.

“Good boy,” Ilya says softly.

Shane makes a noise, a quiet one low in his throat, like he can’t hold it back, and Ilya squeezes his eyes shut, lowering to sit on the plush arm chair by the bed, leaning back.

“You are, aren’t you?” he says. “Such a good boy, so good at listening.”

“Ilya,” Shane whispers.

“Always so good,” Ilya whispers back. “Say it for me.”

“Ilya.”

“Tell me,” Ilya says. “Say it.”

“I— I’m good,” Shane says weakly. “I’m good.”

“That’s right,” Ilya says. His chest feels warm, and his stomach aches, and his hands are shaking a little bit. “You are so fucking good, Shane.”

“Fuck, I’m…”

“Tell me.”

“I don’t know.” His voice is thin, strained. He’s going to start crying. It makes Ilya’s entire body hurt. “I’m so fucking tired, and I’m scared, and I miss y—“

He cuts off with a sharp breath.

“*Fuck.”*

He sounds like he’s running, breaths coming in quicker, shaky, and Ilya leans forward, squeezing his eyes shut.

“Sorry,” Shane chokes. “Fuck, I’m— I’m sorry—“

“No,” Ilya says loud enough for Shane to hear him over his own breathing, his own voice. “Don’t say sorry, it’s okay, I’m here.”

“Ilya—“

“I’m right here,” Ilya says, nodding again. “I’m here, just breathe for me, baby, okay?”

Shane lets out a whiney groan, and there’s a rustle of something, like he’s tucked the phone against himself.

“I need—“

“I’m here,” Ilya says.

Maybe it’s *something* that he knows the end of Shane's sentence. Maybe he should look into that, that he can finish his sentences for him, that he can fill in the blanks. He ignores it instead.

“Breathe for me,” Ilya murmurs. “That is all you have to do right now, just breathe, baby.”

Shane groans again, breathless, and Ilya’s eyes burn. He wants *so* fucking *desperately* to hold him, to cradle his head and press his lips between his eyes, to rest a hand on his chest and feel it rise and fall.

“In, slow,” he says, listening to Shane’s choppy inhale until it stops. “And out, perfect.”

“Mm.”

“You’re okay, I have you.”

“Keep— Keep talking to me.”

“Okay,” Ilya says softly. “Just listen to me, yes? Just my voice.”

“Yeah,” Shane gasps. Ilya can practically hear him nodding.

“I’m right here,” Ilya says lightly, almost cooing. “And you are okay, and you are safe, and healthy, and you are at home, yes? It is quiet, and nobody is there, nobody is bothering you. And the world is full of stupid idiots, but you are not one of them.”

He hears Shane let out a breathless laugh, short and so, *so* sweet.

“And I am here,” Ilya continues gently. “When you need me, I am here.”

Shane makes a noise, choked in his throat.

“Shane,” Ilya says softly. “You are listening?”

“Yeah,” Shane whispers. “‘M listening.”

“Close your eyes for me.” He doesn’t even know how he knows they’re open, that they’re flitting around the room anxiously, searching for an escape.

“Okay,” Shane breathes.

“Good boy,” Ilya praises softly. “Just breathe, and just listen to me, okay? I’m right here.”

“Mm.”

“And I’m not going anywhere, okay? I’ll be here for— for as long as you need me here.”

Shane hums quietly.

“You’re so nice.”

Ilya can’t help but smile, and he holds back a stupid response like *Only to you* or *You’re nicer.*

“Thank you,” he says instead— it’s not much less stupid, really, but Shane just hums again in response. “You’re doing very well, Shane, good boy.”

He’s breathing steadily. Ilya squeezes his eyes shut, picturing the way his chest rises and falls like the gentle crashing of waves on a shore. He loves the sound of Shane breathing.

Which is weird, isn’t it?

Whatever.

“You listen to me so well,” Ilya says softly, a little hesitantly. “So good for me.”

Shane makes a sound, breath catching.

“For you,” he says so quietly, Ilya just barely hears it. “Wanna be good for you.”

“Mm, you are, baby,” Ilya says. “So perfect, like you were made for me.”

“Mm.”

“You don’t have to think right now,” Ilya says. He wishes he could see him, the way his eyes are probably pinched shut, his lip caught between his teeth. “Okay? I think for you.”

“Okay,” Shane says— it’s just a breath, soft and hushed and easy.

“There you go,” Ilya praises softly. “Just be empty, yes?”

Shane swears under his breath. Ilya wishes he could feel it on his skin.

“Ilya,” Shane whispers.

“Yes, baby.”

“I want you,” he whines. “I want you so bad.”

“You have me,” Ilya says, and it feels like a lie. His chest feels tight, and he might fucking cry just because Shane Hollander is whimpering to him over the phone. “You have me, Shane —“

“Fuck, I’m…” Shane trails off, voice trembling as he whines again. Ilya’s eyebrows furrow. It shouldn’t make him feel like this, listening to Shane in distress, listening to him whine like he’s in pain. “I want you.”

Ilya drops his head, squeezing his eyes shut. There’s no way for him to say it without it sounding *too much*— that Shane *has* him, that he has him like nobody else ever has. That Ilya hasn’t slept with anyone except him in at least a year, that he hasn’t even wanted to.

“Fuck, I— I’m fucking hard,” Shane says after a moment, letting out a soft laugh that sounds delirious.

“Yeah?”

“Mhmm.”

“What do you want, Shane?” Ilya asks gently. “Hm?”

Shane hums, breathing shakily, but it sounds better than earlier.

“…Can you make me come?”

It’s like a punch to the gut.

“Yes,” Ilya breathes. “I can do that.”

Shane groans softly, and Ilya imagines him squirming, shifting wherever he’s sitting.

“What room are you in?” he asks. “Where are you?”

“The— The living room. On the sofa.”

“You are comfortable?” Ilya asks. “Or do you want to be in your room?”

“‘S okay here,” Shane mumbles. “I’m fine.”

“Fine?” Ilya says. “Or good?”

“Good. I’m good.” His breath hitches, and he hums a little, and he’s touching himself. Ilya knows it.

“Did I say you could touch yourself?” he asks, voice firmer than he feels. Shane takes a sharp breath.

“No, ‘m sorry, I just…”

“You need it, yes?” He hears a soft affirmative hum. “I know. I will make you feel good.”

“Please,” Shane chokes. “I want it.”

“What are you thinking about?” Ilya asks. He’s curious. Shane makes him curious. “Tell me.”

“You,” Shane says weakly. “Your fucking… your hands. Your mouth, and your chest, and your nose, and your fingers, and…”

Ilya is smiling. He really wasn’t expecting… that. His cock, maybe, but—

“My nose?”

Shane is silent before he lets out a shy laugh, like he hadn’t noticed himself saying it. Ilya’s smile grows.

“It’s pretty,” Shane says. “I don’t know.”

“You are… so fucking cute.”

“Shut up.”

“So cute. What am I supposed to do with you?”

“Make me come.”

“Mm. Take your shirt off for me.”

Quiet. There's a soft rustling noise, an exhale, and then,

"Okay."

"Touch your chest," Ilya instructs gently. "Like I do, yes?"

"Mm."

Ilya thinks about it. Shane's hand sliding over his skin, fingers pressing into the flesh of his pecs, squeezing, kneading, groping. Thumb sliding over his nipple.

"Good boy," Ilya breathes. "Does that feel good?"

"Fuck, yeah," Shane says. "Yes."

"Tell me."

"It feels good," Shane chokes. "I love it when you— when you play with me like this."

Fuck.

Ilya can't help it.

He reaches down, slides a hand over his dick— it's half-hard, just started to tent his pants.

"I love playing with you," he says softly. "You're so easy."

"Yeah," Shane breathes. "Fuck."

"Pinch your nipple for me," Ilya says. "Make it feel good."

"…*Fuck."*

Ilya hums, his hand tightening, pressing into the fabric of his pants.

"You're so good, Shane."

"Fuck, can you…"

"What?"

"My— My dick, Ilya, I'm so hard," Shane whines. "Please."

And Ilya moans. He can't help it, not when Shane is begging so pitifully, voice weak and needy and perfect. So fucking perfect.

"You're listening to me?" Ilya asks breathlessly, squeezing himself over his pants.

"Mhmm. Yes."

“Do you remember… when you got off on my leg that time?” he asks, letting go, running his hand across his leg slowly, caressing the ghost of Shane’s thighs straddling it. “Hm?”

“God, that was so embarrassing,” Shane says with a soft huff. Ilya grins.

“It was so *hot*,” Ilya corrects. “I want you to do that.”

“Fuck,” Shane gasps. “H— How, I’m…”

“Use the side of the sofa,” Ilya says. “The— The arm rest?”

“*Shit,* that’s…”

He falls quiet. There’s a rustling, a shifting on the smooth leather of the sofa, and he’s following directions. Listening.

“Yes?” Ilya says, looking at the ceiling.

“Yeah, ‘s hot. It…” A sharp exhale. “Fuck, it feels good.”

“Mm, good boy,” Ilya hums. He touches himself again, rubbing slowly as he listens to Shane breathe heavily. “Nice and slow, yes?”

“Yeah,” Shane breathes. “Fuck, you…”

“Fuck me?”

Shane laughs brightly, and Ilya beams. He’s probably doing that thing where he drops his head, chin to his chest, like he’s trying to hide his smile and the flush of his cheeks.

“Fuck, *comma,* you…” He exhales sharply, letting out a breathy hum. “You’re so hot.”

“You cannot even see me.”

“Are you touching yourself?” Shane asks softly. Ilya hums, looking down at his hand, fingers pressing so he can hold his dick through the fabric.

“A little.”

Shane whines. Actually *whines,* like he’s going to throw a tantrum. It makes Ilya grin, makes his hand tighten.

“Fuck, can I—“

“No,” Ilya interrupts.

“Ilya—“

“I said no,” Ilya says firmly. “You will not touch yourself, okay? Use the sofa like you used my leg.”

Shane moans high in his throat. It sounds fucking *good,* breathless and whiney and pathetic. Ilya's eyes drift shut again.

"Talk to me," Ilya says. "What are you doing?"

"Just… Mm. Rubbing on the— the arm rest. I feel …"

"Hm?"

Shane scoffs. Gasps.

"Feel like a whore."

Ilya groans, finally pushing his hand under his pants.

"Aren't you?" he asks softly. "So needy?"

"Yeah," Shane gasps. "I need it, *fuck,* I need you so bad."

"I'm here," Ilya breathes. "Just let me take care of you, yes?"

"Yes," Shane says weakly. "Please."

"Touch your chest again. Play with it."

"Fuck."

Shane is breathing hard, panting, and somewhere under the sound of it, Ilya can hear him moving, grinding his hips against the sofa, fabric rubbing smoothly against the leather, slow and rhythmic. He's good at that, like he's meticulous even when he's mindless.

"Want your hands," Shane mumbles. "Miss them."

"You will have them again," Ilya murmurs. It's not something he usually says— they don't usually address future hookups, don't acknowledge that it's a regular thing for them. "They are yours."

Shane whines again, voice breaking in his throat.

"*Fuck,* can you— What are you doing?" he asks. "Can you tell me?"

As though Ilya would keep it from him.

He looks down. Tugs at his pants and shifts so they pull out of the way to expose most of his dick. He's so hard it aches a little, but he just teases it, running his fingertips over the head.

"Playing," he says softly. "Just the tip."

Shane lets out a deep groan. It sounds pained.

"Are you— Are you wet?"

He sounds so shy when he says stuff like this, dirty, filthy things— until he's out of his mind enough. *Harder* and *More* and *You gonna come for me?* always come out of his mouth so easily, so effortlessly.

Ilya presses a fingertip to his slit and pulls it away slowly, watching a string a precome glisten and fall.

"Of course. You know how wet you make me."

Shane whines, and then he laughs.

"Maybe I just like to hear it."

"Yeah?"

"Mm."

Ilya groans a little, shifting to shove his pants down, pausing to gather saliva in his mouth before spitting it into his palm. Shane always looks so grossed out when Ilya does that, but he doesn't seem to mind it as much as he used to.

Ilya grits his jaw as he fumbles with the phone, pulling it away to put it on speakerphone.

He moves the phone down, touching himself to spread the spit and pre, rubbing quickly so Shane can hear it, wet and fast.

"Oh, *fuck—"*

Ilya groans, his head falling back. He can hear Shane moving, can hear him whining and swearing under his breath, can hear his voice muffle like he's falling against the back of the sofa, burying his face in it like he did with Ilya's neck that one time.

Ilya had reveled in it, the way Shane fell apart so easily from just humping Ilya's leg, from Ilya murmuring to him and holding him in place by his hips. The way Shane's lips parted for every groan and gasp, the way he'd *drooled* on Ilya's neck, left it wet and cool with spit.

It's stupid to be jealous of an inanimate object, but Ilya wants to be that sofa. Something is wrong with him.

"You hear it?" he asks breathlessly, bringing the phone back up, turning off speakerphone so he can hear Shane as close as he can. "You hear how much I want you?"

"Yeah," Shane gasps, still muffled. "I hear it, *fuck,* Ilya—"

Ilya slows down, letting his head fall back and his legs fall open lazily, rubbing just under the head of his cock, pressing the foreskin back and forth. He sighs a soft moan.

"You are touching your chest for me?" he asks, eyes drifting shut. He slips a finger over the head of his dick, pressing it so it tucks under the foreskin, and his shoulders push back, head pressing into the back of the armchair.

“Yes,” Shane breathes. “My nipple, like you do.”

Ilya moans softly, eyebrows furrowing. It’s a filthy image, Shane alone in his big apartment, riding the armrest of the sofa, pinching and tugging at his nipple that way Ilya loves to— it makes his face scrunch up in discomfort, like it hurts, like he doesn’t *love it.*

“Spit on it.”

Shane is quiet, and then Ilya hears it, the soft sound of him spitting, and Ilya feels kind of drunk, hand tightening as he mouths *Боже мой* across the room.

“Oh, I missed,” Shane says, voice temporarily at a normal tone, flat and dry like it usually is, and then he’s giggling, laughing at himself, and Ilya’s chest aches. It’s a beautiful sound, no doubt accompanied by a beautiful *sight*— Shane’s eyes squeezed shut, nose scrunched and lips spread into a grin.

“That’s okay,” Ilya says softly, biting his lip at the sound of Shane’s pleasured sigh. “Yeah?”

“Mm, feels good.” He’s breathless. “Wish it was yours.”

“My what?”

“Your spit,” Shane says roughly before he falls quiet for a moment. Ilya hears him spit again, and he stares at the ceiling, hand moving faster than he’s telling it to. “Your come.”

Ilya swears under his breath, hand tightening before he slides it lower, tucking beneath his underwear to cup his balls, squeezing the slightest bit.

“That is filthy, Shane,” he mutters. “You want my come on you?”

“Yeah,” Shane groans. “Want it so bad, I want it everywhere.”

“Fuck, *Shane.”*

Shane hums, and he must be fucking out of his *mind,* because he *keeps talking.*

“Want it on my face,” he says, his voice weak like he’s going to cry. “And in my mouth, and — and on my chest, and— *fuck*— in my *ass*—“

They haven’t talked about doing it raw, but Ilya can’t help but wonder if Shane’s been thinking about it. If he’s been wanting it.

“Fuck, that’s hot.”

“Mm, *fuck,* Ilya—“

He whines pitifully, muffled like he’s burying his face in the sofa again, and he’s getting close— Ilya can hear it. He gets all whiney and breathless before he comes, gasping things like *Oh, god,* and *Don't stop, don’t stop.* Ilya loves to hear it, the way his voice gets breathy

and high in his throat. And he loves to see it— his entire body trembles, and his mouth falls open, and his eyebrows furrow, and it's fucking divine.

Ilya groans, moving his hand to jerk himself off, shifting back against the chair. Shane is moaning, whimpering as he rides the armrest of his sofa, and Ilya wishes he could see him like this.

He wishes he could see him at all.

"Fuck, good boy," he says breathlessly. "So fucking good, Shane—"

"I wanna hear you come," Shane chokes. "Let me hear you come, Ilya, please—"

Ilya swears breathlessly, back arching.

He'd do anything for him.

Shane sleeps well after they hang up. And after he takes a quick shower and changes his clothes.

He hates that he has nothing of Ilya's to wear after, and then hates that he hates it. It's romantic, isn't it? Putting someone's clothes on? Especially after they make you come. There's a line there somewhere.

But Shane wants it. *Really* wants it.

To have something warm, something that has the lingering scent of Ilya's cologne, the lingering scent of *Ilya.* God, he smells so fucking good.

It takes a while for them to hang up. Shane kind of doesn't want to, still straddling the armrest and leaning against the back of the sofa, clutching his phone to himself as he listens to Ilya's breaths slow. It takes a while for him to stop trembling.

Ilya seems hesitant to let him go too, like he isn't sure Shane is really okay.

He is.

He's better.

Ilya makes him feel better.

Shane is exhausted as he dresses after the shower, eyes drifting shut as he pulls on a pair of briefs and a hoodie, and he knows, logically, that it makes sense for him to be this fucking tired. Panic attacks do this, and so do mind-melting orgasms.

Fuck, he's never come in his pants like that. He's come in his pants— of course he has— but *this.* God.

It was *intense.* It was intense before he even got hard. He kind of feels like he's lost his mind.

He said things. They both did. Things like *good boy* and *I want you to come in my ass.* In fewer words.

And really, some of the things should have made it worse, should have made him scared, because they're not supposed to be like this. Not even over the phone, overseas. But it was easy, coming down from that high with Ilya's voice in his ear, murmuring to him and calling him gross.

I'm *gross? Asshole. You're the one that made me dry hump my sofa.*

I didn't make *you do anything. And I didn't say I wanted to drown in your come—*

I did not *say that—*

He turns off the lights. He shuts the blinds, closes his door, turns on the fan. And he collapses into bed like it's late at night, like it's not half past noon.

It's not healthy— he knows full well that it's not. It's borderline self-destructive, honestly, the way he's fucking up the daily routine he's had for years. He's never been one to take naps unless he's ill or jet lagged, and now.

He was going to take a nap when he got home. Really, he was planning on knocking out on the sofa, falling asleep or putting on some boring documentary if he couldn't drift off completely, but then the shitty part of his brain took over. It was too loud.

It's quiet now. He swears Ilya's voice is echoing in his head, murmuring shit like *Such a good boy,* which— Look. Shane isn't a fucking dog.

But.

He likes being good for Ilya. He likes pleasing him, even if it's just by touching himself the way Ilya tells him to, or by drinking water and promising to text him before he falls asleep.

Jane
Water drank ✔️
Fresh clothes on ✔️
Falling asleep ✔️

Lily
You are so perfect.

Jane
Whatever.
Nap time

Lily
Text me when you are awake please.

Jane
I will.
Thank you.
For calling earlier I mean.
And also everything else. I liked it a lot.

Lily
Any time
Really. I am here.
I liked it a lot too.

It kind of kills him. He finds himself pulling a pillow to his chest and hugging it to himself like he's trying to fill some kind of gap, some gaping void that's by his side.

shelly | she/her *@therangersfan1*
have we discussed how hollanders statement or whatever says ‘my privacy and the privacy of my loved ones’. does this mean he is seeing someone or am i delusional
💬**14** 🔄 **1** ❤️**15**

|

replying to @therangersfan1
chance #24 *@luckeeecharmsss*
how are you quoting hollander asking for ppl to respect his privacy whilst actively Not Doing That
💬 🔄 **7** ❤️**29**

replying to @therangersfan1
freddie! he/him *@frederickjonesthetrapsman*
WHO FUCKING CARES LEAVE HIM ALONE
💬 🔄 **10** ❤️**25**

replying to @therangersfan1
lindsey smiley face *@p3anutall3rgy*
i mean he could def just mean like his parents and friends but! obviously if he IS seeing someone then him having to come out would affect their life too. esp if theyre not out bc like hollander is pretty famous isnt he? that would affect their life wouldnt it?
💬**3** 🔄 ❤️**5**

|

replying to @p3anutall3rgy
hazel !! *@dustyfurbies*
i was unaware he had friends other than pike /lh
💬 🔄 ❤️**17**

replying to @p3anutall3rgy
sander *@crisscrossh0ck3yst1ck5*
hollander has friends?
💬 🔄 ❤️**19**

Ilya shouldn't be as excited as he is for the season's first game against Montreal. It's not the game he's excited about per se— he's excited, of course he is, to play and compete, but *Shane* is in Montreal.

He feels better the second he's on the plane back to Boston. Before the plane even moves in taxi, before it's even in the air, he's settled, his chest lighter than it's felt since the start of the off-season. And he kind of feels shitty about it, being so stoked for the start of the season when Shane is dreading it so much.

They've been talking about it. Texting. Calling, occasionally. Video calling, three times. One time, Sveta was there— she was much too excited to meet Shane kind of in person, and the way she'd snatched the phone from Ilya's hand had made Shane laugh so brightly Ilya couldn't help but laugh and let them go across the room, out of reach.

Shane hasn't been well.

He's stressed, *beyond* stressed, and even though nothing's really changed except the bullshit online, he feels like everything has. He told Ilya on the phone that he isn't excited about the start of the season.

He's *always* excited for the season. He isn't this year. And it's scaring him.

And Ilya doesn't know what the fuck to do.

He's tried texting him through it, assuring him that he's okay, and he's going to be fine, and that he's still the fucking captain of the Voyagers— even if they haven't said much since Shane's statement went up. Shane confided in Ilya that he wonders if Hayden had a talk with them, if he told them outside the group chat to leave Shane alone, to fucking drop it. If there's a Voyagers chat that he's not a part of.

They're in the same time zone when Ilya lands in Boston. It gives him butterflies. It's fucking stupid.

And then they're in the same city, and he's so fucking close Ilya's body aches with it, with the need to touch him, to hold him, to smell him and hear him and breathe him in. He rooms with Marly, who he did end up responding to a few days after Marly's initial message checking on him. Marly is much nicer than people expect him to be— he was understanding when Ilya told him *I've been having a hard time*. He even offered a Facetime call for Ilya to vent.

They arrive in Montreal early, with almost a whole twenty-four hours to kill before they have to be at the arena, and the guys go out for drinks. Ilya tells them to be responsible. *I don't want to lose this fucking game because you're all hungover.*

They pinky-promise him they won't be hungover. Marly promises to keep an eye on them.

Ilya stays behind.

Lily
[location attached]
713

Jane
Ilya.
We have a game tomorrow.

Lily
The guys went out for drinks. I want to see you.

Jane
It's a bad idea.
Give me 15

There's a knock at the door after 13 and a half, and Ilya is startled by it before he grins, impressed. Shane is on him before the door is even open all the way, hand pressing to Ilya's chest and pushing him into the room, stumbling over his feet.

It's not even a kiss.

Shane's arms are around his neck, tight and desperate, and Ilya's chest tightens suddenly. He throws the door shut and flicks the lock just in case before he wraps Shane in a tight embrace, lifting him up off the ground. Shane groans, his voice soft next to Ilya's ear.

Ilya swears under his breath, tightening his arms around him, burying his face in Shane's neck.

He doesn't want to let go.

He doesn't ever want to fucking let go.

His eyes are closed, shut tight, and it's dark with his face down, and for the first time in months, he can feel Shane's breath on him. It's warm, Shane's nose tucked right where the collar of Ilya's shirt drapes over his neck.

Ilya can feel Shane's fucking pulse on his face.

"Fuck," Shane chokes after a while. They've been standing here too long, just holding each other, just breathing. His voice is tight, breaking in his throat, and Ilya wants to take it all away, whatever is choking him up like this, whatever is making him ache.

Ilya lifts him up again, higher, and Shane lets him, his legs lifting to wrap around Ilya's hips. Ilya groans, hands sliding to his ass, his thighs, just to hold him up. Shane nuzzles into Ilya's neck, and Ilya tilts his head to let him in even though it tickles; he's brushing his nose back and forth, breathing heavily.

"Are you okay?" Ilya asks softly, his voice muffled.

"I don't know."

Ilya carries him to the room's desk, sets him down as softly as he can, and he tries to pull away, pushing gently at his hips. Shane's breath catches in his throat, and he shakes his head, pressing closer until he relents.

"Let me see," Ilya whispers, tilting his head to look at Shane's face. The desk is low, and Shane has to look up at him. He looks pitiful. He looks tired. "Oh, baby."

Shane exhales, closing his eyes. Ilya touches his face, brushing the backs of his fingers over his freckles softly before he presses his palm to his cheek, cradling him. Shane turns into his hand, expression relaxing.

“Tell me,” Ilya says softly.

“They’re not really talking to me,” Shane says without opening his eyes. “Any of them, except Hayden and— and JJ. The others only talk to me if they have to, and the group chat’s been really quiet, and I’m…”

He sighs shakily, eyes fluttering open to look at Ilya’s like he’s searching for something. He shrugs, shaking his head.

“I don’t know what to do,” he whispers brokenly. “I can’t be a captain if my team won’t fucking talk to me, and if I’m a shitty captain, our season’s gonna be terrible, and they’re all gonna know it’s because I’m fucking gay, and I’m gonna get kicked—”

“Stop,” Ilya interrupts quietly. Shane falls silent, eyes fluttering, blinking tears back. Ilya exhales slowly, holding Shane’s face between his hands, brushing his thumbs over his freckles, gazing. It feels unreal, having him here, meeting his eyes. “Breathe.”

Shane inhales slowly, gaze unwavering, chest rising until it stops. Ilya nods, and Shane exhales, like he was waiting for Ilya’s permission.

“Good,” Ilya murmurs, nodding again. “You are okay.”

“Ilya.”

“You are a good captain,” Ilya says firmly, leaning closer, nodding, looking back and forth between Shane’s eyes. “If your team sucks, is because *they* suck, yes? Not you. You— Shane,” he interrupts himself, tilting his head and pulling at Shane’s when he tries to lower it, to look away. “Shane. You haven’t done anything wrong.”

“I feel like I’m doing it all wrong.”

“You are not. You are doing so… You are doing so well,” Ilya says, throat tightening. “You are.”

Shane tries to shake his head. Ilya doesn’t let him.

“The world is fucked, and people are cruel, and you are brave,” Ilya murmurs. “You are so brave.”

He isn’t quite crying, but his eyes are gleaming, wet with unshed tears, and he’s looking up at Ilya so sweetly his teeth hurt. Ilya stares at him, memorising the pattern of his freckles. They’re always darker at the start of the season, when he’s spent time in the sun, but they’re not as dark as they usually are this year. It kind of kills Ilya, seeing that Shane hasn’t been outside, that he hasn’t had a normal summer.

“You’re Shane fucking Hollander,” Ilya says softly. “They will not kick you if they like winning.”

It makes Shane’s lips quirk into a smile. Ilya feels like he’s standing in the sun.

They fall quiet, looking at each other like they're using telepathy. Shane kind of looks like he's begging, eyes wide and shining, and Ilya wants to tell him to use his words, to just *say* what he wants. Ilya will give it to him, whatever it is.

"You haven't kissed me," Shane says finally, voice hushed. Ilya blinks.

"That is unacceptable," he says very seriously. "I will fix this."

Shane smiles, chin lifting, head tilting, and he's so precious it makes Ilya crazy. He's gentle as he holds Shane's jaw, moving it so he lifts his chin some more, and he leans down.

Shane's eyes drift shut, and Ilya presses a soft kiss to his forehead, lingering to breathe him in. Shane sighs.

Ilya pulls away to look at him, cradling him, and he leans closer, pressing kiss after kiss to his face, his forehead, cheeks, nose, chin, until Shane is giggling a little, eyes squeezed shut, nose scrunched adorably.

"Ilya," he says.

"I am fixing problem," Ilya says between kisses. "Shush."

Shane laughs, hands finding Ilya's waist and holding him. His fingers curl into the fabric of his shirt like he doesn't want Ilya to step away. As though he would.

"Ilya."

"Mm."

He turns Shane's face, kissing across his cheek and temple, ducking his head.

"You missed a spot."

"*What?*" Ilya says dramatically, pulling away and looking at Shane's face like he's searching for it, like he can see the shape of his kisses on his skin. "Where?"

Shane looks at him expectantly, eyebrows raised, and he huffs when Ilya doesn't seem to get it. He puckers his lips. Points at them.

"Ah," Ilya breathes. "I will take care of this."

He kisses him. It's slow, not like it usually is, not like what Ilya half-expected of their reunion. He expected it rushed, needy and desperate and *normal.*

But *this.*

They linger, lips pressing and slotting together and staying. Shane's hand touches Ilya's face, palm sliding over his cheek, inhaling slowly. Their noses press. Shane's legs tighten around Ilya's hips, pulling him closer, and Ilya lets him, draping an arm around his shoulders, holding the side of his neck.

They part slowly, breathing heavily. Their foreheads press, and Ilya's eyebrows furrow. He exhales, brushing his thumb back and forth over Shane's pulse.

"How much time do we have?" Shane whispers.

"Plenty," Ilya says, nudging his nose against Shane's. "Do not worry. What do you want?"

Shane pulls him back in, lips parted, and Ilya grins against his mouth, letting his jaw drop for Shane's tongue to press inside. He missed this. Of course he did.

Shane hums, arm wrapping around Ilya's waist tightly, hand reaching for his hair and squeezing firmly. Ilya moans softly, cradling the back of Shane's head.

They're panting when they part, lips slick and shining, and Shane's cheeks are pink. His freckles are glowing.

Ilya swears under his breath. Shane nods like he gets it, and he reaches up, pushing both hands into Ilya's curls. He's gentle with it, the way he meets Ilya's eyes like he's checking as he pushes him down, legs releasing Ilya's hips and spreading open. Ilya nods.

He goes down easy.

🍝 *@ifihadtopickateam45*
the league knows what they're doing putting montreal and boston against each other as their first games of the season.
💬**7** 🔄 **24** ❤️**37**

replying to @ifihadtopickateam45
juraj my beloved *@skateonme*
no they're out for blood what is happening
💬 🔄 **2** ❤️**15**

ana 🏖️🐆*@beachfrontpanthers*
cancel me all you want but oh the thought of the world finally seeing why ppl like him shouldn't be in the sport. i need him gone GET his ass rozanov
💬**9** 🔄 ❤️**2**

|

replying to @nightgoldenknight
hasan 🧸 *@butcherisms*
classic behaviour from a tkachuk defender you should deactivate and also ratio
💬**2** 🔄 **49** ❤️**219**

replying to @beachfrontpanthers
🐞🕷️🐌🪱🐛*@bitemeboston*
aside from the obvious flaws in your personality, your obliviousness is astounding. i'm a montreal bitch through and through but ana. babe. do you think rozanov and hollander aren't friends.
💬**4** 🔄 **9** ❤️**16**

replying to @beachfrontpanthers
lucy | SJ🦈 *@giveemgills*
....people…… like him…… ana give us a quick explanation of what you mean by that huh?? asians?? gays??? nice normal people that aren't rapists?? answer quickly
💬**2** 🔄 **19** ❤️**89**

replying to @beachfrontpanthers
bayani ⭐ he/him *@bayanibutifiwasinsane*
you gotta deactivate
💬 🔄**2** ❤️**29**

luigi *@icouldvegonebigleagueifitwerentfortheinjury*
people are acting like the bears are gonna go full westboro baptist church in montreal. can we all calm down. it's hockey.
💬**9** 🔄 **57** ❤️**102**

cash money (maya) *@bearwithmeibeg*
do yall think rozanov is gonna just fight hollander and call him a ****** during the face off or something. why are we acting like someone's gonna die
💬**7** 🔄 **24** ❤️**37**

#1 shane hollander defender *@mistertwentyfour*
you guys are gonna be so embarrassed when montreal wins and no fights happen except between rozanov and pike just because rozanov loves to ragebait him
💬**4** 🔄 **18** ❤️**40**

|

replying to @mistertwentyfour
#1 shane hollander defender *@mistertwentyfour*
i'm manifesting.
💬 🔄 ❤️**19**

|

replying to *@mistertwentyfour*
🐿️ *@puckrighttotheface*
manifesting that your favs best friend gets in a fight is kinda funny
💬**1** 🔄 ❤️**12**

|

replying to @puckrighttotheface
#1 shane hollander defender *@mistertwentyfour*
if i was a betting man id put money down that pike starts the fight.
💬 🔄 ❤️**9**

There are phones held out in front of Shane's face in place of microphones— they've been doing that for a while, using their phones to simply record his answers, but it's still weird to see. It makes Hayden feel old.

He's standing close even though he doesn't really have to— none of the questions will be directed at him. All the cameras and eyes around them are on Shane, who hates it. Hayden knows he hates it. But he's standing strong, shoulder just touching Hayden's like he's seeking it, like he wants Hayden closer, and he looks stoic. His expression is hard, eyebrows drawn. He isn't almost smiling like he usually is, face trained into a pleasant, friendly expression. He looks serious. He's kind of scary now that Hayden thinks of it. He'd hate to be on an opposing team.

"Shane, how are you feeling about this upcoming season?"

"Uh, yeah," Shane says absently. "Good. I know we've all been keeping up with training and doing the work over the off-season. Pre-season training's gone well—"

A flat-out lie.

"— and I trust the guys to keep their heads in the game and do what needs to be done for the team to do well."

"And how are you feeling about heading into the season given everything online?"

A beat of silence.

"I'm not worried."

Lie.

"None of it has anything to do with hockey," Shane continues, voice firm like he's leaving no room for argument. "Which is what we're here for, and what we train for."

"Do you have anything to say about the statements and rumors online?" someone asks. "There's a lot of speculation and—"

"I've said what I need to say," Shane interrupts curtly, his voice firm. He doesn't usually do that unless the interviews have to be cut short. "I don't have anything to add."

"What about to the fans who are concerned about your performance this season?"

"They don't have anything to be concerned about," Shane says. Hayden's hand twitches at his side, eyeing the reporters. He knows his face is on camera too, that he's going to be screencapped and posted if he reacts to anything. "I know what I'm doing."

"And to the fans that are curious?" someone says. Hayden sees Shane's shoulders rise as he takes a slow breath, and he risks a glance at him. His nostrils are flared, his eyes narrowed, lips pursed, and he looks fucking *angry.* "Who just want to see some resolution, or who just want to know some more about you outside of your hockey—"

"I've already stated that I'm not answering questions about my private life," Shane snaps, words moving quickly from his mouth to the recording devices around him, to the camera, the boom mic hanging over their head. Hayden's lips part, and he takes a breath to say something like *Maybe we're done with questions* or *Do you have any questions regarding the game?* or fucking something, but Shane isn't finished. "I'm here to talk about *hockey,* not who I'm *fucking*."

There are soft gasps. Cameras flash. Hayden's eyes, wide, stare blankly at the ground.

Shit.

"And if all of your questions only have to do with *that*, then maybe you should write for some stupid fucking tabloids and you shouldn't be *sports* journalists."

He leaves. He shoves past Hayden, pushes away a reporter that's already asking something stupid, and Hayden is stuck there, standing and staring at the ground before his eyes lift. The cameras are on him now, and nobody's saying anything. They're all looking at him like

they're waiting for him to say something, to follow *that* up, and he pauses for another brief moment before lifting a hand, gesturing vaguely toward where Shane's disappeared.

"Come on, guys."

He turns away before they have the chance to say anything.

#1 shane hollander defender *@mistertwentyfour*
GET THEIR ASSES SHANEY LETS FUCKING GOOOOOO
💬**7** 🔄 **164** ❤️**274**

babe *@hockeyfannotnumber1*
The Sweetheart of Canadian Hockey Just Said the Word Fucking on International Television. Twice.
💬**167** 🔄 **512** ❤️**753**

river | they/them *@slushontheice*
something has shifted. i can feel it in the aether. they pissed shane hollander off and the planet has tilted on its axis.
💬**12** 🔄 **70** ❤️**87**

preem | SJS *@legendairy*
i didnt know he had it in him that was fucking crazy
💬**7** 🔄 **164** ❤️**274**

|

replying to @legendairy
missy \\ they/she *@torontomaplelea_ves*
no literally the way you can see him getting more and more pissed until he just. snaps. oh my fucking god.
💬**5** 🔄 **49** ❤️**187**

frida <3 *@sharkboym4ck*
i hope those reporters are fucking embarassed bro
💬**2** 🔄 **78** ❤️**148**

|

replying to @sharkboym4ck
clarissa she/her *@sjsharkieismybestfriend*
serves them fucking right what are they thinking
💬**1** 🔄 **9** ❤️**15**

loser #2 *@ohnomypucks*
hollander is going to fucking destroy them tonight isnt he
💬**25** 🔄 **219** ❤️**390**

Svetlana 🦅🇺🇸🦅🌭🍔🦅
My Jane.
You are so amazing.

Jane 🍁🇨🇦☀️🏒❤️
Cannot believe I just said that on camera.

Svetlana 🦅🇺🇸🦅🌭🍔🦅
I am very proud. Lily is very proud too. I can feel it in my bones.

Jane 🍁🇨🇦☀️🏒❤️
Lol
I'm fucking stressed
And just kind of angry.

Svetlana 🦅🇺🇸🦅🌭🍔🦅
Use it. Kick Boston's ass tonight.
I am rooting for you.
Don't tell Lily I said that.

Jane 🍁🇨🇦☀️🏒❤️
I would never betray you like that

“No, I have no worries about this season,” Ilya says confidently, leaning toward the closest microphone. “We will win, many times.”

“And how are you feeling about going up against Montreal today?” someone asks. “Any thoughts on playing Hollander?”

“Same thoughts as always,” Ilya says after a brief pause to furrow his eyebrows like he’s confused by the question. “We will win.”

“No thoughts on seeing Hollander on the ice?” the reporter asks again. “I’m not sure if you’ve been up to date on everything online recently—”

“I have Twitter,” Ilya interrupts. “I have seen bullshit, yes.”

“Any thoughts on it all?”

“Eh, it is not hockey, so no, not really.”

“No apprehension about going against Hollander at all?”

He sounds surprised, and Ilya hates it. He kind of wants to take the microphone from his hand and break it. Throw it to the ground. Or at his face. And maybe he’s just doing his job, maybe these questions are scripted and he’s required to ask them or he’ll be fired and his family will starve, but. Fuck.

“You are asking if I have problem with Hollander because people think he is gay?”

The reporter blinks. He has the decency to look a little embarrassed, and he shrugs, still holding the microphone out for Ilya.

“Is because I am Russian or because I am hockey player?” There’s no answer, and Ilya doesn’t wait, sliding his tongue over his teeth, exhaling slowly. “Okay, look. I… I was not going to talk about this because it is not important, but look. I am Russian. I do not like everything Russian government does, yes? You are Canadian, you do not like everything Canadian government does.”

He’s being stupid. This is fucking stupid.

“There are many gay people in Russia,” he says. He hopes his face doesn’t flush with colour. “They have to be… quiet. They cannot live out loud, no? Because it is not safe. They are not safe. There are many gay people in sports, but they have to be quiet too.”

Stupid. Stupid. Stupid.

It's too obvious. They'll all know.

He keeps talking.

"Because one person *might* be gay, *might*," he says again pointedly. "And this is what happens, okay? Is the only thing anybody wants to talk about, and he gets, eh, harassed on the internet, and he is told to leave the sport that he— he *dominates* in, yes? I am getting asked about it like it matters. It does not matter if Hollander is fucking gay, does it?"

He takes a breath, looking at the reporter with raised eyebrows.

"People, they— they act like the sport will fall apart now, like it is destroying it all, but how many fucking rapists are there in the league?" he asks. A sheet of silence falls over the room. "Who the fuck is saying anything about it other than the women online who are told to get out of— of sports spaces? There are athletes online acting like they will be infected or something, da? You want to know my thoughts?"

His hands are shaking. He turns, shifts on his feet to lean toward the closest microphone.

"I think that the guys who have problem playing against a gay guy, or a *maybe* gay guy, are fucking pussies. That is what I think."

He walks away, ignoring the calls of his name and the camera flashes, and his chest aches, and it aches, and it aches.

#1 shane hollander defender *@mistertwentyfour*
oh. wow.
💬**4** 🔄 **60** ❤️**103**

jordan | they/he/she *@performativematcha*
hey @beachfrontpanthers would you like to share your thoughts??? please share with the class go ahead
💬**7** 🔄 **54** ❤️**145**

adam <3 *@givemeiceandafuckingbreak*
ok razanov is a lot cooler than i gave him credit for. he's an asshole but hes not a bigot and i respect that
💬**1** 🔄 **20** ❤️**53**

harper 🐻 *@beatsandbearsandbeans*
ilya rozanov the man that you are
💬**59** 🔄 **810** ❤️**1K**

Hayden Pike #35 ✓ *@haydenpikeofficial*
I never thought I'd be seen agreeing with the guy, but… what Rozanov said.
💬**1K** 🔄 **4.9K** ❤️**5.6K**

Jane
Wow.

Lily
They pissed me off.
It was too much, I am sorry.

Jane
Don't be sorry.
I appreciate it a lot.
Really.
Also it was hot.

Lily
Lol.
I will curse at press more often.

The locker room is quiet.

The guys are talking, quietly muttering to one another, but Shane is still seething, hands shaking after texting Svetlana, and Ilya, even after seeing that Ilya's somehow managed to cause a stir even after Shane's outburst. He can feel Hayden looking at him, can feel him waiting for him to burst again.

"You okay?" Hayden asks quietly. Shane sees someone glance in his periphery, but he doesn't look back.

"Fine," he says sharply.

"Hey, captain."

They turn at the same time, turning in toward each other as their eyes find Gariépy—Benjamin "Benny" Gariépy, left defense— looking at them, holding his hockey stick in his hand. Shane looks him up and down; he can't quite read the expression on his face, but he can't do that usually anyway. The room is quiet, like everyone is listening in.

"Yeah."

"I just…" He shrugs, making a face. "I was just wondering when you were planning on telling us."

And the room *was* quiet, or at least Shane thought it was. It's fucking silent, like the air's been sucked out of it, and he swears he can hear a shower dripping somewhere.

"...What?"

"You know," Gariépy says, shrugging again, hand sliding over the stick. "It's the kind of thing we'd like to know about our captain, isn't it?"

Shane shifts, facing him, trembling fingers steadying where they're holding the rim of his helmet.

"What is?" he says softly.

"Come on, Hollander."

"Gar," Hayden tries to interrupt, but Shane lifts a hand, dismissing it. Hayden exhales slowly.

"I'm sorry," Shane says. "Has something changed in the past year?"

"*Yes?"*

"No," Shane snaps. "*Nothing* has fucking changed, Gariépy."

It's silent. Shane can hear them fucking breathing, and he can feel their eyes on him, staring like the cameras haven't left, like he's being followed.

"This is gonna blow your mind," Shane says, stepping closer, gesturing vaguely, watching as Gariépy's eyes narrow. "But I was already fucking gay before Twitter decided I might be. I was fucking gay when I was a rookie, and I was fucking gay when I signed with the Voyagers, and I was fucking gay when they made me *your* captain, and I was fucking gay when I got this team—" He lifts a hand, fingers curling to display three fingers. "— *three fucking cups*."

He lowers his hand, looking back and forth between Gariépy's eyes, searching, waiting. Hoping.

He's breathing hard, and he knows his lip is trembling, but he can't help it.

“Don’t fucking act like I’m a whole new person,” Shane says shakily. “And don’t act like this changes how I fucking play hockey— if you’re worried about having queers in the sport, then get out.”

He lifts a hand. Touches two fingers to Gariépy’s chest pointedly.

“It’s *my fucking* sport.”

He pushes lightly. Gariépy stumbles back, letting him, and Shane stares for a moment longer before he turns away.

“This is our fucking city,” he says loudly, voice strong and echoing a little, bouncing from the tile and metal surrounding them. “And this is our fucking game, got it?”

Quiet.

“*Got it?”*

There’s a chorus of *Yes, captain*, and Shane looks at Gariépy, whose lips move with the words he shares with the others, sullen.

“*Move,”* Shane says, gesturing toward the door, putting on his helmet, and they follow directions, filing out as they grab their helmets and sticks. “Don’t fucking embarass me.”

He stays in place. Lets them pass him by, taking their casual shoulder checks and masculine shoves, lets them act like normal, like his heart isn’t fucking racing, like he doesn’t feel like he’s dying.

“Let’s go,” Hayden says when the others have gone, knocking his hand against Shane’s padded shoulder and then his helmeted head against Shane’s with a solid thud. “Captain.”

“Did you fucking hear what Hollander said during his—”

“Oh, my god, *yes*, what the *fuck*—”

“I didn’t know he could do that—”

“Wasn’t it, like… Isn’t that kind of just confirmation, though?”

“I mean… I wasn’t gonna say it, but…”

The voices are hushed. Soft. Like they know Ilya doesn’t want to hear it, like they think there might be someone outside with a phone or a mic. Ilya focuses, pretending he can’t hear them, but it becomes unbearable when Marleau leans over and nudges their shoulders together.

“You good, man?”

“Fine.”

He turns. Surveys the room. Clenches his fists by his side, digging his nails into his palms.

They’re all ready to head out, lingering just to gossip like schoolchildren, and for some reason, it pisses Ilya off even more.

“Everybody listen the fuck up,” he calls loudly. The room falls silent. They turn toward him. “We have all seen the tweets and shit about Hollander, yes?”

Some of them nod. Some of them laugh a little, like he’s going to join in on it, like he’s going to use it during the game, like he’s going to give them shit to chirp Hollander with. Like they didn’t hear everything he just said to the whole world.

“Yes? Okay. Listen.” He scans the room, hands hovering in the air. “I don’t want to hear Hollander’s name from *any* of you, if it doesn’t have to do with *fucking* hockey.”

Smiles falter. Eyes blink.

“I don’t want to see his face on your fucking phones,” Ilya continues, “if it doesn’t have to do with *fucking hockey*.” He looks around, meeting their eyes— those of them who are looking at his face. “Got it?”

Silence.

“I don’t give a shit if Hollander is maybe gay,” Ilya says, voice carrying through the room. “I don’t give a shit if he *is* gay, okay? I give a shit that we beat his fucking team.”

“You can get why we don’t wanna play him, though,” a voice says. Ilya’s eyes snap to him— Liam Harrison, right wing— and he lifts an eyebrow. “Right?”

“You did not want to play him before all of this,” Ilya says dryly.

“But it’s different now,” Harrison says firmly.

“Is it.”

“Yeah,” Harrison says, gesturing vaguely, like the others are all in agreement. Ilya doesn’t look at them. “It is. I don’t wanna be on the ice with someone like him, you know?”

“What, you think queer is contagious?”

“Fuckin’ might be,” Harrison says with a scoff. “Jesus.”

“You are scared of losing to a gay guy?” Ilya says, tilting his head condescendingly, stepping a little closer. “You do not want him to be better than you?”

Harrison’s nostrils flare.

“I will remind you something,” Ilya says nicely. “You just got traded here, yes?”

They’re eye-to-eye, unblinking, unwavering.

“He *is* better than you,” Ilya says steadily. “He *has* been beating you. He will not get kicked from hockey because he is Shane fucking Hollander.”

He sees Harrison’s jaw twitch, sees his eyes flick back and forth between Ilya’s, sees his cheeks flush red with rage, and Ilya’s a little sick— it’s fucking *satisfying*.

“If you get kicked from this team, nothing will change,” Ilya says. It’s cruel. He doesn’t care. “Get better at fucking hockey, and *then* maybe I will give a shit about what you think, okay?”

The room is too quiet. He’s never talked to a team member like this— he knows it’s fucked up, knows that negativity doesn’t work, and positive reinforcement is the best method of encouraging the team to improve. He usually tries to be positive, tries to make them laugh and build comradery, but Harrison doesn’t deserve it.

“You’re really defensive about this,” Harrison says quietly, eyes searching Ilya’s, and he knows. He knows, he knows, he knows.

“You are very *off*ensive about this,” Ilya says softly, expression stone-still. “You are… What is word?” He pauses, glancing across Harrison’s face. “Overcompensating?”

He mispronounces it, emphasises the wrong syllable, but it lands.

Harrison’s face breaks. His eyes widen, and his nostrils flare, and his jaw tenses, and he shifts, stepping forward a little, hand curling into a fist. Ilya doesn’t flinch. Doesn’t move, in spite of the slight gasps around him, in spite of the way Marleau moves closer behind him. He stares, unblinking, tilting his head.

“You want to hit me?” he says softly, almost whispering.

“Feel like I fuckin’ should,” Harrison says. He’s red. It’s funny.

“You can,” Ilya says, nodding, raising his eyebrows like he’s being polite. “You can, yes. Go ahead. See what happens.”

“Roz,” Marleau says quietly behind him. They ignore him.

“You don’t make the call on who plays,” Harrison says calmly, like he’s indifferent.

“See what happens *now*,” Ilya says. “Find out.”

Harrison is a fucking coward. Ilya nods as he steps back, watching him turn to grab his helmet.

“We will win tonight, yes?” Ilya says, turning to look around at the guys. A few of them nod, still looking back and forth between him and Harrison. “Not because Hollander might be gay, okay, because he plays for fucking *Montreal*.”

There’s a light laugh.

“Let’s move.”

“Let’s fucking *go,* boys,” Marleau yells. His hand slams into Ilya’s shoulder on his way out.

lucas! they/she *@lucasslluccasluuucccaas*
he is on a fucking warpath today holy shit
💬**8** 🔄 **27** ❤️**39**

💥 *@hocketskatesandfirstdates*
no fucking way he just won the face off with the END OF HIS STICK. HOW IS THAT

EVEN POSSIBLE.
💬**63** 🔄 **159** ❤️**382**

stiles | he/him *@stileslikeshockey*
it never occurred to me that that was a possibility SHANE HOLLANDER THE MAN THAT YOU ARE
💬**4** 🔄 **60** ❤️**103**

|

replying to @stileslikeshockey
prue ⛸️🎀 *@dancingonicebutbadly*
you can even see rozanov looking surprised in the replay lmaoooo
💬**2** 🔄 **34** ❤️**42**

replying to @stileslikeshockey
beatrice 🪻 *@flowersandsaints*
im not even into hockey and im in awe holy shit
💬**1** 🔄 ❤️**7**

edna 🐻❄️ **she/they** *@mytypehasmissingteeth*
ROUGH start to the season for boston. the games not even half over and im mourning. good for montreal though ig
💬**38** 🔄 **152** ❤️**301**

|

replying to @cobblestonesandice
liam 🍁 *@bluehairpronouns*
📣GOOD FOR MONTREAL LETS GOOOOOOOOOO 🎺🎊‼️📯🚨🎷🎉🚨‼️
💬**1** 🔄 **73** ❤️**125**

|

replying to *@bluehairpronouns*
edna 🐻❄️ **she/they** *@mytypehasmissingteeth*
you are intolerable
💬 **4** 🔄 ❤️**72**

jenn(y) she/he 🥅 *@m4gicm4n*
are we going to see someone actually die on the ice tonight holy fucking shit this is so intense
💬**17** 🔄 **45** ❤️**72**

|

replying to @m4gicm4n
mandy ✝️🌈 *@lilrabbitteeth*
you guys can't see it but he is literally standing in front of the television like a dad watching football. i dont even like hockey and i can feel the pressure
💬 🔄 ❤️**23**

Voyagers	**5**
Bears	**2**

Ilya is disappointed. Of course he is. It's not a start to the season that any team captain would want, and his exhaustion isn't validated by anything— not a score, not cheering, not vindication.

But— not that anybody will *ever* know— he's also a little pleased.

Pleased because he can see the satisfaction on Shane's face throughout the whole game, his lips pursed like he's about to break into a smile. Pleased because Shane is fucking showing them all, every fucking one of them. Pleased because he hears Shane's mouthguard-muffled *Let's go* after a particularly smooth goal.

He avoids Shane's eyes the whole time. He doesn't know what'll happen if he meets his eyes, if he acknowledges him. If he'll be distracted from the game— which, really, is a lost cause about halfway through— by the memory of Shane's cock on his tongue, in his throat, the memory of Shane's hands in his hair, guiding his head up and down, caressing his neck tenderly. The memory of Shane's lips on his, smiling in spite of it all.

They make the teams line up for handshakes, for some fucking reason. Ilya is confused, and it would be terrible sportsmanship to refuse it, especially after a loss so humiliating. So he goes, glancing at the others' annoyed expressions.

He dreads it, the feeling of Shane's— *Hollander's*— hand in his, rough with calluses, sweaty from exertion and exhaustion, *warm*. He stills his expression, lightens it to mutter soft nonsense to the players across from him, nodding with each handshake. They look satisfied, happy, all their mouths curved into identical smirks.

Except Shane.

He looks intense, eyebrows drawn, and Ilya knows this is kind of just his resting expression, but it certainly doesn't help that he's feeling everything he's feeling.

It's a slow-moving line, each handshake lingering a moment too long, but it might just be Ilya's imagination. He's fucking tired.

Harrison is in front of him. It wasn't on purpose. Ilya glares at his name in bold letters across his back, above his stupid *04*. And Harrison hasn't done anything— not since the locker room — but somehow the way he's walking is fucking annoying.

Shane inches closer.

Their eyes meet briefly. Something flashes across Shane's face, but they look away quickly, on the same page. Like they tend to be.

Shane reaches for Harrison's hand.

Harrison raises his over Shane's, their fingers missing by inches, and Shane blinks, looking at Harrison for a moment.

"Fucking faggot."

Ilya doesn't get to shake Shane's hand.

—now, this isn't really normal at the very start of the season, right, handshake lines are usually reserved for the end of a series, after the Stanley Cup's been won, but today's

game has been particularly intense, hasn't it?

Oh, for sure, the energy has been really interesting tonight— could just be because it's the very start of the season, and Montreal and Boston are known to have such a heavy rivalry, but there's some speculation surrounded Shane Hollander as of late, and it wouldn't really be a huge shock if that had something to do with—

Oh, oh, oh—

Oh, and there's some commotion in the lineup—

Is that—

That… It looks like two Bears, doesn't it? Looks like four and eighty-one, that's Liam Harrison and Ilya Rozanov—

That is *something*, isn't it? When was the last time we saw a fight between two teammates?

I'm not sure, it's definitely happened, but it's certainly not as common as between members of opposing teams. Nobody really seems to know what to do, do they? Looks like their teammates are trying to break them up, and— Oh— There's some blood.

What timing, huh? Gloves are already off for the handshakes.

It's pretty intense— This whole night's been a time, hasn't it? Is there something in the air tonight?

There *must* be, look at that. Rozanov just does not want to let up, my god.

What on earth prompted this? Jesus, he looks like he's about to take the refs down just to get back at Harrison. What's he saying?

What did I fucking tell you? What the fuck did I say, Harrison, you fucking bastard*, what did I say? Иди на хуй, you fucking—*

Oh, wow.

Wow. What *did* he say to Harrison? He's even busting out the Russian— I don't think he's done that in a long while, has he?

Not for a while, not that I remember. Oh, he's escaped the refs, and— *Ooh*, one more solid hit even with everyone trying to keep them apart— and Harrison's nose isn't looking too good, is it?

Nope, definitely a little crooked, and— and *Hollander* is getting involved now, and *he's* got his gloves off too… Oh.

Oh, seems like a wake-up call for Rozanov. Hollander's saying something to him…

***Really* interesting for Hollander to— Well, it *looks* like he's defending Harrison, doesn't it? That push, huh. Seems like it would usually be at the start of a fight, doesn't it?**

I don't think I've ever seen Shane Hollander involved in a fight, but he doesn't look like he's involved now, he just…

Oh, doesn't take a professional lip reader to read that. Not the language we usually expect from Hollander, but after his interviews before the game today, who knows?

God, what I wouldn't do to know what the hell that was about.

Doubt either Harrison or Rozanov are gonna wanna talk about it, though, huh?

jack 🥅 he/him *@numberonesportsman*
WHAT THE FUCK
💬12 🔄 72 ❤️198

loralai | 🦈⚡ *@tiredandcold*
WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT!!!! WHAT DID HARRISON DO!!!!! WHAT DID ROZANOV MEAN!!!!!! WHAT DID HOLLANDER SAY!!!!!! OH MY GOOOOOOOOD
💬**10** 🔄 **61** ❤️**102**

🌞 *@sunnysynonym*
THE GIRLS ARE FIIIIIIGGGGGGHHHHTTIIINNNNGGGGG
💬**23** 🔄 **87** ❤️**212**

#1 shane hollander defender *@mistertwentyfour*
what the fuck just happened i am so confused
💬**13** 🔄 **30** ❤️**52**

carla likes hockey 🐻🍁 *@hollanovtrthr*
feeling #vindicated
💬**7** 🔄 **4** ❤️**23**

gloria 🏒🍁 *@morninggloria*
rozanov swinging from behind harrison. everyone scattering away. ‘what the fuck did i tell you.’ the random russian. ‘you fucking bastard.’ the tousling to separate them. three refs getting involved. hollander. ‘fuck off.’ rozanov only leaving when hollander gets him to back off. the blood on the ice.

i don’t know WHAT the fuck is going on but what i do know is that it is Fucking Cinema
💬**38** 🔄 **204** ❤️**413**

Sveta
Girl
???????
что за черт??????

Ilyusha 🐻🏒🐓🔥🥅🌨️
Он меня заебал

Shane goes out.

It's stupid, but he feels obligated to, especially after a win like this, after so many goals scored by *him.* He doesn't drink— not much, at least. Someone gets him a beer, and he nurses it for three hours, pretending to drink from it while the others get tipsy. Not *drunk*. They know they're not allowed to do that, and Shane would be pissed if any of them wake up hungover.

He doesn't want to be here.

He's tired, and he's still kind of pissed at all of them for just standing there and letting Gariépy say all the things he said. He's also kind of pissed just in general— at them, and Gariépy himself, and at the league, and Liam Harrison, and Ilya.

Jesus.

He's pissed at Ilya.

And he's kind of pissed at himself, because he isn't *just* pissed at Ilya, is he? No, he's also kind of happy with him, kind of pleased with the way he defended Shane, with the way he swung with such reckless, *stupid*, abandon. And he's kind of horny about it, about the fire in Ilya's eyes and the blood on his cheek and knuckles. And he just…

Well.

He feels special, in a stupid, self-centered, juvenile way. Like his crush was fucking nice to him, like he was smiled at. Like Ilya didn't almost give someone a fucking concussion, and *fuck*, why is that so fucking *hot?* The way Ilya just fucking *lost it*, every ounce of self-control he usually has, the restraint he usually shows after games— he's never picked a fight after the final whistle— the way he fought past the referees to get back at Harrison, to hit just one more time before Shane grabbed at him.

The way he stopped.

It was practically instantaneous. He froze. Blinked. Looked into Shane's eyes.

Exhaled.

And Shane had snapped at him, pushed him, told him to fuck off, gesturing vaguely somewhere off the ice.

And Ilya had *gone*.

He'd *left*, like he was incapable of refusing him, of fighting past him like he listened to Shane and *only* Shane. And nobody fucking knows it.

He’s stupid, and he redownloaded Twitter onto his phone, and he’s been looking at the things that people have been saying. Mostly, it’s questions about what prompted it, about how unexpected it is for Rozanov to be such a dedicated ally, to defend Shane so passionately.

Some people say other things.

Some of them just *imply*.

hollanov real????????????? *@unbearablebearsfan*
FUCKING HELLO??? THE WAY THEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER???
💬13 🔄 12 ❤️20

luna | i love shane hollander *@h0ll4nd3r24*
i have things to say about this all but im going to keep it to myself i fear im getting too parasocial for my own good
💬29 🔄 32 ❤️49

brenda | she/they 🐻 *@littlemisshockey*
what the fuck did harrison do i am so confused right now
💬14 🔄 21 ❤️30

|

replying to @littlmisshockey
fish 🐟🍭✨ *@fishieneedsabreak*
you can only see it from certain angles but he 100% called shane the f slur which…. get his ass rozanov
💬1 🔄 73 ❤️125

sage | he/they *@fruitoftheroom*
ok i wasnt a hollanov girlie but i fear i am now
💬**23** 🔄 **87** ❤️**212**

It's all fucking stupid. Stupid. Stupid. He keeps reading them, keeps scrolling, keeps opening fucking *comment sections*, and he's known for having good self-control, for abstaining from alcohol, drugs, sex, for not giving in to taunts and chirps that are clearly meant to start a fight.

And that's just not who he is, really, but sometimes— *sometimes*— he wishes it was. He wishes he would throw his gloves down, wishes it didn't matter. But it does. That's been perfectly clear to him since he started taking hockey seriously.

Because he's different.

It's not his sport.

But he's perfectly content with *making* it his sport.

"You good?"

He startles in spite of all the noise around him, lifting his head to find Hayden standing over him, resting his hand on the back of the booth Shane's sitting in like he's trying to hide him from something.

"Shane?"

"Yeah," Shane says, blinking, shaking his head. "Yeah, sorry, I'm just…"

He waves his hand, the light from his phone shining around his face. Hayden nods, frowning.

"Thinking," Hayden finishes for him. Shane scoffs.

"Yeah."

"You wanna talk about it?"

Shane looks up at him again. He's a little backlit, but the lights in this place are shifting, swirling for the few people on the dancefloor, shining Hayden's face in shades of red and yellow and pink and blue. He kind of looks like he's glowing, especially the stray strands of his hair that catch the light like they're on fire.

"Uhm," Shane says. He squints, and then squeezes his eyes shut, his hand tightening on the beer bottle that's warm now. The label is a little soggy from the condensation that's evaporated. "Yeah, *no*, sorry, I just—"

He shakes his head again.

"Need a minute?"

Hayden says it like it's fine. Like it's perfectly okay for Shane to be like this, for him to be so visibly discomforted, and Shane nods. Hayden moves aside for him, gesturing with a tilt of his head. Shane leaves the beer on the table.

He should go outside, but he goes to the bathroom instead. It's quieter here, and he doesn't have to worry about coming back into the bar, about convincing the security guard that he's already shown his ID, about the whiplash of the silence outside to the noise again. About starting over.

He goes into a stall and shuts it behind him, sitting on the toilet lid that's thankfully already down. He feels… small.

He draws his knees to his chest, setting his feet on the toilet seat, and he presses his face down, letting his knees press into his closed eyes. He can hear himself breathing, and he listens to it, lets it take over the muffled rap song that he just barely recognises. He breathes slowly. In, and out, and in, and out.

He's there for a while, breathing and squeezing his phone in his hand so tightly it hurts his knuckles.

He's there for so long that when the door bursts open, his instincts think it's Hayden, come to make sure he isn't having a breakdown or something, and he lifts his head, but it isn't Hayden's voice he hears.

"—cking *insane*, man."

"What the fuck *happened* tonight? Fucking *Christ.*"

They shouldn't sound as drunk as they do, and Shane rolls his eyes.

"I've never been scared of Hollander, man—"

He's interrupted with a laugh.

"No, seriously! He's not fucking scary, man, you know that."

"No, I know."

Zippers unzipping. Rustling of fabric. Piss.

“He’s so *nice*.”

He says it like it’s bad, like it’s a swear word.

“He’s *sweet*, dude, he doesn’t belong in hockey. It’s not a sweet sport.”

Shane lowers his head again. He knows it’s not a sweet sport. He knows he doesn’t belong in it— he’s been told over and over and over since his childhood, since the time he first saw it on TV.

“But, like… Fuck, man, he’s *good*.”

“I *know*. Jesus, he made three of five goals today— What the fuck?”

“And you saw how he won the face off with Rozanov? Holy *shit*.”

“I’ve never seen that shit before—”

“*Fuck,* I’d hate to be on *any* other team right now, man.”

A laugh. Shane shakes his head, lips quirking into a smile.

“Man, as long as he keeps this up, I don’t even care if he’s a queer. He can fuck whoever he wants.”

Another laugh.

“As long as he’s a Voyagers fan.”

Shane almost snorts, pressing his face against his leg, and the two of them are quiet as they zip up their pants and run the tap for much too short a time. Shane doesn’t hear the squeak of the soap dispenser before they go. Gross.

He stays. Breathes some more.

His phone vibrates in his hand after a while, and he forces his eyes open to look at it, squinting a little.

Lily
Still celebrating?

Another comes in as he’s looking.

I am down the road from yours, but do not rush if you are still out
Have fun

Shane's teeth close on his lower lip, biting it a little too hard as he rereads the messages, which he can fucking hear in Ilya's voice, and he can't tamp down the annoyance in his chest even though he doesn't even know what the fuck he's annoyed at— Ilya for fighting Harrison, or for walking away so easily the second Shane told him to, or having the nerve to go to Shane's like everything is just like it was last season, or for being so fucking nice about it. *Have fun* he says. Christ.

Shane doesn't answer, but he pushes himself up, already grimacing before he even walks into the noise and lights.

Lily
Still celebrating?
I am down the road from yours, but do not rush if you are still out
Have fun

Jane
Back now.
Come up.

There’s a knock on the door before Ilya comes in.

He’s quiet, which Shane kind of expected even though he hates it. His head is down as he takes off his jacket to hang it up, as he toes his shoes off and nudges them into place by the door, and it’s so horribly domestic that it makes Shane’s chest ache even more than it already is.

Ilya comes into the kitchen. Stands across from where Shane is leaning against a counter, arms crossed. Their feet are almost touching as Ilya mirrors him, leaning back, but his arms are down, hands lifting to hold the edge of the counter. Their eyes meet.

Ilya has the decency to look ashamed, his head ducked a little, eyes cutting up to Shane’s like he’s shy.

Or like he’s trying to hide his fucking black eye.

It’s already purple, and Shane hates it.

“What the fuck were you thinking?” he says finally, his voice sharp.

Ilya stares before he looks at the ground.

“I was not.”

“No, you fucking weren’t,” Shane snaps. “Fucking Christ, Rozanov.”

He’s quiet again, and Shane stares at him, exhaling heavily. His leg bounces, leg jerking anxiously, and he watches Ilya’s face. He’s standing still, *too* still. He’s usually moving somehow, fidgeting subtly with his fingers, but he isn’t. Shane’s stomach twists.

“I heard what he said to you,” Ilya says softly.

“*Everyone* heard what he said to me,” Shane says too loudly, his arms falling as he stands up straight. “Fucking— The *commentators* probably heard what he said, Ilya, people *online* know what he said to me."

Ilya looks up at him. His eyes are glassy.

He’s so beautiful.

“I don’t get to do that,” Shane says shakily, pointing to himself. “I don’t get to pick fights and defend myself, Ilya, I have to fucking *take it*—”

“You do not have to take it,” Ilya says quietly.

“Yes, I do,” Shane bursts. “I’m not fucking *white*, Ilya, I have to fucking— *behave* myself so people don’t notice that I don’t fucking belong here—”

“Shane.”

It’s soft. Quieter than it should be, especially with Shane like this, almost yelling, gesturing with his hands, *angry*.

Shane stops. Looks at him and swallows the lump in his throat along with all of his anger and frustration. He doesn’t fucking *get it*. He never will.

Ilya hesitates, looking at Shane’s face like he’s searching it.

“I do not understand why you are angry with *me*.”

“I…” Shane takes a sharp breath, blinking his eyes as they begin to sting. “I’m not. I mean— I *am*, but I— I’m not—”

He covers his face, huffing, rubbing his cheeks harshly. He hears Ilya shift, hears him take a breath, hears him murmur Shane’s name.

“Please don’t touch me right now,” Shane says weakly. “I’m not— I can’t right now, I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay,” Ilya says lightly. “I won’t.”

Shane takes a moment, takes a slow deep breath that echoes into his palms, staring into the dark. He doesn’t want Ilya to touch him, doesn’t want anything to touch him right now, but he knows he’s there, knows he’s waiting, that he won’t push Shane to calm down faster.

“I just…” He drops his hands and looks at the ceiling. Takes one more slow breath. Ilya is leaning against the counter with his hands against his back like he has to restrain himself so he doesn’t touch Shane. “I try to… to attract as little attention as possible, to— to myself, right? I always have.”

Ilya nods, listening.

“And *this*—” He waves a hand. “— hasn’t helped. And other players being assholes hasn’t helped, but at *least*—” He chokes off, looking at Ilya intently, and he wishes Ilya could just read his mind, could just hear his thoughts so he didn’t have to try so hard to articulate. “At least I get to be the bigger man or whatever the fuck— *I* can ignore them, and I can fucking beat them and show them that I’m fucking *better* than them, and you fucking beating up your own teammate because he called me a fucking faggot doesn’t help me stay under the fucking radar, Ilya.”

He falls quiet.

Ilya looks at him, his eyes flicking back and forth between Shane's, and he looks sad. He looks devastated.

"I'm sorry," Ilya says finally, his voice hushed. "I did not think about… consequences."

The word tumbles out of his mouth clumsily. It's endearing, even when Shane's heart is beating like this, even when his muscles are tight and his hands are clenched. He exhales.

Shane looks away. His throat is tight and his eyes are stinging, and he hates this, *so* fucking much.

"Shane," Ilya says softly. Shane looks at him, biting the inside of his cheek. "I am sorry."

"I know."

"And I am sorry you cannot defend yourself the way you deserve to."

Shane blinks. Ilya keeps talking, pressed to the counter even though Shane can tell that he wants to come closer, to wrap himself around Shane tightly.

"You deserve to defend yourself," Ilya says. "You deserve to fight them, Shane, you do."

"Ilya."

He shakes his head. Closes his eyes. Resists it.

"You do," Ilya murmurs. "And you deserve to be here, you *belong* here, Shane, you fucking do."

He's insistent, nodding when Shane shakes his head,finally shifting closer, ducking his head to look at Shane's face intently. Shane squeezes his eyes shut, dropping his head.

"Shane," Ilya says softly, firmly. "Baby. You are Shane fucking Hollander. You are second-best hockey player in the league—"

Shane interrupts with a choked laugh, looking up at him. He's smiling crookedly.

"You're such an asshole."

They fall quiet, looking at each other, their smiles fading. Ilya looks tired too, his curls ruffled from the wind outside, his eyes shining. His eye is swollen— not as much as it could be, Shane supposes. He'd probably iced it as soon as he got off the ice, tended to by one of the medics standing by in case of accidental injuries or stupid shit like this.

"You didn't have to do that for me," Shane says. Ilya shrugs a little.

"I did not really choose to do it," he says lightly. "It was instinct."

Shane shakes his head. His eyes sting again.

“I would have done it anyway,” Ilya says after a moment. “If it was not instinct, I still would have done it. You know this, yes?”

“Ilya, you…” He exhales, shaking his head. “I don’t need you to do this.”

“Do what?” Ilya says. “Defend you? Take care of you?”

Shane’s stomach does a somersault.

“I don’t need that,” he lies. “I don’t need you to act like this, Ilya, I can take care of myself, okay? Even if I can’t fucking— throw punches or pick fights, I can still—”

“You do not *have* to,” Ilya says, raising his voice a little. “You do not have to take care of yourself, because I will do it for you, okay?”

“Ilya—” Shane cuts himself off, blinking tears back, steeling himself. “You’re not my boyfriend.”

Silence.

They’re looking at each other, and Shane has long wished that he could read people better, that he could see what they’re feeling right on their faces the way that other people seem to so easily. He’s always wanted that, to not have to guess and hope for the best every time he opens his mouth to say something. And he wishes he could right now, wishes he could just hear what Ilya is thinking, wishes he knew what the expression on Ilya’s face means.

He looks still. Like he’s trying to be, like he doesn’t want Shane to be able to see his feelings.

“...Am I?” Ilya says finally, voice soft. Shane blinks, searching his face some more to no avail. “What am I? Some… emotional support fuck buddy?”

Shane stares at him some more, and then he *laughs*.

It breaks up the room, makes Ilya’s face split into a bright grin that makes Shane’s face feel like it’s sunburnt. Shane looks away, shaking his head, but Ilya can still see him, can still see his smile, and it’s embarrassing.

They’re quiet for a moment, and then another, and then another, and another. Shane looks at the floor, at his socked feet on the tiling, until he hears Ilya say his name.

“Shane.”

His voice breaks.

And his eyes are suddenly gleaming with tears that threaten to fall over his cheeks, and he looks fucking distraight. Shane blinks, searching his face, stepping forward, but Ilya holds a hand up as though to stop him, like he knows Shane still doesn’t want it. Like he doesn’t want it either, not while Shane doesn’t.

He's breathing hard, his glistening eyes wide as he looks at Shane desperately, lifting a hand to point at himself.

"*I* take care of you," he says shakily, voice breaking a little. "I *want* to take care of you, okay? I want to— to defend you, and I want to *protect* you—"

"So, what, you're my guard dog?"

"*Yes*," Ilya shouts. It startles Shane, who jumps, blinking, staring. Ilya stares back. "*Yes,* I will be your fucking *guard dog*, Shane."

Shane looks at him. He can hear him breathing, can hear the way each breath trembles.

"For *you*," Ilya says. His voice breaks. "Okay? For *you*, I will— I will follow your commands, I will listen to every *word* you say, Shane, I…" He takes a breath, a breath that chokes a little like a sob, and Shane is crying now, isn't he? He hardly notices it, the tears falling hot down his cheeks, the way Ilya blurs as his eyes fill and unblurs as the tears escape. "Anything."

He shakes his head, looking at Shane intently, desperately.

"Anything," he repeats. "For you, I will quit hockey."

"Ilya—"

"I will, if you tell me to," Ilya insists, nodding, stepping a little closer. "If you tell me to beat Harrison up again, I will do that, Shane, I will hurt anybody you want to hurt, I will do that for you—"

Shane is shaking his head, turning away to hide his face, and Ilya steps closer, hands still hovering out of reach, away from the surface of Shane's body.

"If you tell me—" Ilya tries. "Shane, baby, if you tell me you never want to see me again—"

Shane looks at him. He's horrified.

"— and you want me to go back to Russia, I will go."

"*Stop*," Shane says sharply.

Ilya looks at him.

He's holding his hands out like he's going to shove Ilya away— or grab him and tug him closer— and he's breathing hard. He's still crying. He hates crying.

"I…" He takes a shuddering breath. "I would never ask you to do that."

Ilya blinks. He softens.

"I know," he says. "I just…"

He scans Shane's face, eyes flickering across him, searching him, and it looks like he's trying to memorise him, like he's trying to keep his face in his mind.

"I would do anything for you," he whispers. "Anything, Shane."

Shane stares at him. He knows it's shitty, but he half expects it to be a joke, for it to be an exaggeration, something a little sarcastic, but Ilya just looks at him, face shifting into something anguished. And then.

"I love you," Ilya whispers.

Shane blinks.

Ilya blinks. It makes a tear fall over the purple skin around his eyes, and it's sickeningly beautiful, and Shane is looking at Ilya fucking Rozanov with his black eye and his pretty curls, the same Ilya fucking Rozanov that Shane approached in a parking lot just to awkwardly tell him that he's a fan, the same Ilya fucking Rozanov that Shane's been kind of in awe of since he was a teenager.

He's standing in Shane's kitchen, hurt and crying and pitiful, and he loves Shane.

"I…" Ilya trails off, looking away. "I know it— it is a lot, I know, you don't have to—"

"You're smart," Shane says quietly. "Aren't you?"

Ilya blinks, looking at him blankly.

"I…"

"You are," Shane says softly, almost absently. "I know you are, I've always known you are."

"Shane," Ilya tries, voice soft.

"But if you think I'm not head over fucking heels in love with you, you are a *lot* more stupid than I thought you were."

Ilya stops.

They stare at each other as Ilya processes it, as the words seem to roll through his mind until they fall into place, and then he scoffs.

Shane's face softens, and he smiles weakly, tilting his head as Ilya lets out a wet laugh, as he moves forward a little bit, and they fall against each other. Shane crumbles, reaching to wrap his arms around Ilya's neck. Ilya hugs his waist so tightly he lifts Shane up onto his tiptoes, and they sway, pressing their faces into each other's necks.

They're slow in how they pull away, letting their faces press, their cheeks slide against one another. Their noses nudge , and their lips brush, and it feels like the first time all over again. Shane pushes a hand into Ilya's hair.

“I love you,” he breathes.

Ilya nods. His eyes are glassy.

“A lot,” Shane adds. He holds Ilya’s face, brushes his thumbs over his cheeks gently. “And I’m grateful for you.”

Ilya nods again, eyelashes fluttering. He looks pitiful.

“Thank you,” Shane whispers. “For fucking Harrison up today.”

Ilya’s mouth quirks into a smile, and his head tilts like he’s fond.

“Anything for you,” he breathes.

Shane’s eyes flicker across Ilya’s face, taking in the soft earnestness in his eyes. And Shane wouldn’t say that he has trust issues, wouldn’t say that he’s had trouble trusting people, but he doesn’t think he’s ever trusted someone like this, doesn’t think he’s ever believed someone so immediately.

And he thinks about it. How Ilya skated off the ice the moment Shane told him to fuck off, even after fighting off three fucking refs.

Anything for you.

“Kiss me,” Shane demands. “Now.”

Ilya kisses him.

He surges forward, reaches up to catch Shane’s face with his hand, cradling his jaw like the bone is delicate, like he’s fragile, and their mouths crash together, lips already parting. Shane clutches at him, burying his hands in his curls and squeezing until Ilya groans.

It’s clumsy. One of Ilya’s hands finds the small of Shane’s back, pulling him in sharply. It makes him stumble a little, makes him trip over Ilya’s feet and fall against him, and Ilya catches him, moving closer to press him up against the counter. Shane moans softly, scratching over Ilya’s scalp, tilting his head and letting Ilya lick into his mouth like he’s committed to it, like he’s desperate to give Shane what he asked for.

Shane pulls away. Ilya tries to follow, leaning forward to catch his mouth again with a sharp breath, and Shane jerks at his hair, pulling it sharply. Ilya moans, his head falling back, his eyes closed, lips parted. He looks fucking wrecked. Shane didn’t know he could do this.

“Look at me,” he says softly.

Ilya’s eyes flutter open.

They’re glassy and dark, like he’s fucking high.

“You okay?” Shane asks. Ilya nods, eyes blinking.

“I love you,” he mumbles. Shane smiles, caressing his cheek, rubbing his scalp. “Fuck, I love you.”

“I love you too,” Shane breathes. “I hate seeing you get hurt.”

Ilya’s lips twitch into a smile.

“We play hockey.”

“I hate seeing people hurt you,” Shane corrects, leaning forward with emphasis, moving his hand to hold Ilya’s chin the way he holds Shane’s sometimes, fingers pressed into one cheek, thumb pressed into the other. “I hate it so fucking much.”

He’s looking at the black eye. The slight swelling around his eye, narrowing it a little, the purple ring that reaches around his cheekbone. He traces it as lightly as he can, watching Ilya’s eyes flutter.

“Take it,” Ilya breathes. Shane blinks.

“Hm?”

“Take it,” Ilya repeats absently. Shane’s chest clenches.

“Take what, baby?”

“The hurt,” Ilya whines. “Want you to hurt me.”

Shane falters, his thumb stopping next to the bruise, and he searches Ilya’s eyes, looking back and forth between them. He looks desperate, glassy and needy and so fucking perfect it makes Shane ache.

“Ilya…”

“I am yours,” Ilya says, leaning forward, reaching for Shane’s face. “I am yours, Shane, please. Take it.”

“Fuck,” Shane breathes.

He smooths his thumb over the bruise again, softly before he presses harder, pushing against it so it hurts. Ilya winces, eyes squeezing shut, and he takes a sharp breath, his hands reaching for Shane’s waist and holding on tightly.

“Yeah,” he gasps, nodding. “Like that.”

Shane swears under his breath again, rubbing the bruise firmly, and he shouldn’t like this, should he? He should hate this, should despise hurting Ilya, hurting the man he loves so dearly, but he fucking *doesn’t*. He likes it. A lot.

Because Ilya is so fucking pretty, even when he’s in pain, and because he’s hurting Shane too. His fingertips dig into Shane’s sides, and he can’t possibly be aware of it, of the way he’s

hurting Shane, but maybe that's something Shane likes about it.

Mutual destruction.

He lets up after a few moments, and Ilya gasps, nodding.

"God, you're…" Shane trails off, gazing at him. "Fuck, you like that?"

Ilya nods into Shane's hand before he reaches up for it, taking it gently, carefully, his hands trembling just the slightest bit, and Shane's never seen him like this, never seen him like this. Shy, and tentative, and meek.

Ilya drags Shane's hand downward, slides it over where his cock is hard under his jeans. He exhales heavily, eyes drifting shut as Shane takes over, rubbing slowly, firmly.

"Does that feel good?" Shane asks softly. Ilya nods absently, running his hands up Shane's arms, squeezing his biceps. "Tell me."

"Yes," Ilya gasps, nodding again. "It feels good."

"Good boy," Shane murmurs absently.

Ilya moans weakly, his shoulders pushing back, his cheeks flushing with colour, and *fuck*. He *likes* that, doesn't he?

"Yeah?" Shane whispers, squeezing Ilya's dick as much as he can over his jeans. "Are you?"

"Yes," Ilya gasps again, nodding like he's desperate. His hands tighten on Shane's arms. "I want to be."

Shane's eyes burn, and he doesn't know why it kills him like this, doesn't know why he's suddenly crying, just from looking at Ilya losing himself in this, in Shane's touch.

He didn't know he could do this.

He didn't know he could remove Ilya from himself like this, didn't know he could make him feel so weightless. He didn't know he could touch him like this.

Shane draws him into a kiss, releasing his cock to hold his face as tenderly as he can, avoiding the bruise— he's worsened that enough.

Ilya whines, reaching to hold the back of Shane's head. Shane holds him tightly, pushing a hand into his hair and gripping it tightly, pulling to force Ilya to tilt his head, to force him closer. Their tongues slide, and Shane fucking needs him in a way he's never needed anything in his life. He needs him more than *air*.

He lets Ilya's tongue into his mouth, and he sucks, pulling Ilya in so hard their noses press into each other's cheeks. Ilya's moan is muffled in his mouth, and he fucking feels it in his *throat*.

He mumbles something into Ilya's mouth. It might be French.

Ilya reaches down, leaning with his head tilted up so their mouths don't separate, and he picks Shane up, his hands strong on Shane's thighs, fingers pressing into his flesh. Shane lets him, hugging his neck with a weak groan, and they finally separate so Ilya can see where he's going.

Shane tilts his head. Kisses Ilya's neck and lingers right where he can feel Ilya's pulse against his lips before he opens his mouth to feel it on his tongue. He feels fucking insane, like he wants to bury his teeth in Ilya's skin until he can feel his pulse on his teeth.

Ilya mutters something in Russian.

Shane feels fucking high.

Everything in him aches, every organ, every *cell*. He feels like he's on fucking fire, trembling, fingers clutching at Ilya's hair like it'll keep him in place.

Ilya is gentle. He sets Shane down on the sofa, and Shane expects him to climb onto him, or to sit and pull him onto Ilya's own lap, but he doesn't. He lowers Shane onto the sofa so gently it's like he thinks Shane is asleep and doesn't want to wake him up, and then he lowers himself to the ground in front of him, kneeling between his legs.

He looks up at Shane.

He looks pitiful. His eyes are glistening, shining like a puppy's, and he lets his head fall to rest on Shane's knee. Shane exhales slowly, pushing a hand through Ilya's curls and tugging gently, shaking Ilya's head. Ilya moans softly, eyes fluttering.

"Fuck, Ilya."

Ilya makes a soft sound, a fucking *whimper*, and it sets Shane on fire. He caresses the side of Ilya's face, smooths his thumb as gently as he can across the bruise around his eye, gazing at it. He did that for *Shane.* Let himself get hurt, bruised his knuckles on someone's fucking face.

He would do anything for Shane, he said. And Shane believes him. He'd trust Ilya to pull his heart straight from his chest and keep it beating if Shane asked. Anything.

"Get my cock out," Shane whispers.

Ilya complies, already reaching up for Shane's belt. He fumbles with it, clumsy as he undoes it and the button and zipper of Shane's jeans. Shane watches, heart pounding, and he reaches for the end of his shirt, shifting to pull it off and toss it aside. Ilya watches, his eyes somehow darkening more, scanning Shane's torso. He moves like he's desperate, like if he doesn't get his hands on Shane right now he'll fucking die or something.

"*Fuck*," Shane hisses when Ilya's hand finds his dick, his head falling back a little. "Mm."

Ilya touches him for a moment, slides his hand up and down, before he lets go and wrestles Shane's jeans off of him, leaning back to tug them off his legs. He leaves Shane's socks on, and it makes Shane's chest ache a little for some reason.

He separates the jeans from Shane's underwear, tossing the jeans aside as he draws the briefs to his face and holds them over his nose and mouth, eyes gleaming as he gazes up at Shane.

Shane hears him inhale. He laughs a little, and it's almost fond in a stupid way.

"You're gross."

Ilya moans softly, muffled, before he lowers his hand, eyes drifting to Shane's cock, hard and leaking.

"Please," Ilya breathes.

"What?" Shane asks, watching him. He's just holding the underwear now, like he's forgotten that it's in his hand, fingers curled into the fabric, holding it to his chest. "Hm?"

"Baby," Ilya whines, shifting closer. "Please."

"Please what?" Shane says, leaning forward, reaching for Ilya's hair and tugging his head back so their eyes meet. Ilya's lips part, and he looks awestruck. "Tell me what you want."

"You," Ilya chokes. "I want you, baby, please—"

"God," Shane breathes, his hand softening in Ilya's hair, his other hand moving to caress his face. "I fucking love you so much."

He leans down. Kisses him teasingly, leaning back just far enough that Ilya can't reach him when he tries to reciprocate. It makes him frown, and it's so cute Shane has to kiss him about it.

"You're perfect," he whispers. He nudges their noses together, listening to Ilya exhale shakily. "You're so…"

He brushes a curl back, tucking it behind Ilya's ear, and Ilya keens, eyes fluttering shut, shifting on his knees, and he kind of is like a dog, isn't he? All sweet and pliant as Shane pets him, coos at him. So well-trained.

"Such a good boy," Shane murmurs. "My sweet little guard dog."

Ilya nods, eyes looking blearily at Shane, chin lifted so Shane can brush his fingers under it like he's scratching him.

"You were so good today," Shane says softly. "Listened to me so well when I told you to get off the ice, didn't you?"

Another pitiful nod, and one of Ilya's hands finds Shane's leg, fingers wrapping around his ankle before sliding up to his calf and holding on weakly.

“Yeah,” Shane breathes, nodding. “Good fuckin’ boy.”

He slides his hand over Ilya’s cheek, brushing his thumb against his lips, and Ilya opens his mouth, tongue falling out. Shane smiles, sliding his thumb over Ilya’s tongue smoothly, watching his lips close around it, sucking. Shane moans softly.

“You want a treat?”

It’s weird. Shane knows it’s weird, talking to his boyfriend like he’s a dog. Is that what he is? They never actually talked about it, did they? Ilya didn’t really disagree with what Shane had said— that he’s *not* Shane’s boyfriend. He hadn’t insisted, but he hadn’t argued, and Shane takes a brief moment to think about it, about what he wants. He wants Ilya. He knows this. It’s one of the only things he really knows for sure. He wants Ilya.

And right now, he wants him like *this*.

Ilya’s eyes flutter. He’s nodding like he barely notices it, like it’s an instinct.

“Please,” he mumbles around Shane’s thumb.

Shane draws him up, pulling his thumb away so he can kiss Ilya softly, lingering to suck on his bottom lip even though Ilya is hovering, lifted onto his knees so Shane can sit up, his mouth hanging open like he’s begging. Shane licks across his open mouth, slides his tongue along his lips and his teeth, and he holds his neck almost possessively, fingers wrapping around his throat. It’s slow, and it’s quiet, and it reminds him of the first time Ilya ever kissed him, pressing him up against a wall, lips gentle like he knew how terrified Shane was.

The way Ilya’s tongue licked into his mouth, the way he held Shane’s head and his waist, the way he rubbed Shane’s chest, the way he moaned.

It sounds like this.

Quiet, almost silent save for the wet slide of their tongues, save for the soft moan that escapes Ilya’s throat.

Shane pulls away to look at him, to take it in.

He’d wanted it *so much* that night, and it *terrified* him. And Ilya was so good at soothing his fear, at coaxing him into pliancy, into making him let himself feel good. It was a bad idea, really, because he’d wanted more, and then he’d wanted more, and more, and more, even after he’d had Ilya’s cock in his mouth, even after he’d had it in his ass, even after he’d kissed him and held him and listened to him from four thousand miles away. He wanted more, and more, and *more*, and now.

He has it.

Ilya lowers back to rest on his feet, his head tilting to look up at Shane, and Shane gazes at him. He cradles his face, cups his jaw in his palms and he *gazes*. He might be glowing. Ilya seems to do that a lot.

“Baby,” Ilya breathes. Shane nods absently. His eyes sting, and Ilya must see it, because he shifts closer, his hand sliding up Shane’s calf and holding him tightly. “You are my baby?”

“Yeah,” Shane chokes, nodding. “I’m your baby.”

Ilya nods, lips twitching into a smile like he’s excited about it, about Shane being his. Shane kisses him again, tilting his head, and Ilya hums softly, lifting his hands to rest them on Shane’s knees like he’s going to use them for leverage, like he’s going to stand, and Shane doesn’t want him to stand up yet, so he catches them. Holds them in place until their mouths part.

“Shane,” Ilya breathes. “Baby. Fuck me.”

Shane looks at him. He lifts a hand to Ilya’s cheek, and Ilya turns into it, lips parted for Shane’s thumb, and Shane pauses for a moment, exhaling slowly, pressing his thumb to Ilya’s lip to drag it down a little, exposing his pretty teeth. There’s nothing about Ilya that isn’t pretty, that Shane wouldn’t worship.

Ilya is pliant, hands resting on Shane’s knees as Shane grabs at his hair and pushes him down, watching breathlessly as Ilya opens his mouth and closes his eyes. His mouth is warm, and wet, and Shane must be fucking delirious, must be insane, because even though he was just here fucking *yesterday*, it feels like coming home. But maybe it’s just how Ilya makes him feel.

“*Fu-uck*,” Shane hisses, hands tightening in Ilya’s hair as Ilya tilts his head, pushing down lower, mouth tightening. “*Oh*, fuck, *Ilya—”*

Ilya groans around Shane’s dick, shoulders falling, head lifting and lowering. Shane rubs the back of his neck, sliding his hand under the collar of his shirt, dragging his nails up over his skin.

“*Mm*, fuck, that— that’s good.”

It is. It always is.

Fuck, it’s so good. It’s always fucking good.

“Ilya,” Shane gasps when Ilya pulls away, gasping to catch his breath.

“Please,” Ilya gasps. “Fuck me.”

Shane shivers. His hands are trembling, and he can’t help but reach for Ilya’s head, pushing his fingers into his hair and tugging gently. It’s like it flips a switch in Ilya— his eyes close, and his shoulders fall, and he looks like he’s sleeping.

“Look at me,” Shane says softly. Ilya’s eyes open. “Tap my leg or something, okay? If it— If it’s too much.”

“Okay,” Ilya breathes, nodding.

“Okay?”

“Yeah,” Ilya says softly, lips lifting into a brilliant smile, and he looks kind of like Shane feels. Kind of drunk, a little high. Like he’s on *something*.

Shane swears under his breath again and he leans down to kiss him some more, humming when he tastes himself on Ilya’s tongue— he doesn’t think he’ll ever get used to that. Fuck.

Ilya goes easily when Shane pushes him down again, mouth already hanging open, tongue wet with their shared spit. He lingers for a moment, sucking at the head of Shane’s cock, hands moving to grip Shane’s calves.

“Come on,” Shane pants, pushing at the back of his head until he lowers it, taking Shane deeper. “You said to fuck you, didn’t you?”

Ilya lets out a garbled moan, shoulders falling in spite of the intrusion, in spite of the inherent discomfort of having Shane’s cock in his mouth, sliding too far over his tongue, pressing where it doesn’t belong. Shane groans, throwing his head back, fingers curling into Ilya’s hair so tightly it *must* hurt, but Ilya just moans back at him, his voice vibrating through Shane’s entire body.

“*Shit*,” Shane hisses, gasping, shifting, pushing Ilya’s head lower. “God, you’re…”

He doesn’t know what to say, how to finish the sentence.

He’s perfect.

Shane tries to catch his breath, but it doesn’t work, so he settles for breathing heavily but steadily, slow ins and outs that are measured, like he’s trying to not have a panic attack. He lifts Ilya’s head by his hair, lets him take a sharp gasp of air before he pushes him back down, and Ilya gags a little, chokes on it, his fingers tightening on Shane’s calves.

“Jesus,” Shane gasps. “Fuck, you’re so— so good at this.”

One of Ilya’s hands lets go of his calf and rubs it, smooth and firm like a soft thank you.

Shane moans, slumping over a little, surrendering to it, the way it slides past Ilya’s tongue, the way his nose presses into the patch of hair around the base of his cock, the way his throat tightens when he swallows. Shane shifts, pulling at Ilya’s hair and moving his head up and then down, and then up, and then down. Because Ilya lets him do it, lets him take over and move him like a toy, lets him do whatever the fuck he wants.

“F*u*ck,” Shane swears, holding Ilya’s head with both hands, watching the slope of his shoulders. “That’s a good boy, *mm.*”

Ilya presses close, resists against Shane’s grip in his hair, shoves as far as he can, and he shakes his head a little like he’s trying to get closer, like there’s anything left for him to reach. Shane’s breath catches in his throat, and he holds it, squirming, all of his muscles tightening until Ilya lets up, lifting his head.

He's a mess. Panting, red-faced, glistening with his own spit that's falling over his chin. He looks up at Shane like he's waiting for approval, like he's looking for a smile, and Shane gives it to him easily. Of course he does.

"You're amazing," he murmurs, smoothing a hand over his hair until he's caressing his face. "Fucking Christ."

Ilya hums, turning his face into Shane's palm, and they both ignore how messy he is, how wet his chin is. Shane kind of wants him to be even more messy, actually.

"You like it?" he asks softly. Ilya nods, humming again, his eyes opening and looking very intently at Shane's cock, staring like he's mesmerised by it. "Fuck, you really do, don't you?"

"Yeah," Ilya says breathlessly. He blinks. Meets Shane's eyes. "Can I… Can I have more?"

"More," Shane repeats absently, brushing a thumb over Ilya's lip.

"More," Ilya says, nodding. "Want you to *fuck* me, Shane."

He hesitates, and then shifts, leaning up to meet Shane's eyes intently, close enough for their noses to brush.

"I am your good boy," he says softly. "Right?"

"Yes," Shane says, nodding, eyes flickering across his face. Ilya's head tilts, and he still looks inebriated, but he looks more grounded now as he looks into Shane's eyes like he's taunting him.

"And you are my baby, yes?"

"Yes."

His eyes sting. His throat tightens. He doesn't think he's ever wanted anything as much as he wants to be Ilya's baby.

"I want my baby to ruin me," Ilya whispers. Shane squeezes his eyes shut, letting his head fall forward to rest on Ilya's. "Will you do that for me?"

Shane nods weakly, bumping their noses together.

Ilya hums, letting their lips brush, and Shane melts a little. His eyes are closed, but he swears his vision— of lack thereof— somehow fuzzes around the edges, and he feels lightheaded. Ilya reaches up to cradle his face, kissing him softly. His lips are wet. And so is his chin; it smears onto Shane's face, but he doesn't think he minds.

Ilya leans back down, stopping to press kisses to Shane's chest, lingering at his nipples to suck on them for a few moments, stopping to kiss his stomach, and his hips, and then the insides of his thighs. His teeth find the skin there, nibbling like he's trying to hold back, like he's trying to be gentle, and it makes Shane's heart hurt.

He moans, head falling back, as Ilya pushes his legs apart further, ducking his head to mouth at Shane's balls, tongue gentle and wet and warm, and he feels like he might pass out, really. It's all too much, but also. It's not enough. And he wonders if Ilya ever feels like this, like he needs more, even if it might kill him.

"Fuck me," Ilya whispers, reaching for Shane's hand, drawing it to his head and forcing Shane's fingers into his curls. "Fuck me, baby."

He takes all of Shane's cock into his mouth smoothly, and Shane groans, grabbing Ilya's hair tightly.

"*Oh, fuck—"*

Ilya holds onto his legs again, swallowing around him, and Shane looks down at him. His eyes are closed like he's blissful, his cheeks red despite his insistence that Russians don't blush, his hair tangled and wild around Shane's fingers, and he looks like a mess already.

But he wants to be ruined, and Shane is a man of his word.

He can do that.

"Fuck," he gasps, moving Ilya's head up and down. Ilya lets him, his muscles relaxing like he's given himself to Shane's hands. "Mhmm, good— good boy."

It's filthy. Ilya is drooling, the spit sliding over Shane's dick and spilling to the bottom, over his balls and onto the sofa, and it's really gross, isn't it, and Shane will have to clean it up later, but that's a *later* problem.

He doesn't have any *now* problems, does he?

He just has this.

Ilya's throat around his cock, his hands on Shane's calves like he's scared to let go, his hair tangled around Shane's fingers. The soft soft sound of his throat clicking and resisting and *allowing* Shane in, the soft puffs of his breaths every time he gets a chance to gasp.

"Fuck, yeah," Shane chokes, shifting his hips as he guides Ilya's head up and down. "Fuck, *Ilya—"*

He shifts. Sets a hand on the sofa next to him and uses it to push himself up, gripping Ilya's head by his hair with his other hand as he moves, fucking into his mouth. He groans low in his throat, and he doesn't think he's ever made a sound like that before, rough and almost angry-sounding.

"Oh my— *Fuck*—"

He forces his eyes open to look at Ilya. He's got his eyes closed, and his expression somehow looks calm, content, even though his eyebrows are furrowed a little bit. As Shane looks, one of his hands lets go of Shane's leg, and he reaches down, pushing it between his own legs.

“*Oh,* fuck, you like this?” Shane gasps. Ilya’s eyes open, and he looks up at him. Shane wonders if he can even see him clearly. “You do, don’t you? Like it so much you have to touch yourself, huh?”

He doesn’t know what he’s saying. He’s just making noise.

A lot of noise, actually.

He can’t shut up, moaning and whining and swearing around Ilya’s name as he fucks his face, hips thrusting steadily, hand clenched in his hair to hold him in place. And Ilya is making noise too, though, admittedly, substantially less noise than Shane, and, admittedly, involuntary noise. Not that Shane’s is *voluntary*.

Ilya is choking, gagging occasionally, his hand reaching for Shane’s thigh and holding on so tightly it might bruise— which Shane wouldn’t mind. It sounds horrific, wet and spluttery and violent, and Shane loves it. He loves Ilya doing this for him, and he—

“I love you,” Shane murmurs, his voice too soft for a time like this, when he’s fucking Ilya’s throat. “I love you so much, it might kill me.”

Ilya’s eyes cut up to him, and he can see it, the way Ilya wants to say something like *You’re not allowed to die*, the way he *can’t*. It makes Shane grin, makes him laugh a little, and he sees Ilya’s face soften.

“My good fucking boy.”

Ilya’s eyes roll back in his head, and it’s beautiful. Shane feels his throat tighten, and it sends him over the edge, pulling Ilya off of him,collapsing onto the sofa and jerking himself until he’s coming across Ilya’s face. He’s being loud, he knows he is, but he can barely hear himself moaning and groaning and saying Ilya’s name like he’s begging for something.

“Oh my fucking god,” he pants, falling back against the back of the sofa, before he leans forward again, reaching for Ilya’s face and wiping around his eyes with trembling fingers. “Fuck, are you okay? Was that—”

“I love you too,” Ilya interrupts. His voice is rough. “I love you a lot. It might kill me too.”

Shane blinks at him, and then he laughs almost deliriously, shaking his head. Ilya smiles, head tilting fondly, reaching up to his own face and wiping some come from his cheek onto his fingers, looking into Shane’s eyes as he lifts the fingers to his lips and sucks them clean.

“Jesus.”

“We cannot die, though,” Ilya says firmly, like it’s law. “We are not allowed.”

“No?” Shane says softly. “Why’s that?”

“Because I want to do that again.”

Shane laughs, letting his head fall back, closing his eyes, lifting his hands to cover his face, because— for some reason— he's embarrassed. Embarrassed because he just fucked his boyfriend's (maybe?) throat, and come on his face, and there's still come on his face, he's still a wreck, and *Shane* did that to him. He feels Ilya rest against his leg, nuzzling into his thigh, and he looks down at him.

It's a vision.

Ilya's face, debauched and exhausted, streaked with come, inches from Shane's soft cock, pressing into his thigh like he can't get close enough.

Shane reaches down. Brushes his thumb over the bright bruise under Ilya's eye and wipes it clean of come before pressing it into Ilya's mouth. Ilya hums, letting it in easily, sucking on it.

"Did you come?" Shane whispers.

Ilya nods, looking up at him, and *Jesus*, he *came* from that. He hasn't even taken his shirt off.

"Think you can come again?"

Ilya nods again.

"For you," he mumbles around Shane's thumb.

"Get up here."

Ilya grins, teeth biting into Shane's thumb for a brief moment before Shane pulls his hand away, reaching to pull Ilya up by his shirt. He mumbles to him, something about *Fucking take this off*, and Ilya lets him, lifting his arms and shaking his head when it's off, swinging his curls. He pushes himself up, fumbling with his jeans, pushing them down and off clumsily, pliant under Shane's hands as he pulls him onto the sofa next to him.

He's hard, and *wet*, already leaking precome along with his come from earlier. He's a fucking mess, and Shane loves him.

He manhandles him a little, and Ilya lets him, which is hotter than it should be, really. Ilya could easily take over, could easily push Shane's hands away and have his way with him, but he lets him.

Shane turns toward him, reaching for his hips, leaning in to take him into his mouth, and Ilya lets out a rough groan, his voice graveled and broken in his throat. He leans against the back of the sofa, shifting so Shane doesn't have to bend down as much, and Shane loves him. He's so sweet.

"*Fuck*, Shane," Ilya chokes. "Fuck, your mouth…"

Shane hums, shifting, bringing a leg up onto the sofa in front of himself so he can move closer, hands sliding around Ilya's hips to hold his ass.

"*Mm*, *baby*."

Shane squeezes, tightening his hands until his fingerprints are pressing into the soft flesh of Ilya's ass, and he barely feels present at all, really. He loves it when Ilya takes him like this, when he talks to him like this, when he cradles the back of his head like his skull is fragile, like he isn't Shane fucking Hollander.

He hums around Ilya's dick, groping him, reaching a hand up to touch his chest, and he looks up, vision a little blurry. Ilya's head is thrown back, exposing the line of his beautiful throat, and Shane wants to bite him there, wants to sink his teeth into him and not let go.

Which, maybe, *probably*, is fucking insane. But Shane has a feeling Ilya wouldn't mind it.

Ilya's hand slides over Shane's forearm until it reaches his hand, cupping Ilya's pec, lacing their fingers and holding it in place.

"Fuck," Ilya breathes, reaching with his other hand to hold Shane's face, caressing him. "My baby is so pretty."

Shane's eyes sting. He whines, bobbing his head, watching Ilya's chest heave. Ilya smiles, nodding, pushing his hand into Shane's hair at the base of his head and gripping it tightly.

"My baby," he mutters. "My baby."

Does baby translate to boyfriend? Shane doesn't really know, and maybe, he thinks as Ilya tugs his head up and down, moaning loudly and openly, it doesn't really matter.

What's a boyfriend when he has *this?*

It feels bigger than that, than some juvenile label that Shane's never really cared about until Ilya happened. He supposes *husbands* comes after *boyfriends*, and really, he wouldn't be opposed to that either, actually— having a ring around his finger, something obvious and clear in its messaging that Shane is taken, that he belongs to someone.

But somehow, even that doesn't feel big enough. Nothing does.

Even *love* doesn't feel like a big enough word.

It fucking consumes him, everything he feels for Ilya, *drowns* him, and he *likes it*, even when it kills him.

"*Shane*," Ilya gasps, fingers gripping his hair tightly, before he chokes something out in Russian that Shane doesn't understand. Ilya whines, and it sounds pitiful. Shane loves it.

He moves faster, letting his throat relax, and he slides his hand from Ilya's ass to his thighs, slipping up between his legs and reaching for his balls, rubbing them before he tugs. Ilya groans, fingers gripping Shane's hair, his other hand grasping Shane's tightly and moving a little across his chest until Shane's hand is resting over his heart.

Shane can hear it when he gets close, the way his breathing gets fast and rough and shallow, the way he groans like he's upset, like he's fed up, and Shane pulls back, pressing his head into Ilya's fingers so he can open his mouth, showing Ilya his tongue.

"*Блять*—"

Shane moans, letting his eyes drift shut. Ilya's come is warm on his tongue, and he savors it, humming as Ilya jerks himself off until he stops. He's breathing hard and ragged, and it sounds beautiful.

"Fuck," Ilya gasps with a loose groan before he leans down, towering over Shane in a way that makes him feel tiny, that makes him feel *safe*, and he grabs Shane's face possessively. "Give."

Shane giggles, letting Ilya pinch his cheeks, letting the come drip from his lips, letting Ilya pull his face so it's tilted upward, so Ilya can slide his tongue over Shane's chin. Shane groans, his eyes rolling back, and it's so fucking *gross*. It's filthy, and nasty, and disgusting, and he loves it.

Ilya kisses him, holding his face firmly, licking into his mouth, humming softly. Shane reaches up, pushes a hand into Ilya's curls, squeezing his fingers in them, moaning weakly into Ilya's mouth.

When they part, Shane is still panting, and his face is wet with spit and come and *tears*. He's crying, and it's pathetic of him, crying with come dripping from his mouth, with his throat sore and his hands trembling.

"Fuck," he breathes, tilting his head as Ilya lowers to rest back on his feet, letting his head fall back so Ilya can lick up his chin, his jaw, his cheek. It's ridiculous, he knows it is, letting someone slide their tongue over his face, but he likes it. He feels fuzzy, feels kind of lightheaded, like he's on something, and he *likes it*. He *longs* for this feeling when he can't have it, when Ilya is across the planet or when they're preparing for a game, when he's stressed and scared and overwhelmed, and all he wants is *this*.

Shane falls against him, gasping for breath, and Ilya lets him, arms opening for him. Their skin slides, slicked by sweat and fallen come and spit, and despite the chill threatening Shane, he finds himself warm in Ilya's arms, against his chest, tucking into his neck.

Ilya holds him, runs his hands over Shane's back, up his neck, into his hair, and Shane shudders, tucking himself into Ilya as much as he can, squeezing his eyes shut.

"Fuck," Ilya breathes. "Baby."

"Mm."

"Are you okay?"

"Yes," Shane says softly. "Just… Overwhelmed. Gimme a minute."

“Okay,” Ilya whispers.

He holds Shane until it feels like he’s falling asleep, and it’s a bad idea. If Ilya doesn’t clean him he’ll have hell to pay. And they’re both starting to shiver.

“Shane,” Ilya murmurs. Shane groans softly, shaking his head. “Shane. Ba–by…” He sings it, voice soft and hushed.

“Mm.”

“Sweetheart. Darling.”

“What.”

“Shower?”

Shane sighs heavily, nuzzling into Ilya’s neck.

“Don’t wanna.”

Ilya hums, pressing his face into Shane’s hair, taking a slow breath.

“Is okay,” he says softly. “I will take care of you.”

He does.

Shane is pliant, loose and sated, and Ilya feels like at least part of it is put on, exaggerated just for Ilya’s sake, just to make him giggle as he drags Shane up the stairs like he’s wasted. They’re laughing, giggling to each other like they’re trying to remain hushed, like there’s anyone around to hear them. It feels silly, stumbling up the stairs naked, still so exhausted from coming *twice* that he’s trembling a little, sneaking glances at the curve of Shane’s ass, his cock hanging between his legs, at his flushed cheeks.

He cleans Shane up. Washes his hair with his fancy shampoo and kneels on the tile ground to wash his body, leaves scattered kisses across his chest and his back and his hips and his

thighs. He longs to leave marks behind, to dig his teeth into the softness of Shane's flesh, to leave the imprint of his mouth along his veins and tendons. He refrains. The season only just started.

They brush their teeth, side by side in Shane's unnecessarily large bathroom, and it's cute, the way Shane's eyes keep drifting shut, the way he seems to be falling asleep with the white foam of toothpaste around his lips.

When they fall into bed together, they're naked and still warm from the shower. Ilya can't stand the distance between them, however brief, and Shane seems to feel the same way; he's already rolling closer, pressing into Ilya as he's reaching for a blanket to cover Shane's body.

"Can you stay?" Shane whispers, pulling Ilya closer like he doesn't actually have a choice.

It's a bad idea. They don't usually spend the night. But.

"Yes," Ilya says with barely a moment to think about it. "I can stay."

He lets Shane press close, lets him lift a leg to hitch it on Ilya's hip, lets him nuzzle into his neck like it's physically impossible for them to be close enough, and Ilya knows it's deranged, but he thinks he would let Shane claw his skin open if he needed it. If he *wanted* it. Just to be closer.

"Are you okay?" he whispers after Shane exhales heavily. Shane nods into his neck, lifting his hand to press it to Ilya's chest.

"Mhmm."

"Mhmm?"

"I love you," Shane whispers. "So fucking much. And I don't know what to do with it."

Ilya exhales. He turns his head to press a kiss to Shane's forehead.

"I don't know either," he says softly.

"...I'm scared."

"Me too," Ilya whispers tightly. "We will be okay."

Shane is quiet for a moment, breathing steadily into Ilya's neck until Ilya is sure he's fallen asleep.

"Promise?"

Ilya makes an involuntary noise— he does that a lot— and he shifts, pushing Shane and rolling onto his side so they're face-to-face.

"Shane."

Shane whimpers, pouting a little bit, and he meets Ilya's eyes. He looks pitiful, eyes glistening like he's going to cry again. He's so pretty when he cries.

Ilya reaches to pet Shane's face, caressing his cheek. He sees Shane's eyes flicker to the bruise, and he wonders if he regrets digging his finger into it now— he shouldn't. Ilya fucking loved it. He'd let him do it every day. He'd let him make sure the bruise never fades properly.

"You are my baby," Ilya whispers. "Yes?"

Shane nods, eyes fluttering.

"Tell me."

"I'm your baby," Shane says, hushed. "I'm your baby, Ilya."

Ilya's eyes burn. He doesn't think he'll ever get used to hearing his name come out of Shane's mouth.

"You are," Ilya murmurs, caressing his face, watching his eyes flutter shut. "I will not let anything happen to you, okay? I will make sure you are okay."

Shane nods again. His lip quivers. Ilya stills it with a kiss.

"Do you trust me?" Ilya whispers, their lips brushing together. Shane nods again, shifting closer, his leg tightening around Ilya's hips. "Do you trust that I love you so much?"

Shane nods again, lips tilting into a weak smile. His cheeks flush with pink.

"I adore you," Ilya says, shifting to nudge their noses together. "My sweet baby boy."

Shane lifts his chin.

"I love you so much," he whispers. "...I wish it was easier."

"I know," Ilya breathes. "Me too."

Shane reaches up, pressing his hand to Ilya's face, and Ilya exhales slowly, letting their noses press. He can smell the mint on Shane's breath.

"We will be okay," he says again. "I will make sure we are okay."

"Okay," Shane breathes. "Okay."

They fall quiet again, and Shane brushes his nose back and forth against Ilya's.

"What time do you have to go tomorrow?" he whispers.

"Not too early. Flight is at two thirty."

"Mm, nice. We can sleep in. 'Nd have lunch."

“Yes. And then I do walk of shame back to hotel.”

Shane laughs lightly, his breath warm on Ilya’s face, his hand falling to the space between them.

“Where’d you learn that phrase?”

“Marly,” Ilya says lightly, fondly. “He likes to use it a lot with me.”

Shane laughs again, kissing him softly.

“You don’t have to be shameful.”

“Oh, I’m not.”

Another laugh, this time against Ilya’s mouth. He smiles, letting Shane’s lip against his teeth.

“Go to sleep, Сла́дкий.”

Shane hums softly, melting against Ilya, and Ilya shifts to pull his face away, lifting his chin to press his lips to Shane’s forehead softly. Shane hums again, moving down so Ilya doesn’t have to reach.

Lily
I forgot to tell you
The way you won the face off last night was very sexy.

Jane
You’re ridiculous.

Lily
I could have had you on the ice right there
Make them all watch

Jane
You're RIDICULOUS.
But that is kinda hot.

Lily
Hm.
Think about it tonight
Call me when you do

Jane
God, I fucking miss you.

Lily
Needy. I am not even on plane yet.

Jane
I know :(

Lily
Maybe I can skip next game. I will see you in thirty minutes.

Jane
Do NOT.
I'll see you in a few months, asshole.

Lily
(((((
I love you.

Jane
I love you too.
So much.

End Notes

shout out to:
- my beta reader gwendolyn love u
- my mother for giving us the 'don't talk about my child like that' scene when i was eighteen and having a breakdown
- my best friend for letting me type very loudly in our shared space
- my beloved hasan for accepting my humble screenshots of my wip and saying things like 'weeugh' and for answering my hockey questions
- macklin celebrini for this insane fucking shot which inspired shanes face off win

here's a little playlist
come hang out with me <3

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!