

I trace your constellations

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by [stupidnephlim](#)

Summary

When Ilya and his mother move to Ottawa after escaping his abusive father, he didn't expect to find his new neighbour Shane Hollander so endearing.

Notes

Hi everyone. So this idea had been floating around my head for a while. I liked the idea where Irina is ALIVEEEE and she and Shane can meet.

Hope you all enjoy.

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Chapter 1: I don't want to turn away

Chapter Notes

Chapter title from song: Chance with you - mehro, Kina (Kina Remix)

The loud and constant beep awoke Shane from his sleep. His alarm set for 6am sharp. Shane was a morning person, he wasn't one to linger in bed so he got up to get ready for school.

Shane opened his curtains letting in the sunlight that was beginning to rise, his window faced the house next door, giving him a clear view into the bedroom adjacent to his. The house had been empty for quite some time, but today there seemed to be a light on in the room. Shane frowned, but then shrugged. It looked like someone had finally moved in.

He made his way downstairs, already hearing his parents pottering about in the kitchen. "Morning." Shane greeted, kissing his mum on the cheek and patting his dad on the shoulder.

"Morning hun." Yuna Hollander replied. "You want some breakfast?"

Shane shook his head. He had practice and didn't like eating before. "But I'll take coffee." He walked over to the coffee machine, brewing himself a cup.

"Looks like we finally have neighbours." Yuna said. She pointed the spatula she was using to cook eggs in the direction to the house next door. "I saw a woman going into the house late last night."

Shane nodded. "Yeah I saw a light on in the room opposite mine." He chugged his coffee, took a glance at his watch and winced. He was going to be late. "I got to go. Bye mum, bye dad!" Shane rushed out, grabbing his jacket and shoes on the way out.

Shane rubbed his face and leaned his head against his locker. He was exhausted, practice had run over and his coach had seemed determined to tire them out more than usual.

Hayden stood beside him and groaned. “Urgh, I can’t feel my legs. Coach really drilled us today.”

Shane could only muster a nod. His whole body felt like a cooked noodle. He grabbed his textbooks from his locker and placed them into his bag. He had history in five minutes, one of his favorite subjects, so he pulled away from his locker and walked to his next class. The school hallways were always packed, everyone either rushing to their class, or stood talking at their lockers. It was always chaotic.

“Dude, did you hear?” Hayden asked as they walked to class. Before Shane could ask what he was talking about he heard a girl’s voice calling his name.

“Hey Shane.” She said, her voice silky and seductive. Shane didn’t know her name but vaguely recognised her from one of his classes. She took his arm, smiling up at him and fluttering her eyelashes. Shane smiled, and murmured out a quick hello back, before continuing to walk with Hayden.

“Hey Shane. How you doing?” A boy asked as Shane passed him. Shane merely nodded his head back.

“Dude everyone is obsessed with you.” Hayden laughed.

“What? No they’re not!” Shane denied. “It’s just because I’m on the hockey team.”

Hayden rolled his eyes. “So am I. And yet I don’t get that kind of attention.”

“That’s because you’re ridiculously in love with Jackie. Everyone knows you have eyes only for her.” Shane supplied. They turned the corner of the hallway, almost at their classroom.

“Ah! So that’s what I need to do. Get you a boyfriend. Take you off the market!” Hayden laughed and patted Shane on the shoulders.

Shane rolled his eyes, but couldn’t help but laugh. “*Anyway*, what were you going to tell me?” Trying to steer away from conversations about his dating life. Ever since he had come out to Hayden and a couple of other guys on their team, they couldn’t stop trying to set him up with random guys they knew. Their collective taste was *not* it. So Shane had sworn to himself to not get roped into a blind date if it was set up by any of them.

“We’re getting a new player.” Hayden replied. “Apparently he’s new to Canada or something and was really good at his last school.” He shrugged his shoulders. They walked into the classroom. Shane’s eyebrows furrowed. Huh. A new player. He wondered why his coach hadn’t told him about this, he was captain after all. Not that Shane minded a new player. He could do with another center after Kent was suspended from the school for his violent and aggressive behaviours, always starting fights. He was also a huge homophobe and Shane was so glad the day he heard Dallas Kent had been kicked out.

“You know what position he’d be playing?” Shane asked, his brain immediately thinking on how their team dynamic could be impacted, not that it wasn’t already with Kent’s exit.

“Dunno.” Hayden shrugged and sat on an empty desk. Shane doing the same beside him. “I just hope he’s good, really wanna win a cup this year.”

Shane nodded in agreement. “He’s probably replacing Kent.”

“Yeah I heard he’s -”

Hayden’s words drowned out when Shane’s attention shifted to someone entering the classroom. Shane’s eyebrows furrowed at the boy he had never seen before. The boy had blond curly hair, and was wearing sweatpants and what looked to be a Boston Bears hoodie. His eyes scanned the room before he found an empty desk at the back of the classroom and

made his way toward it. Shane's eyes followed him, not being able to make himself look away. At the back of his mind, he could hear Hayden go on about hockey, but it all felt muffled; his focus on the newcomer.

The boy sat down with a tired huff. He seemed to have a stern moody look on his face. He looked like the type of guy who would steal some poor freshman's lunch just because. He was looking down at his phone and frowning at the device. His thumbs moved across the screen as if he was typing.

Shane hadn't realised he had been staring until he saw the boy's eyes shift away from his phone and straight at him. They were piercing blue and so sharp. The intensity Shane saw in them startled him. They zeroed in on Shane, slightly narrowing in confusion. The boy raised an eyebrow and Shane flinched, quickly looking away and facing the front again. He nodded along to Hayden, not hearing a thing as he could not feel the boy's stare on him, it made the hairs on his neck stand up.

Thankfully, it wasn't long before their teacher walked in and the lesson began.

"Oh before I forget," Mr Hunter exclaimed, clapping his hands together. "We have a new student joining us. Ilya Rozonov." He pointed at the boy with blond hair sitting at the back of the class, who now had his eyes closed and was seemingly asleep. At the sound of his name, his eyes shot open and looked around the room.

Mr Hunter frowned. A few people snickered.

Ilya nodded his head at everyone now staring at him. He shoved his hands into his hoodie pocket, not bothering to say anything in greeting. When the silence started to stretch for a few more seconds, Mr Hunter clapped his hands together again.

"Okay, let's begin. Now I assume you have done the assignment I set out last week?"

Shane snuck a glance behind him at *Ilya*. Huh. It was a nice name. Ilya had his head low, and was now doodling on his notebook, uninterested in the lesson happening around him.

The sun was setting by the time Shane arrived home. Hayden and some other guys from his team had invited him out, all hanging out the arcade before going over to J.J's house. It had been a fun night.

Shane pulled up at his house and parked in the driveway. He got out, making sure to take out the groceries his mother had phoned him to buy on his way home. As he headed towards his house he saw the downstairs room in the house next door had a light on. Shane paused and wondered who his new neighbours were. They seemed to have moved in the middle of the night. He saw a shadow of a person move inside the room, which spurred Shane on to continue walking.

He placed the groceries on the kitchen counter, and called out to his mum. "I've got the stuff you wanted!"

"Thanks sweetheart!" Came Yuna's voice, from somewhere in the house. Shane toed off his shoes and took off his jacket, and began putting away the newly bought groceries.

"Hey, can you call Anya inside, whilst your father and I set the table. I think she's out front." Yuna asked, now appearing in the kitchen, followed by David. She began taking out the plates and glasses, whilst David dished the food into a bowl.

Shane nodded, grabbed his shoes and walked outside whistling for his dog. "Anya. Come here girl." He called out.

Shane looked around, and wrapped his arms around himself. It had gotten chilly and he had left his jacket inside. Shane squinted as he searched for Anya, finally finding her standing at the end of the driveway where their garden met the neighbour's. She was standing next to a man, who had his back to Shane, and was too busy getting strokes and pats to notice him calling her. Shane huffed and walked closer. *Why did his dog have to be so social?*

"Anya!" Shane called out. The dog finally turned in his direction. She panted, tongue hanging out and tail wagging and Shane immediately melted, his furrowed eyebrows

smoothing. "I'm so sorry if she's bothering you," Shane apologised to the stranger, before stopping short. The stranger turned around, his eyebrows also jumping up in surprise.

Ilya Rozonov

The boy from his history class. Was his new neighbour.

"Is fine." The boy spoke with a heavy accent that sounded... Russian? Shane wasn't sure. "She's cute."

Shane smiled then. His dog *was* cute. "Yeah she's... the best." He watched Ilya take out a cigarette and light it up.

Shane frowned, wanting to say something about the dangers of smoking. "I'm Shane Hollander." He introduced himself instead, holding his hand out for the other to shake.

Ilya's eyes darted down to his hand before back to his face, before reaching out to shake it. "Ilya. Rozonov."

Shane nodded. "I know." He blurted out.

Ilya raised an eyebrow. "We-we have history together." Shane then rushed out, not wanting to think he was *stalking* him or something, he could feel himself flush.

Ilya seemed amused, his eyes darting across Shane's cheeks. He didn't say anything other than a small hum of acknowledgment. He brought the cigarette to his lip and took a puff.

Shane grimaced. "You know, you shouldn't be smoking." He stated, not being able to help himself.

Ilya didn't reply for a few seconds, looking Shane up and down . Then. "Ok." Before continuing to take a puff, as if Shane hadn't said anything.

Okay. Rude.

Shane huffed. He rubbed his arms feeling the cold start to seep in. He needed to head back in. "Okay. Well... it was nice to meet you." He reached out his hand again, as if they hadn't shook hands mere moments ago. Ilya to his credit didn't question it. He looked back at Shane, a smirk playing now at his lips alongside the cigarette that sat between them. Unknowingly, Shane's tongue darted out and wet his own lips, as his eyes drifted to Ilya's lips, his own mouth suddenly felt very dry. Ilya took Shane's hand again to shake.

"Right. I'll see you around." Shane spoke, his words stilted. He awkwardly pointed to his house with his thumb, whistled at Anya and quickly walked back to his house. He didn't let himself look back.

Shane sat the dinner table, thinking way too much about the interaction he'd just had that he missed his mum's question.

"What?" Shane asked, his fork playing about with the food on his plate.

"I *said*. How was school?" Yuna asked.

"Oh. It was okay. We're getting a new player." Shane replied.

His mother's eyebrows raised in interest. "Ooh. Do you know who it is?" One thing about Yuna was that she was obsessed with hockey. Maybe more than Shane.

Shane shook his head. "Nope. Haven't met him yet."

"Well. I hope he's good." Yuna replied. Shane nodded. Yeah he did too.

Dinner passed by, his parents chatting idly about their day. Shane was stuck in his head, replaying his interaction with Ilya again and again in his mind. He recalled how Ilya's eyes seemed to shine brighter somehow. Perhaps it was the reflection from the street lamp, Shane thought.

“-so I went over and gave her the brownies that I had baked.” His mum was saying. Shane tuned back in and shot her a confused glance.

“Gave who brownies?”

“Irina. The woman who just moved in next door. She and her son.” Yuna explained. “Shane, I think he might go to your school actually.”

Shane’s heart jumped. He ignored it and forced out a nod. “Yeah. Probably.”

“She was so sweet! Kept thanking me for the brownies.” Yuna continued.

Shane felt the chill of the rink as soon as he stepped inside. He had been skating since he was four years old, and loved how his feet glided on the ice. He spotted his team gathering on the ice, some doing the stretches, some standing idly drinking water and chatting as they all waited for their coach.

Shane wasn’t usually late to practice, in fact he was usually the first one there. But today, he was having car trouble and had to take out his bike that he hadn’t used since he was twelve out of the garage so he could ride it to the rink.

“Okay quiet down boys!” Coach Wiebe yelled out as he walked into the rink, followed by Harris, who was in charge of their school’s webpage.

“I’ve got an announcement.” Everyone gathered around the coach. “We have a new Center!” Shocked murmurs spread across the team. Shane didn’t engage. He had suspected as much. Now he just wanted to know who it was.

“Told you.” Hayden nudged Shane.

“He will be joining us -” The massive double doors that led to the locker rooms opened with a loud bang. All eyes turned to see the newcomer. “Here he is!” His coach stated.

Ilya Rozonov.

Shane’s eyebrows jumped up, his heart rate picking up.

Ilya walked towards them, now in his gear. Shane could see the number 81 displayed on his jersey along with their school logo. Ilya eyed everyone warily, as if he was sussing out the weaker ones. “Everyone, this is Ilya. Ilya, this is everyone.” Coach Wiebe introduced, vaguely waving his hand across the team.

“Hi.” Ilya greeted. His face was stoic. Shane wondered what he was thinking. His eyes darted across each player, before they found Shane. Ilya’s eyes widened slightly, and his lips twitched before he managed to school his features back to the unbothered look.

The team introduced themselves one by one to Ilya, shaking hands, patting him on the shoulder and welcoming him to the team. When it was Shane’s turn, he swallowed nervously. “Hi.” Shane greeted, reaching for Ilya’s hand to shake.

“Hollander.” Ilya merely replied, shaking his hand back. He seemed to be eyeing Shane, his gaze making Shane shift uncomfortably. Although, he didn’t break their eye contact. It felt like an unspoken game. Who would look away first?

“Okay boys! Let’s go.” Coach shouted, breaking them out of their *moment*. It was then that Shane realised he and Ilya were still holding hands. Ilya must have realised at the same time.

They both dropped their hands as if they had been burned. Shane turned away, his cheeks on fire.

“Going to split you into two teams.” Coach Wiebe was saying. “Captains are Hollander and... Rozonov.” His gaze landed on the Russian boy and raised his eyebrow in a challenge. “Up for it, Rozonov?” He wanted to see the boy play. The others turned to look at him, all thinking the same thing.

Ilya smirked. “Yes.”

They picked their teams and just like that the game started. Shane and Ilya leaned in front of each other, both on edge as they waited for the puck to be dropped.

“Shane Hollander.” Ilya murmured between them. “Will you disappoint your team?” He smirked at him, eyes gleaming.

Shane shook his head as he chewed on his mouth guard. “No.” He didn’t let himself look up at the other boy, only looking down at the ice. It was probably why he won the puck drop, stealing it and skating away. He could hear Ilya murmur something in Russian before Shane was too far away. Shane passed the puck to Hayden, seeing he was open but before the puck could get to Hayden, Ilya intercepted. He stole the puck, smirking, before he skirted away in the other direction towards his own goal.

Shane was a good player. Maybe even the best at this school. He knew that. His coach knew that. His team knew that. But seeing Ilya play. Shane thought he might have some competition at his spot on top. It fuelled something in him. He needed to work harder, play harder. It was on. Shane smirked, and chased the puck.

Ilya was an amazing player. His manners however, needed some work. Every time he got the chance to chirp some useless insult, Ilya took it. It was clear he was a ruthless player.

Hayden rolled his eyes in Shane’s direction when Ilya threw his fourth insult his way. “You sure you know how to play, Pike?” Ilya taunted after he had just stolen the puck from Hayden a second time. Ilya’s team laughed.

Ilya's team won practice, much to Shane's dismay. Something his team boasted about all the way to the showers. Shane knew it was all in good fun, they were all a part of the same team after all. But he couldn't help feeling down because he had lost to *Rozanov*.

"Maybe I steal your place as captain, huh?" Ilya taunted, he pat Shane on the shoulder before sauntering away to the showers.

"God. What an asshole." Hayden breathed, standing next to Shane and he couldn't help but agree.

"-and then he stole the puck!" Hayden was retelling the story at lunch. Shane and his friends gathered around their usual lunch table. Shane dug into his salad, he was starving after practice.

"You should have been quicker!" Shane replied.

"Hey! It's not my fault Rozanov just fucking *appeared* in front of me. God. He's such an asshole but I have to admit he's good." Hayden argued.

Shane laughed, his eyes darting across the room absentmindedly. He found Ilya sitting in the corner of the cafeteria. Alone. Ilya had a black hoodie on, his head underneath the hood. Shane watched as Ilya fiddled about on his phone, his eyebrows were scrunched. They always seemed to be plastered that way, Shane thought. Although, this time Ilya looked worried, his teeth biting his bottom lip incessantly.

Shane got the sudden urge to walk up to him. He wanted to tell him he played well. Ask him what was wrong that was making his face look like that. Would Ilya tell him? He didn't seem like the talkative type. He was brought out of his musings by a pat on his shoulder. "Shane is still the best player." J.J stated.

Shane laughed. His thoughts about Ilya forgotten.

He continued to eat and laugh with his friends, conversations and topics changing, until the bell rang signalling the end of lunch. Shane stood up, put away his food tray and made his way to class.

He stepped into the classroom and stopped abruptly. The seat he usually sat on was taken. The only one available was one at the back. Next to... Ilya Rozanov, who was early today and sat there waiting, slumped in his chair. Shane shot Hayden a sad look, not being able to sit next to him before he sighed and walked to his chair.

“Rozanov.” Shane acknowledged as he sat down. The other boy straightened in his seat slowly, eyeing Shane. He did that a lot, Shane thought.

“Hollander.” Ilya murmured back.

Shane turned to look at him, and saw the dark circles underneath his eyes, his hair a mess, as if Ilya had waved his hands through it one too many times. Ilya’s shoulders were slumped as if he had the weight of the world on his shoulders.

He made Shane curious.

“You played well today.” Shane stated.

A small smile spread across Ilya’s lips but it was gone before Shane could determine if it was in fact a smile and not just a muscle spasm.

“Thanks.” He merely replied.

Shane opened his mouth to ask. Ask more. Ask where he was from, what his story was, when Mr Hunter walked in. “Okay class, let’s get started.”

Shane turned back to the front, and got his pen out, ready to take notes. About twenty minutes in, he heard a light noise. Shane frowned and turned to Ilya, only to see the other boy had fallen asleep and was now snoring softly. He had his head resting on the table between his arms. Eyes closed, his face relaxed, he looked so soft. So *normal*. His long lashes brushing against his cheek.

Shane thought about waking him up, his hand reaching out before it stopped. He had so looked so tired. Maybe he had a long night moving everything into place. Shane took his hand back, letting him be. He then decided to take another piece of paper from his notebook, now writing his notes twice.

A few minutes before class ended, Shane decided to wake the other boy up, before Mr Hunter realised that Ilya had slept throughout his lesson.

“Hey.” Shane whispered, gently shaking him awake.

Ilya shot awake. His eyes were on alert, sussing out a threat that wasn’t there. He soon relaxed when he realised where he was. “Class is almost over.” Shane murmured, tentatively.

Ilya sat up, and nodded stoically. “Ok.”

Shane pulled his hand away. He took the notes he had made for Ilya and held it out for him. Ilya shot him a puzzled look. “I made you notes.”

Ilya opened his mouth, perplexed. “You made me notes?”

“Yeah.” Shane shrugged, playing off as nothing. “So you don’t miss anything.”

The bell rang. Shane stood up and gathered his things. Ilya stayed silent and watched. Once he had everything sorted into his bag neatly, Shane faced Ilya.

“See you around, Rozanov.” And Shane could swear he saw that small smile again.

The final bell rang, signalling the end of the day. Shane was glad. He walked to his locker, ready to hit the road.

“You going out with us, right?” Hayden asked.

Shane made a face, considering. “Erm.” He stalled. He didn’t really want to spend his evening out tonight.

“Come on man!” Hayden exclaimed when he saw the denial on his face.

“It’s family night.” Shane lied. It was *not* family night. That was on Saturdays. “My mum’s got these old movies for us to watch. Sorry dude.” Hayden made a face of disappointment.

Shane smiled apologetically and opened his locker. He frowned when a piece of paper fell out, it had been jammed into the side of his locker. He opened up the folded piece.

“What’s that?” Hayden asked, now rumbling through his own locker.

Shane’s breath hitched.

Thank you. - I.R

The note merely read.

His thumbs stroked over the writing. His heart was beating fast. Too fast for something that, in retrospect, was nothing. It was just a thank you. Nothing more.

He realised then that Hayden was looking at him, waiting for a response. Shane quickly put the note into his back pocket. "N-nothing."

Shane couldn't sleep. He stared at his ceiling, eyes staring at the brown water stain that had been there for years. His eyes traced the pattern, willing his mind to find sleep. He peaked over to the clock in his room and groaned when he saw it was one o'clock in the morning! He was grateful the next day was a Saturday and would not have school or practice to go to. He hated when he would get random bursts of insomnia. It messed his whole routine up.

His mind drifted to the day he had. To the note Ilya had left. It now sat on his desk, gently placed in between the pages of his journal. He thought back to how soft Ilya had looked, asleep. It was a complete contrast to the boy he had seen on the ice. That boy had been all fire.

Shane's window was slightly open, bringing in a slight breeze. It was perhaps why he heard the click sound, somehow sounding loud in the quiet hour of the night. Shane dismissed the sound, thinking it was probably a bird. The sound changed, to an odd ruffling. Shane frowned. He sat up, and slowly made his way toward his window. He peaked through the curtains, moving them away slightly.

He looked out, at the flat roof next to his window, attached to the house next door. It seemed to lead right into the bedroom adjacent to his.

To Shane's surprise, he saw Ilya, climbing out of the window, a cigarette between his lips as he made his way to sit on the roof between their houses. Shane's hands shook as his grip on the curtains tightened.

He watched the other boy, as he took a puff and looked up at the sky. Shane took the time to simply observe, even though he felt like a creep. He couldn't help it. Ilya made him curious.

Ilya's hair was extra curly tonight, he wore a large sweatshirt and shorts; his feet bare. Shane's eyes traced the bridge of his nose and the edge of his lips, eyes dripping down to where his neck met his hoodie. He looked sad. Shane felt a pang in his heart.

Before he could get caught looking, Shane slipped back from his window and into bed.

Every night, like clock work, Ilya climbed out of his window and sat on the roof. He would sometimes smoke a cigarette, sometimes he would just sit there, looking out at the stars. Every night, Shane would stay awake until he heard the telltale sound of Ilya climbing out, before he would watch him from his window.

Tonight, Shane had his window opened wider due to the hot weather. He stood as he watched Ilya, trying to hide behind his curtain so he wouldn't be seen.

"Are you finally going to join me? Or keep staring like peeping Tom."

Shane flinched, not expecting to be addressed by the man of the hour and also not expecting for Ilya to have seen him. Shane's cheeks burned with embarrassment. He opened his window all the way, Ilya now having turned to look at him. He slowly climbed out, a little unsure about how safe this was. Ilya watched him, his eyes sharp. He wasn't smoking tonight, Shane noted.

"Sorry." Shane mumbled as soon as sat down beside him.

Ilya didn't say anything for a few moments, turning back to look at the stars. There were a lot of them out tonight.

"Is okay." Ilya mumbled.

Shane shot him a look. “Why do you come out here?”

“Is quiet. Calm. Boring.” Ilya replied.

Shane opened his mouth to defend his town. Sure it was not as exciting as Boston, but it wasn’t *boring*.

“I think I like boring.” Ilya then added.

“Oh yeah?”

“Hmmm. Is nice.” Ilya turned to look at him. “Your notes are very... *thorough*.” He said, changing the subject.

Shane bit his lip to stop himself from smiling. “I got your note.” He said instead.

Ilya nodded. “Good. I meant it.”

“Could you not... sleep?” Shane asked, maybe this was why Ilya was always tired at school.

Ilya shook his head. “No.” He didn’t add anything further. Shane didn’t pry.

“You?” Ilya added.

“No.” Shane copied.

They then just sat there, basking in the quiet, until Shane could see hints of the sun coming up. “I should go.” Shane whispered, he turned to look at Ilya.

“Ok.” Ilya replied. Shane nodded and moved to climb back into his room.

“Shane.” Ilya then called out.

Shane’s heart fluttered. “Yeah?”

“See you tomorrow night?” Ilya then smirked. Although it was phrased like a question, it didn’t feel like it. It felt like more of a confirmation of a silent agreement they had made. To sit and meet on the roof top.

Shane smiled. “Yeah.”

Yuna hummed to herself, pleased how well the cake turned out as she finished icing it. She gently placed it onto the finishing plate and sighed.

“That looks good.” David stated, walking into the kitchen. He came up behind Yuna and hugged her. Yuna smiled and leaned back into his arms.

“Thanks - ah! It’s for Irina next door!” She gently swatted away David’s hand when he tried to pick a piece. “She loved the brownies I made so I thought I’d invite her over for some coffee and cake.”

David smiled, and kissed Yuna on the cheek. “That’s sweet, hun. When is she coming?”

“In about an twenty minutes”

“Whose coming?” Shane asked, rubbing his eyes tiredly, as he walked into the kitchen still in his pyjamas.

“You slept late.” David stated, sharing a look with his wife. They knew how much of an early riser their son was.

Shane winced then blushed. He quickly walked to the sink, busying himself with getting a glass of water. “Y-yeah, I couldn’t really sleep last night.”

“Aww that’s too bad sweetie. And Irina is coming. Our new neighbour.”

Shane froze. “Oh?”

“Yeah. I told her to bring her son as well. You two can get acquainted.” Yuna shrugged her shoulders and began taking out the plates from the cupboards.

“I... met him already.”

“You did? When?”

“At school. He’s the new center.” Shane replied, fiddling about with his glass of water.

“Is he any good?” Yuna asked, her interest peaked.

Shane nodded, his cheeks flushed slightly. “Yeah.” Before he busied himself with making breakfast.

David shot Yuna a look. Their son was being weird.

“Hi! Welcome.” Yuna opened the front door to let in her new neighbour. The woman standing on the porch was a petite woman, she had beautiful blonde curly hair and blue eyes. She was holding a small bouquet of flowers, and handed them over to Yuna as soon as she stepped inside.

“For you.” Irina said, her English stilted.

“Oh thank you. That’s so sweet.” Yuna led her into the kitchen, and put the flowers in a vase.

“How are you doing?” Yuna asked, making conversation. She turned to look at Irina, who was looking around the house, taking note of all the decor.

“I’m good. You have lovely home.” Irina replied.

Yuna smiled. “Thank you.” She paused when she realised Irina had come alone. “Oh isn’t your son joining us?”

At that, Irina’s eyes grew slightly distant and she looked a little sad. “No.” She didn’t offer any reason. Yuna hid her frown, she did not like the sad look on her face.

“That’s okay.” Yuna stated. “More cake for us.”

Irina smiled, her eyes brightening again.

Shane watched from the upstairs landing as Ilya's mother walked in the house. She looked exactly how Ilya looked. She was beautiful.

When Shane had heard that Ilya was coming, he had practically run up stairs to get changed out of his pyjamas. Although Ilya had seen them already last night, his brain unhelpfully reminded him. He quickly got changed into whatever jeans and top he found first, hoping it looked okay. He told himself he wasn't dressing up for Ilya. It was just nice... to look nice.

He had gone over to the top of the stairs when he had the doorbell, watching as Irina walked in. Alone. She was alone. Ilya hadn't come with her. Shane tried not to feel too disappointed. It's not like they were friends. Why would he come over?

He slowly walked back to his bedroom and up to his dresser where Ilya's note sat. He traced over the writing with his thumb, before letting out a sigh and putting it away.

He was pathetic.

Chapter 2: So if I wanna run and hide?

Chapter Summary

Ilya's POV:

Feelings, jealousy and nightmares.

Chapter Notes

WARNING: This chapter has scenes of past child abuse/ domestic abuse.

Chapter title from song: Real - Majik

The sharp sound of a slap and then a cry awoke Ilya up. His eyes shot open, his heart in his throat. He could hear someone wailing, a woman. Then words being shouted at, a man.

Ilya scurried out of bed and ran out of his room, just as his father was walking away from his mother who was lying on the floor, trembling.

"Mama!" Ilya shouted. He ran to his mother, crouching down at her level. "Mama! Mama. Look at me. Are you okay?" He frantically searched her body for any major injuries. His mother turned slowly, and whimpered lightly. Her dress was ripped from her neckline, hair a mess. She had a bruise on her left cheek, slowly forming into something ugly. Her bottom lip was busted and bleeding.

"Mama!" Ilya panicked, tears forming in his eyes, not knowing what to do.

"Ilya," she murmured, before her eyelids closed and she passed out.

Ilya's heart dropped, hands shaking. He grabbed his mother and carried her to his room, gently placing her on his bed. He looked around frantically for his phone, where was his phone! It lay upon his desk, unknowing to the turmoil happening around it.

Ilya grabbed it and dialled for an ambulance. "Help! I need help. My mother she's..." Ilya trailed off, he couldn't remember much of what happened next, the moments passing like a blur. The ambulance came, carried out his mother and took them to the hospital, where they examined her injuries.

Ilya waited nervously in the waiting room, pacing and biting his nails.

"Ilya!" At the sound of his name, Ilya jumped. He turned around to see who had called him.

Svetlana was running over. She grabbed him into a hug, Ilya clutched back. "Sveta, I can't do this anymore." Ilya weeped into her shoulder, body shaking. "I thought... I thought she was dead."

"Hey, hey. She's not! She's okay." Svetlana whispered. "And you don't have to do this anymore."

Ilya pulled away and looked at her sharply.

"I did it. My father did it. You and your mama can leave America tonight."

"What?"

"My father got your papers sorted. Got you a house in a small town in Canada." Svetlana explained. "You'll be safe there."

"Safe?" The concept seemed so foreign to him.

Svetlana nodded. "We need to get your things sorted. Come on. Before your father comes back."

"But my mama," Ilya murmured, he looked back into the direction the doctors had taken her in.

"She will be fine. The doctors are with her. As soon as she's discharged, you both have to leave."

Ilya wiped at his tears and nodded.

Ilya stared at his class timetable, trying to make sense of it all. The school layout seemed so confusing. He knew he had history first, something he absolutely *hated*. He begrudgingly made his way through the corridors, pausing every few seconds to read the classroom numbers to see which he was in.

The hallway had emptied, everyone having gone to class already; Ilya was late. When he finally found his class, Ilya snuck in, happy that he had made it before the teacher. He didn't fancy getting in trouble on his first day.

Ilya saw a seat at the back and quickly made his way to it. He felt his phone buzz with an alert.

Kip (work):

You're still working tonight's shift right?

Ilya rolled his eyes. His new co-worker had asked to swap shifts, claiming to have a date or something. Ilya hadn't cared, he didn't mind working more, needing all the cash he could get.

He had gotten a job as soon as he and his mother arrived in Ottawa. It's not like they could live off his father's income anymore. So Ilya had gone to the first restaurant/bar that he had seen and asked if they were hiring. Thankfully, they were and had hired him straight away. The job was easy, serving people, making drinks, blah blah blah. It was just the late hours that were the problem. He felt he was at work more than he was at home. He wondered how he was going to balance work with school and now hockey. He was soon to join the team, in fact his arrival would soon be announced.

Ilya sighed and wrote out his reply.

Ilya:

Yes.

As he typed, he could feel someone staring at him. He looked up and saw a boy sitting two seats away, watching him. The boy had almond shaped eyes and freckles dotted across his cheeks and nose.

Ilya raised an eyebrow, confused as to why he was being stared at. The boy suddenly flushed and quickly looked away.

Okay. Weird.

Ilya put his phone away and leaned back in his chair. The teacher, Mr Hunter, was taking too long to arrive. Ilya looked around, his eyes growing heavy. To say he was exhausted was an understatement. His eyes began to close without his consent, before he decided to let them. Only for a minute.

Ilya flinched awake when he suddenly heard his name being called. His eyes shot out across the room, to find everyone staring back. He wasn't sure what was said about him, so he merely nodded. Thankfully, Mr Hunter continued with the lesson.

Ilya slumped in his chair. It was going to be a long day.

Ilya hadn't meant to fall asleep in class again, a few days later. He had gotten home from work late last night, and then when he finally got to bed; sleep wouldn't come. He had tossed and turned, staring up at the ceiling, before he had let out a sigh and climbed onto the roof. He liked looking at the stars, the constellations making up pretty patterns. It was something he did as a child, when he still lived in Russia. Looking up at the stars made him feel so small, his problems miniscule. It felt refreshing, the sky so big, so free. It made Ilya feel free as well. At least for the moment.

He had spent most of the night on the roof.

Now, he couldn't help *but* fall asleep. Maybe it was Mr Hunter's boring voice, the way he drolled on about something that happened in the 1800s. It felt like he had only been asleep for five minutes, when he felt a gentle hand on his shoulder, shaking him awake.

Ilya shot up, his heart racing, for a second he thought he was back *there*, expecting to see his mother crumpled on the floor and father looming over him, red in his eyes.

Ilya's eyes scanned the room, his brain catching up and his breathing evened. He was at school. He was not in Boston. He relaxed.

"Hey. Class is almost over." A voice whispered. Shane. The boy he had met last night. His neighbour with the cute dog. His neighbour who had told him off for smoking.

Ilya sat up, nodding at the boy. Grateful for the heads up. Thankfully, Mr Hunter hadn't noticed him falling asleep again. "Ok"

"I made you notes." Shane stated, handing him a piece of paper.

"You made me notes?" Ilya asked, feeling confused. He hadn't expected this random act of kindness from a boy he didn't know. From someone who he had just won against at practice. Ilya hadn't done anything to deserve it, he thought.

Shane shrugged. “Yeah. So you don't miss anything.” And with that he packed up and walked away, leaving Ilya sitting there feeling lost.

All day, he couldn't help but think back to the boy with the freckles, *Shane*. He hadn't even gotten a chance to say thank you before Shane had left. Ilya regretted it. All day, he watched Shane from afar. He seemed to be rather popular around their school, with people always coming up to him, congratulating him on previous hockey wins, or saying hello so he would notice them. Shane, all too polite, would acknowledge each of them, blushing every time someone complimented him, as if he was surprised each time.

He made Ilya curious.

It didn't take too much time to find Shane's locker. He wanted to thank him in some way, and turning up at his house for a mere thank you felt extreme. In the end, he just left a small note. It wasn't much, but at least it was something.

Each night as he climbed out onto the roof, he could tell Shane was watching him. The boy was *not* subtle. At first it had been annoying. He wanted to turn around and yell at him, ask him what he was looking at. But maybe it was the buzz of the cigarette he was smoking, or the calmness of the stars, Ilya let it be.

Until tonight, he felt restless. Unable to fall asleep like usual and whenever he did, he would just dream of his father. He climbed out onto the roof, and like clockwork he heard Shane move around his room, until a shadow could be seen at the window. Tonight, he wanted to call him out on it. Tonight, he didn't want to be alone.

Shane seemed shocked at being discovered, which made Ilya smile. They sat in comfortable silence. It was nice.

As weeks passed, Shane began joining him on the roof more often. Shane would talk about nothing and anything and Ilya would listen. He decided he liked Shane's voice. They talked about their childhood ranging from how they got into hockey to childhood bullies.

“There was this one kid, Derek. God. He was such an asshole.” Shane told him one night.

“Like me?” Ilya smirked.

Shane huffed. “No. You... can be *nice*.”

Ilya snickered at the admission.

“He was not nice! I hated him, he and a couple of other kids would tease me, about my freckles and my eyes. I had to change ice rinks because of them.”

Ilya turned to look at him in shock and offence. “But your freckles are so cute!”

“Shut up! They are not cute!” Shane retorted, gently shoving his shoulder.

“What! They are!”

“*Cute* is what you call a puppy! I am not *cute*!”

“You’re right. Anya is cute! You’re...” Ilya trailed off. *Beautiful*, he wanted to say, the word at the tip of his tongue. Ilya swallowed, his throat bobbing. He saw Shane’s eyes travel down to his neck, following the movement. Over the weeks, they had begun to sit closer, their shoulders touching, heads close. Ilya had told himself that it was because it was a small roof. Nothing more. He didn’t want his new friend Shane to fall off.

At that moment, Ilya wanted to lean over and kiss him. The urge so sudden it made him flinch back. That seemed to pull Shane out of his daze as he too moved back, shooting Ilya a nervous look. They sat in silence until hints of the sun began to rise and Shane stated he had to go.

They didn't talk about their time on the roof at school, apart from hockey and the one class they shared, their paths did not cross. Their time on the roof felt too sacred to talk about during the day.

Ilya began to look forward to history and practice. At practice, he could be his asshole self, he liked to throw small digs and jabs at Shane, waiting for the flush that always appeared on his cheeks. Shane, to his credit, would always reciprocate, fire in his eyes. Ilya loved it.

Shane would continue to make notes for them even when Ilya stayed awake, even when he didn't have to. Ilya found that Shane would sometimes leave small comments in the margins of his thoughts as the lesson took place.

Mr Hunter needs to work on his tone. He sounds so boring!

I would rather be playing hockey right now.

Is that a hickey on Mr Hunter's neck???

Sometimes, he would leave doodles of random drawings.

It always made Ilya smile. He decided to continue to leave small thank you notes in Shane's locker in return. Sometimes he would add his own thoughts on them.

“Okay, class. This will be a group project, I need you all to get into pairs. It is due next Monday!” Mr Hunter declared. Ilya looked around at the class, who all groaned. His eyes found Shane's and wondered who Shane was going to partner with. His thoughts then drifted to himself, wondering who he should partner with? It's not like he had made any friends in this class. Other than Shane, he hadn't spoken to anyone else. He wondered if he could ask Mr Hunter to work alone, he'd preferred that, rather than seeking out a partner.

“Hey. Wanna be my partner?” Shane’s voice broke Ilya out of thoughts. “I mean... since we basically share notes already.” His cheeks flushed and eyes darted around the room nervously, not meeting Ilya’s eyes.

Ilya nodded. “Ok.”

The answering smile Ilya received made his heart flutter. Ilya ignored it. Shane’s eyes crinkled, tongue darting out slightly to wet his dry lips. Ilya’s eyes couldn’t help but follow the move.

“Okay.” Shane nodded. “We can meet at my house? Or do you want to do it at yours?” He then flushed further as his eyes widened. “I mean... I mean not *it*, but... but like the *work*! The project! We can do the *project* at yours!”

Ilya laughed. “I don’t mind.” Shane looked cute all flustered, the thought randomly popping into his head.

“Ok, well we can meet at mine?” Shane then suggested. Ilya shrugged and nodded.

Ilya walked back to the locker rooms, practice had been gruelling but they had a game coming. He was excited. It would be his first game since he had transferred to this school. He had invited his mother to come, his biggest supporter.

Ilya had loved hockey ever since he was a child and would go to the ice rink with his mother. She had taught him how to skate, holding his hand as she skated backwards. It was one of Ilya’s most treasured memories, seeing the smile on her face, the gleam in her eyes. She encouraged him into hockey, and would always be at his games, cheering from the crowd. However, when his father had learnt of his talent and interest in hockey, he had tried to exploit it. Urging him to do better, be better. Ily had tried to make his father proud the way his mother was, but it was never enough.

Ilya quickly showered and was just about to get dressed, when Shane appeared in front of him. He looked nervous, his ears red. Shane nervously fidgetted with his hands by his side. Ilya raised an eyebrow.

“H-hey.” Shane greeted him.

“Hi.” Ilya replied.

“Would you want to come back to mine after school today? We can do that history assignment.” Shane asked. They had never set a day or a time, Ilya realised.

Ilya moved to nod, before he remembered he was working after school. “I erm... I've got work after school.” He mumbled.

Shane's eyebrows shot up. “Oh right. Well, what time do you finish?”

“Seven.”

Shane nodded. “You can come after? If- if you want!”

“It won't be too late?”

Shane shook his head. “No, it's fine.” He eyed Ilya for a few more seconds, eyes dropping down to his chest, which Ilya realised belatedly was still naked and wet from the shower, before his eyes shot up and he abruptly walked away, muttering “see you then” on his way.

Ilya couldn't help the smirk that came upon his lips.

Ilya returned home from work, cracking his neck from side to side. It had been a long shift, the bar had been busier than usual. To make matters worse, some idiot had split a drink down his shirt and since he didn't have a spare one, Ilya had to continue working with a wet drink-soaked shirt.

He walked to his bedroom wanting to shower and get changed before he went over to Shane's, not wanting to smell like alcohol.

"You're going out, baby?" His mother called as she saw him getting ready. His mother leaned against his bedroom door smiling softly at him.

"Yeah. Just next door." Ilya replied.

His mother raised an eyebrow. *"To the Hollanders? They're really nice people."*

Ilya nodded. *"Me and... Shane have an assignment together."*

His mother hummed, amusement in her eyes. *"You look nice."*

Ilya looked down at the clothes he had grabbed to wear, not having realised he had picked his favourite jacket. The one that made his biceps look bigger. He hadn't done that on purpose! He hadn't.

"I can stay, if you want?" Ilya asked. Ever since they had escaped his father, he did not like leaving his mother alone in the house, especially at night.

His mother smiled, sadly and shook her head. *"No, my love. You can't stop enjoying your life, not going out with friends, because of me."*

Ilya opened his mouth to argue but was shot down by one look from his mother. She could be very stern when she wanted to be. *"I've noticed you staying home, in the evenings, and on*

weekends. Apart from going to work or school, you don't go out anymore."

She walked forward and gently took Ilya's face in her hands. She was a petite woman, Ilya towering over her. *"I want you to enjoy your life. I won't let you waste away at home. Not because of me. And especially not because of him."*

She leaned forward and gave him a kiss on the cheek. *"Have fun."*

Ilya nervously walked up to the Hollander house, his palms slightly sweaty. He rang the doorbell and waited, hearing footsteps and loud barks. Shane opened the door, his hair was wet from the shower, he wore a black t-shirt and grey sweatpants.

"Hey." He greeted, sounding slightly out of breath.

"Hollander." Ilya replied, walking into the house. The house was big and homely. Ilya took off his shoes when he noticed Shane wasn't wearing any, before following him further into the house.

Shane's dog, Anya, immediately came barreling toward Ilya, who crouched down and laughed as she licked him. He patted her head and tried to fight off her kisses.

"Wow. She really likes you." Shane stated, who stood watching the whole thing.

Ilya stood up. "Why wouldn't she? I'm amazing." He replied.

Shane rolled his eyes, but a small smile played on his lips. He nodded toward the kitchen, before leading him further inside the house.

"Who was at the door, dear?" a woman asked. She was sitting at the kitchen island working on her laptop. A man stood near the stove, wearing an apron and seemed to be cooking something.

“This is Ilya Rozonov.” Shane introduced. “We have an assignment together.”

“Hi.” Ilya stood awkwardly. He placed his hands together in front of him, not really knowing what to do with them.

Shane’s parents turned to look at him. His mother smiled wide. “Oh. Your Irina’s son.” She put her glass of wine down and walked toward him. “Nice to meet you. I’m Yuna.” She held out her hand for him to shake, and it reminded Ilya of her son, when Shane had done the same thing that night that they had officially met. Ilya took it and shook it, doing the same to Shane’s dad.

“Shane has told us all about your hockey skills. How long have you been playing?” Yuna asked.

“Okay!” Shane interrupted before Ilya could reply, cheeks red. “Well... we actually have an assignment to do, we’ll be upstairs.” Ilya moved to follow him but they were stopped by his dad.

“Take the food with you. I’m sure Ilya is hungry!”

Ilya opened his mouth to decline, then realised he hadn’t eaten since lunch. Shane rolled his eyes but nodded, taking the plates of pasta, and led Ilya upstairs.

“Sorry about that.” Shane apologised, bashfully, as they entered his bedroom and he closed the door behind them. Anya had followed them and made herself at home on the floor near Shane’s bed. Shane rubbed the back of his neck, cheeks still red.

Ilya smirked. “You gush about me to your parents, Hollander?”

“Shut up! I don't. My mum's just really hockey obsessed.” Shane exclaimed, making Ilya snicker.

He took in Shane's room, mostly filled with various trophies he had won over the years. There was an Ottawa centaurs poster on his wall behind his bed. His room was clean, everything seemed to have a place. His eyes shifted to the bed that was covered in about a million pillows and cushions.

“You think you have enough cushions?”

Shane rolled his eyes, now setting down the food on the floor by the window and sitting down. “Fuck off! My mum set them up.” Ilya joined him by the window, sitting down next to him.

They decided to eat first before the food got cold. Ilya practically scoffed down the pasta, it was delicious. As they ate, they talked mostly about hockey or what they wanted to do on their assignment.

“Did you play at your old school?” Shane asked. They had finished eating and now just sat with their backs to the wall. Their shoulders touched slightly.

Ilya nodded. “Yeah. I was captain.” He smirked at Shane, who rolled his eyes. “I'm thinking I'll be captain here soon, no?”

“You fucking wish dude.”

Ilya laughed. He loved riling him up.

“So how was it? Boston.” Shane asked.

“It was good. We moved there when I was fifteen. Lived in Russia before that. My old team was the best, always winning cups.” He smiled, reminiscing. It had been heartbreaking leaving them behind.

“So, how come... you left?”

Ilya’s smile dropped. His first thought was to tell him everything. Shane seemed like a sound guy who wouldn't go blabbing to the next person he saw. But he couldn't. He didn't really want to bring the mood down.

“Just wanted change.” He lied.

Shane eyed him carefully, as if he didn't believe him. A part of Ilya wanted Shane to ask again, to pry, but Shane didn't. He merely nodded and they moved on to talk about their project.

Ilya realised two things as they worked. One, Shane was really organised, like stupidly so. Shane created individual folders on his laptop for their project and took the time to label each one. And two, Shane was really funny. If he didn't like someone, he would rip into them brutally. It was hilarious to witness.

Ilya didn't remember ever laughing so much, until this moment. They had begun discussing the best hockey players, fighting over who was better.

“He has weak backhand!” Ilya argued.

Shane laughed, eyes crinkling. “No, he doesn't!” Ilya felt his heart flutter.

“Yes. He does. But it makes sense why you like him. You also have weak backhand!” Ilya retorted.

“Fuck you! No I don't.” Shane exclaimed, laughing and leaning forward until he was mere inches away from Ilya. “That’s your captain, you're insulting you know.”

Ilya leaned forward too. “Oh I know.” He replied, smugly. “But he won't be captain for long so is okay.”

“You’re such an asshole.” Shane murmured. Ilya’s eyes couldn't help but drop to his lips.

“Is just the truth.” Ilya shrugged his shoulders. They were close enough that the gesture touched Shane. The contact seemed to freeze them both, now making them realise how close they had gotten. Ilya saw Shane’s eyes dart to his lips, before back to his eyes. Shane swallowed, eyes wide as they darted between Ilya's.

The seconds felt like hours in that moment, they just stared at each other, neither leaning forward, but neither pulling away. The air around them felt like it was buzzing.

Then, Anya decided to randomly bark, making them flinch and move away.

“We should... should finish the assignment.” Shane stammered, his voice sounding weird.

“Yes.” Ilya stated.

They continued to work, this time focusing only on assignment based topics. Still, all night Ilya couldn't get his heart rate back to normal. Every look Shane gave felt charged, somehow. He ignored it.

Eventually, when they had been working for a few more hours, Ilya snuck a glance at the clock, it was almost midnight. “I should go. We can finish this another day.” He moved to stand up. Shane followed him, coming up to stand next to him. They didn't have much of a height difference, Ilya found he liked that.

Shane walked Ilya to his front door, and paused. Ilya paused too. There was something left unsaid between them, festering. Ilya didn't know what. He watched as Shane opened his mouth and then closed it, as if he was rethinking his words.

“See you on the roof, Rozanov?” Shane finally asked, a small smile playing on his lips.

Ilya couldn't help but smile back. “See you then.”

Ilya felt high. Blood rushing, skin hot and sweaty, adrenaline injected into his veins. The cheers of the crowd were so loud, he could not hear himself think.

There were two minutes left in the game, and Shane had scored the winning goal, after Ilya had passed him the puck. They had both moved in sync, as if one mind. It had felt exhilarating to finally have someone play with him with the same skill set. He didn't even have to look to see if Shane would be in the position that Ilya needed him to be in, he just was, already knowing. Their chemistry on the ice felt electric, fueling each other up and it had paid off.

Ilya skated up to Shane and grabbed him around the shoulders. He couldn't help but kiss him on his helmet, grinning into the kiss. Shane grabbed him back, equally grinning.

“Nice goal.” Ilya complimented, eyes sharp and focused only on Shane.

Shane blushed, dipping his head in thanks. “Nice assist.”

Ilya couldn't explain it. Couldn't explain if his heart was beating fast due to the adrenaline of winning a game, or due to the lingering look they were now sharing. Shane was slow to let go, Ilya the same, smiles wide.

They were soon joined by the rest of their team, their moment broken. Ilya didn't mind. They had won! He searched the crowd for his mother and smiled wider when he saw her standing up and clapping. She sat with Shane's parents, who were also standing clapping. His heart felt so full. He raised his stick and waved at her and felt his heart wobble when she waved back.

The energy in the locker room was thrilling, everyone high on their win. "Celebration at mine!" Marley yelled and everyone cheered.

"You gonna go?" Shane appeared next to him.

Ilya froze. He hadn't really thought about it. He was once a party person, back in Boston, but after coming to Ottawa, he hadn't really felt like partying.

"Are you?" Ilya asked instead.

Shane rolled his eyes. "Yeah, Hayden is making me." Ilya nodded. Shane didn't really seem like the guy who went to these sorts of things, despite the company he kept. "It makes sense though. We won!" Shane laughed. Ilya traced how his lips widened as he did.

"So. Are you coming?" Shane pushed.

Was Shane asking him out? He thought.

"Oh, you better come, Rozonov!" Marley yelled in his direction before Ilya could respond. "Your assist scored the winning goal!" There was a round of cheers in agreement.

"We can drive together?" Shane suggested. It was something in his eyes that looked hopeful that made Ilya's heart flutter.

Ilya nodded. "Ok."

Irina embraced him into a hug as soon as he was close enough. “*My baby!*” She exclaimed in Russian. “*You were so good. I’m so proud of you.*” She kissed him across his cheek, until Ilya giggled and pulled away.

“*Mama.*” Ilya laughed. “*You’re embarrassing me,*” he teased.

His mother shrugged her shoulders and continued kissing across his cheek and nose. “*I don’t care. I birthed you. I have the right!*”

They stood at the entrance of the rink, all the players greeting their families standing around them. Shane and his family stood beside them, Yuna and David seemed to be showing the same affection toward him.

“You boys played well.” His mother congratulated, switching to English and now addressing Shane as well.

Shane smiled, eyes crinkling. His eyes darted to Ilya and then back to his mother. “Th-thank you.” Shane stammered out. “I’m Shane.” He held his hand toward Irina.

Irina smiled and shook it. “Your mother has told me much about you.” She then shot Ilya a mischievous look. “And I’ve heard much about you from my son.”

Shane’s eyes darted to Ilya again in surprise. Ilya’s eyes widened, his mouth hanging open. His mother had made it seem that Ilya had been gushing about Shane to her.

Shane’s surprise melted into a smirk. “What has he said about me?”

“Well... we have party to get to!” Ilya blurted before things got more awkward and his mother embarrassed him further.

Shane eyed him with amusement, as if he could see right through him. But thankfully, he only nodded.

“Yeah. Marley is throwing a party.” Shane explained to the parents. “We better get going. But thanks for coming!”

Yuna and David hugged Shane, praising him again. Irina did the same to Ilya, squeezing him tight, before the boys were let go.

“So you drive a boring car.” Ilya stated, as soon as they left the rink and into the car park.

“Shut up! It's a normal car. It's good in the snow.” Shane hit him lightly on the arm in protest.

Ilya snickered and eyed Shane, watching how his cheeks reddened.

“Just because of that comment, I'm not going to let you pick the music.” Shane retorted as they settled in the car.

“Oh really?”

“Yeah.” Shane huffed, now reversing out of the car park. “I was going to be nice but now I'm choosing.”

“Oh, so I have to listen to your boring music.” Ilya rolled his eyes, pretending to be annoyed.

Shane shot him a glare. “So first I have a boring car, now boring music. Do you love that word, Rozonov?”

Ilya looked over at Shane, his freckles somehow darker tonight. “Is good word. It describes you well.” His eyes wandered to Shane’s arms, he was in a T-shirt now which was making his biceps bulge. Ilya quickly averted his gaze.

“You need to expand your vocabulary.” Shane stated flatly.

They bickered over small things as Shane drove, purposely driving each other crazy. Ilya loved it. Much too soon, Shane pulled up at Marley’s house and parked up. They got out and made their way inside, the loud music could already be heard from the outside. Shane led Ilya inside and they made their way to Marley’s basement, where the party was being held.

“There they are!” Someone yelled as soon as they walked in.

“The MVPs,” another yelled. They received pats on the back and were directed to the makeshift bar at the back of the room. Ilya immediately went for a beer, taking a sip. He noticed Shane didn’t and instead just grabbed a ginger ale from the mini fridge.

“Im driving.” Shane merely stated when Ilya raised an eyebrow at him.

“I didn’t say anything.” Ilya replied. He eyed Shane up and down, he looked good tonight. His hair had grown slightly in the last few weeks, Ilya found that he liked it this way.

“You look good tonight.” Ilya complimented, voicing his thoughts.

Shane’s eyebrows shot up and his cheeks immediately reddened, his freckles more prevalent. They reminded Ilya of the stars he spent his time looking at when he couldn’t sleep.

“Thanks. So do you.” Shane replied, shyly. His brown eyes looked Ilya up and down and Ilya found that he liked it, to be observed by Shane, to be noticed. He wondered what he looked like in Shane's point of view.

They were interrupted by a girl with red hair, who came running toward Shane and wrapped her arms around his neck. “Shane!” She exclaimed. Shane hugged her back, his hands on her waist as they squeezed.

“Rose!” Shane replied. “What are you doing here?”

“Celebrating your win! Duh!” She laughed and hugged him.

Shane laughed and hugged her back. “Sorry that your team lost!” He said, not sounding sorry at all.

Rose rolled her eyes not buying his apology. “No, you’re not.”

Shane snorted and took a sip of his ginger ale. It was then that he seemed to remember that Ilya was standing next to him. He turned to Rose and gestured to Ilya.

“Rose this Ilya, our new center. Ilya, this is Rose.” Shane introduced. Ilya noted that Shane didn't mention what she was to him. He shook her hand, smiling but it didn't reach his eyes.

“You were really good.” Rose complimented.

“Yes.” Ilya replied, his voice detached. From the corner of his eye he saw Shane frown, but Ilya didn't care.

The song that was playing changed and Rose gasped, grabbing onto Shane's hand. “Oh, I love this song! You have to dance with me.” She tugged at Shane's arm.

Shane shook his head. "No! I don't dance."

"Come on! For meeee." Rose showed him her puppy eyes and Shane relented, laughing. Rose dragged him onto the dance floor. Shane looked back at Ilya, a weird expression on his face but Ilya couldn't be bothered to decipher it. He threw back his beer, quickly finishing it before grabbing another.

Eventually, he was joined by the rest of his team, everyone talking about the game highlights. Ilya tried to join in, but his eyes kept running back to Shane on the dancefloor still dancing with Rose. Ilya was pretty sure three songs had changed over by now. Rose was holding Shane tight, her fingers slipping under his shirt slightly. She whispered something in his ear and Shane laughed and nodded. Ilya felt his chest tighten, before he looked away.

"Hey Ilya." A couple of girls walked up to him. The one who had spoken had blonde hair and brown eyes. She was cute and was eyeing him up and down. "You played really well tonight." She reached forward and touched him on the arm, giving his bicep a squeeze.

Ilya smirked at her and dipped his head so she could hear him over the music. "Thanks."

She smiled at him seductively and bit her lip lightly. "You wanna dance?"

Ilya threw back his drink, quickly finishing it off and nodded, taking her hand and onto the dance floor.

It was fun, letting go and enjoying himself. He forgot about his troubles, choosing to dance and drink. He wanted to forget. He wanted to pretend that everything was normal, that he was normal. He wanted to forget his father, or why they had to leave Boston or his feelings about Shane.

And as the alcohol swam through his system, Ilya got his wish.

The night soon became a blur. He didn't know how many shots he had drunk, throwing them back and not caring. He had won. That's all that mattered in the moment.

The room began to tilt before spinning around him, he stumbled tripping over air. Head pounding loud in his ears, in beat with the music. He suddenly felt the urge to vomit.

Ilya moved away from the dancefloor, trying to find the bathroom but he had no idea where he was going.

“You okay?” a voice asked. Ilya didn't know who. He pushed his way up the stairs of the basement, hoping he could find a bathroom before he hurled on Marley's carpet.

A hand grabbed his arm, now guiding him somewhere. Ilya, in his drunken state, didn't question who it was or where he was being taken. “I need to... going to vomit.” He did manage to get out, to alert whoever was dragging him to watch out. He heard the other person make a sound before he was dragged faster, and eventually brought to the bathroom.

Ilya didn't waste time, running to the toilet and hurling inside it. He groaned and rested his head against the toilet seat, in his state he didn't care how disgusting it was.

“Come on. I'm taking you home.” The same voice spoke, dragging him away from his spot on the floor. Now that he had puked his brains out, his head had emptied slightly that the noises around returned and he was able to register who was speaking to him.

“Shane?”

Shane nodded and gently guided him outside to where his car was parked. Shane helped him into the car, before he rounded it and got into the driver's seat. Ilya watched Shane fiddle with his seatbelt, he could feel his own eyes drooping. He didn't stop them.

Pain spread across his body first, before the blood spilled out. He could feel it drip down his cheek, an ugly cut forming. He could only focus on his father's angry glare, and at the ring

that lay on his father's finger; the culprit that had made the cut across his cheek as his father slapped him.

"I can't believe you lost to Latvia!" His father bellowed. "How embarrassing. How embarrassing that I have you as a son. A failure!"

Ilya gulped down his retort, not reacting. If he didn't react then maybe his father would stop talking. Then this would end faster.

His father didn't stop, instead his silence seemed to fuel him further. "Now you have nothing to say? You're an ungrateful child! So selfish! After all I have given you!"

"I promise to be better, Papa," Ilya croaked out, his voice cracking.

"Liar!" His father struck him again, his ring leaving a further dent in his cheek.

Tears rolled down Ilya's cheeks, mixing with the blood already there. His father didn't notice.

"Hey." Somebody was shaking him awake. "Hey!"

Ilya shot awake, eyes darting around in confusion, before they landed on Shane.

"You're okay! You just fell asleep." Shane stated, his voice forcibly calm but his eyes seemed worried, eyebrows furrowed.

Ilya swallowed around his dry throat and nodded.

"We're home." Shane murmured and now Ilya took the time to look out the window. Shane had parked into his driveway. He looked over at his house and saw his mother's bedroom

light was still on. *Damn it.* She must be waiting for him.

“What time is it?” Ilya asked.

“About half one in the morning.”

Ilya winced. He nodded shakily and tried to get out of the car but he stumbled.

“Hey! Let me help you.” Shane rushed out, running to his side. He put his arm around Ilya, hoisting him up when Ilya’s legs refused to cooperate. He walked Ilya to his house, and then rang the bell. Ilya wanted to say that he had a key somewhere in his jeans pocket, but his tongue felt too big for his mouth.

The door opened, his mother looked worried as her eyes darted across Ilya.

“Mama.” Ilya murmured.

She reached for him immediately and took him around her arms. Ilya inhaled his mother’s scent, she smelt like the flowers that grew in Russia. He was half way to sleep, his mind already drifting away. He didn’t hear what Shane said to his mother, what his mother replied, before he found himself being taken upstairs to his room. His mother tucked him into bed, waving her hands through his hair.

“*My love.*” she cooed.

“*I’m sorry mama.*” He whispered.

“*Shh. You have nothing to apologise for.*”

Ilya shook his head. His mother didn't understand.

“Im sorry for disappointing you. For being a failure.”

He passed out before he could hear her response.

Chapter 3: I'm running on instinct for you

Chapter Summary

Feelings are so annoying!

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone, sorry this took longer. Even though I've planned out the chapters, writers block still hit me and I just couldn't put my words to paper. URGHHH AAAGHHH

Anyway. hope you enjoy :)

Chapter title from song: Real - Majik

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Shane winced at the loud music as he entered Marley's basement. He made his way to the drinks station and got himself a ginger ale, soothing his nerves. He was glad Ilya had accepted his invite. Well... *Marley's invite*. Whatever.

"You look good tonight." Ilya complimented.

Shane's eyebrows shot up and his cheeks immediately reddened. Sure, he had been putting a little more effort into his clothes lately. He told himself he was just tired of dressing like he was going to the gym. He told himself he wasn't doing it for anyone. He wasn't even sure anyone would notice. But Ilya had. The thought made his heart flutter.

"Thanks. So do you." Shane replied, shyly. He couldn't help but look Ilya up and down. Ilya had opted for dark grey jeans and a black vest, his biceps bulging out. He looked good. Like walking out of a fashion shoot good. Ilya's hair was all curls tonight. Shane wanted to run his hands through them. He wondered if the curls would be as soft as they looked, or if Ilya liked his hair played with.

He was snapped out of his thoughts, when Rose came running up to him.

“Shane!” She exclaimed as she hugged him. As Shane introduced Ilya to her, he felt a shift in his behaviour. Ilya’s face held a small scowl as he greeted Rose. He didn't even give a cocky reply when she complimented him.

Huh. weird.

He wished he knew Ilya better than he did at that moment, then maybe he would know what Ilya was thinking. He didn't have the time to ask him what was wrong, as Rose chose that moment to drag him onto the dancefloor despite his refusal. He couldn't help but shoot Ilya a glance as he was being dragged away, but Ilya was now looking elsewhere, seemingly not watching Shane walk away.

They soon began to dance, Rose’s hands spreading across his chest. Shane didn't mind. She knew he was gay, something he had told her soon after meeting her. They had met when Hayden and J.J had dared him to sign up to a random improv class. Shane had complied because he was not a chicken and although he had made a fool of himself because he did not know the first thing about acting, he had met Rose, which had made his attendance worth it. He had learnt that she went to another high school nearby, and that they shared a love for hockey.

Despite his aversion to dancing, it felt nice dancing with a girl who didn't want to take this elsewhere, and knew his boundaries. Shane didn't dance much so his moves were rusty, but Rose didn't seem to mind and instead guided his hips to the beat of the music.

As he danced, his eyes searched the room. He told himself he was just curious to see who else was in attendance. He wasn't looking for Ilya. His eyes eventually landed on the man that had taken permanent residence in his mind. Shane felt his heart stutter as his eyes settled on Ilya.

Ilya was now dancing with a girl. Shane couldn't help the pit that formed in his stomach. He watched as the girl wrapped her hands around Ilya, fingers wandering across his chest and leaning her face close. Shane felt he was going to vomit.

Shane gulped down his ginger ale, and averted his eyes. He didn't know why the sight of Ilya dancing with another girl bothered him. Actually, that was a lie. He did know. Over the past few weeks, they had gotten closer. It felt like their nights on the roof, as well as working together on their history project had tipped their friendship into something else.

Shane thought back to the moments they had been having lately, lingering eyes and lingering touches. The time back at his house, when they had both accidentally drifted a little too close to one another. Shane had felt Ilya's breath on his face, and up close Ilya's eyes had seemed even more blue. Shane wondered if they would have kissed if Anya hadn't barked.

Now, as Shane watched Ilya practically grind on the girl, Shane felt shame and stupidity spread through him. He didn't even know if Ilya liked boys and he was crushing on him like an idiot!

He was brought out of his thoughts when he noticed Ilya stumble. Shane froze, Ilya looked *drunk*.

Shane excused himself from Rose when he saw Ilya stumbling his way to the stairs.

"You okay?" Shane asked, rushing to his side. Ilya didn't seem to hear him and just continued to walk up the stairs. Ilya stumbled again, and Shane caught him, stopping him from falling down. He reached out to steady him, grabbing his arm.

"I need to... going to vomit." Ilya mumbled out, his face looked very pale.

Shane let out a panicked sound and rushed him to the bathroom closest to them. Thankfully, it was empty. Ilya didn't waste time, running to the toilet and hurling inside it. He groaned and rested his head against the toilet seat, his eyes already drooping closed.

"Come on. I'm taking you home." Shane gently urged Ilya outside and into the car.

He wasn't surprised to see Ilya had fallen asleep a few minutes later. He *was* surprised to hear the noises that Ilya soon began to make. At first, they sounded like small whimpers, as if he was an injured animal. Shane looked over at him in worry. The whimpers started getting louder, until he was mumbling words that Shane could not decipher.

"Papa, no!"

Ilya kept repeating the words, muttering in Russian. Ilya's voice sounded like Shane had never heard before. Shane sped up, wanting to get him home faster and thankfully the streets were empty due to the late hour.

Eventually, when Shane got Ilya home, his whimpers had quietened down again. He gently guided him to his house, to where his mother opened the door.

"Ms Rozonova, I'm so sorry." Shane started as soon as he saw the horrified look on her face at seeing the state Ilya was in. "I don't know how much he drank. He was fine one minute, I swear, and then a while later, I found him like this."

Irina shook her head, grabbing onto Ilya and smiled sadly at Shane. "Is fine, love. Is not your fault." She patted at Ilya's head. "Im glad you brought him home. You are good friend."

Shane nodded and gave her a tired smile, before they said their goodbyes and he made his way back to his house. His mind replaying Ilya's murmurs in the car over and over again.

All week after the party, it felt like Ilya was avoiding him, which didn't make sense. Every time he saw him in school, Ilya would change his direction. It was frustrating. All Shane wanted to do was talk to him, ask him if he was okay. His mind kept replaying Ilya's whimpers in the car. He had sounded so hurt. It was heartbreaking.

Shane eagerly walked to history, knowing Ilya would be there. Ilya hadn't been climbing on the roof like he usually did. Shane had waited for him for the past few nights, hoping they

could talk but Ilya hadn't come. He wondered if that meant Ilya was finally able to sleep but deep down he knew that wasn't it.

Shane walked into class, eyes searching for Ilya expecting him to already be sitting at his desk. To his disappointment, Ilya was not sat in his usual spot.

“You seen Rozanov?” Shane couldn't help but ask Hayden.

Hayden shook his head. “No, man.”

Shane tried not to let his heart sink and found his seat. His eyes shot to the clock on the wall, hoping that Ilya was just late. But as the minutes ticked by, as Mr Hunter continued on with the lesson, Shane's heart sunk further. He made Ilya's notes like he always did, deciding that he will give them to the other boy later.

About half way through class, Shane excused himself to go to the bathroom. As he walked back to class along the empty hallways, he decided to swing by his locker to grab his history textbook he'd forgotten to get before class.

He felt his phone buzz with a message.

Rose:

Dinner tonight?

Shane smiled. It had been so nice seeing Rose come to the party for him, despite their schools playing against each other.

Shane:

Yeah sure. When? Where?

Rose:

7pm. I'll text you the address.

Shane liked the message and put his phone back into his pocket. He looked up from his phone and froze.

Ilya was at his locker. He was holding a piece of paper in his hand, he looked like he was going to stuff the paper into Shane's locker, but then he stopped and put it into his pocket instead.

Shane felt his heart in his throat. Secretly, he loved the little notes Ilya always left him, they were mostly to thank him for the class notes Shane made him. But as time went on, Ilya would add more into them, sometimes they would include random thoughts he'd had during the day, or harmless taunts he wanted to throw Shane's way.

The food at this school sucks, Hollander. Don't know how you enjoy it. We should go out for lunch instead.

You need to work on your back hand. I can help with that!

Thank you, again. And yes, that was definitely a hickey on Mr Hunter's neck. Who would go out with him? He is so old!

You looked good in that sweater. Your taste in clothing is improving!

Shane would laugh and then blush at each note, before he would slide them into his pocket, keeping each one.

"Rozonov!" Shane shouted. He saw Ilya freeze but he didn't stop walking, instead he increased his pace. Shane frowned and followed him. "Hey! Rozonov! Wait up." Shane jogged to catch him.

“Ilya!” Shane shouted, frustrated.

Ilya stopped abruptly, Shane not expecting it, barrelled into him. “Fuck.” Shane mumbled as he hit his nose right into Ilya’s back.

Ilya slowly turned around. Shane instantly noticed how exhausted he looked.

“Are you okay?” Shane asked, lightly rubbing at his nose.

Ilya nodded once, his face giving nothing away. He wouldn’t meet Shane’s eyes.

“You don’t look okay.” Shane blurted out. He noticed the dark circles under Ilya’s eyes, the messy way his curls were scattered under his hood, his shoulders slumped. Shane wondered what weight they carried.

“I’m fine. What do you want, Hollander?” He sounded resigned.

Shane opened his mouth, he didn’t understand what he could have done that was making him act like this.

“We -”

“We aren’t anything.” Ilya interrupted, voice cold.

What the fuck?

“My mother told me you brought me home after party?” Ilya spoke again.

Shane nodded.

“Thank you for that.” He stated. “You didn’t have to do that.”

"It was nothing. I..." Shane trailed off. He stepped forward but froze when he saw Ilya take a step back.

Shane’s eyebrows furrowed. “Why have you been avoiding me?”

Ilya shrugged his shoulders and shook his head. “I’m not avoiding you.”

“Yes, you are! You're missing history right now.”

Ilya mumbled something in Russian, looking down at his feet.

“What was that?” Shane asked.

“Not everything is about you, Hollander!” Ilya suddenly yelled, his voice echoing in the empty school hallways.

“Okay! What is it then?” Shane demanded, his voice also getting louder. He couldn't figure Ilya out.

“What the fuck do you want?” Ilya asked instead.

Shane swallowed, eyes darting across Ilya’s face. *I want you! I want you to want me.*

“Nothing.” He whispered. “I just came to get my book out of my locker.”

“Then get your book and go back to class, Hollander.” Ilya stated before he turned around and walked off, leaving Shane standing alone in the hallway.

Shane walked up to the restaurant, excited to be catching up with Rose. He walked in and spotted her straight away. She waved and called him over.

“Hey. Sorry I'm late, traffic was a bitch.” He hugged her and sat down.

“No worries. I just came myself.”

Shane looked down at the menu and cursed himself. He had forgotten to look up the menu beforehand, too caught up with his fight with Ilya. He kept replaying it over and over again. After he had returned to class, he could not focus on a thing Mr Hunter was saying. He couldn't get the image of Ilya out of his mind.

He settled into a nice conversation with Rose, catching up after not seeing each other for a while. She told him how her acting was going well and how she'd been offered a role in some small Canadian show about hockey.

“You would love it! It's about a gay hockey player.” She laughed. “I play his beard.”

Shane laughed. “So it's about me then?”

“Well... a professional hockey player!” Rose teased.

“Hey! I will get there.” Shane replied, slightly offended. Rose laughed.

“So, tell me. How are you?” Rose asked. “Are you dating anyone?”

Shane laughed in surprise at the sudden conversation change.

“I’m good. And *no*. I’m not.” He crossed his arms and leaned back in his seat.

Rose gave him a deadpan look. “Well, do you *like* someone?”

“Nope.” Shane replied, acting too casual.

Rose raised an eyebrow. “Really? Not even the new center on your team?”

Shane couldn't help it, his face betraying him as a blush spread across his cheeks. “I knew it!” she exclaimed.

“I dont... dont like him!” Shane flustered, avoiding eye contact.

“My god. You're such a bad liar.” Rose laughed. “I knew there was something going on between you two at the party. You were practically eye fucking him when you were dancing with me!”

“I was not!”

“Shane. Yes. You. Were.” She punctuated. “Now spill.”

Shane sighed. "Fine." He knew his friend would not let this go, Rose was like a dog with a bone. He began to tell her about meeting Ilya, their nights on the roof, their night at his house working together. "And then after the party, he got drunk and..." He decided to leave out what Ilya had been murmuring whilst he was drunk. That felt like it wasn't his to share. "And now he's avoiding me."

Rose listened and when he finished she lightly slapped his hand. "Ow." Shane exclaimed, rubbing his hand.

"You boys are so stupid!"

"Hey!"

"He's clearly jealous!" Rose exclaimed. "When we were dancing together!"

"What? No. Weren't you listening? He spent his time with another girl!"

"Weren't *you* listening!" She grabbed his hand. "You were both growing close and you said he even complimented your clothes. And oh my god, I interrupted your conversation and dragged you away." She put her hands on her face in horror. "I'm so sorry Shane. I cockblocked you!"

Shane shook his head. "Don't apologise. That's *not* the case. He's not jealous. I don't even think he likes boys, let alone likes me."

Rose's eyes turned soft as she grabbed his hand again, this time rubbing her thumb over it. "Shane, if you really like him then you should seek him out again. Get to the bottom of why he is avoiding you. You said he looked like he was hurting, maybe he's dealing with his own shit."

Shane sighed. "Yeah I really should but-"

“Good evening. What would you like to...” The waiter interrupted Shane, but then trailed off.

Shane turned at the voice.

Ilya.

Ilya was their waiter. Ilya worked here. He watched as Ilya’s eyes darted from him over to Rose and their joint hands, before he swallowed. “Breadsticks! I get you breadsticks!” he randomly stated before he took off, before Shane or Rose could even open their mouths to order.

Shane shot an alarmed look at Rose, who too was stunned.

“You’re telling me that isn’t jealousy?” Rose asked. When Shane didn’t move, a little too stunned at Ilya’s random outburst, Rose rolled her eyes. “Go! Go get your man!”

Shane nodded shakily and ran after Ilya, hoping to catch up with him.

“Ilya!” He called, trying to spot him around the restaurant without making a scene. Shane approached the first waiter he saw, his name tag reading ‘Kip’. “Hey! Have you seen where Ilya Rozonov went?”

Kip raised his eyebrows. “Erm... yeah i think he went into the back alley, probably taking a cigarette break.” He pointed toward the exit door. Shane nodded and smiled in thanks before running towards the exit.

Shane burst into the alleyway, looking right then left, finding Ilya standing there leaning against the wall, smoking. “Ilya.” He breathed.

Ilya stiffened and turned to look at him, eyes guarded. “You following me, Hollander?”

Shane walked toward him. “We need to talk.”

Ilya eyed him, and took a puff. “About what?” acting nonchalant.

Shane huffed. “Don’t be like that. You know you’re being off with me. And I get that it’s not about me. But whatever it is... you can tell me.”

“No.”

“No?”

Was their friendship over? Just like that?

“Go back to your girlfriend, Hollander.”

Shane stopped short. “She’s not my girlfriend.”

Ilya’s hand froze mid way of taking another puff of his cigarette.

“I’m gay.” Shane suddenly realised that during all their time spent together, he had never told Ilya that. He hadn’t meant to keep it from him, it just hadn’t come up.

“And she’s not my girlfriend,” He repeated. He took another step toward the other boy, taking it as a good sign when Ilya made no move away from him.

“Well, you were dancing with her like she was.” Ilya muttered. He rubbed his nose with the hand that held the cigarette.

“I...” Shane trailed off. Was Ilya really jealous?

“We’re friends.” He stated, firmly. “And anyway. So were you... dancing with that girl.” He added, feeling slightly petty.

Ilya huffed and rolled his eyes, he took another puff. “You danced first.” He muttered, childishly.

Shane almost smiled, the corner of his lip turning up slightly.

“Look, Ilya... it's not just me?” Shane asked, voice low. “It's not just me who... feels something between us?”

Ilya shot him a look. “Something?” He asked flatly.

Shane sighed but continued. “Because if it is. If it's me reading into things... or making shit up. Tell me. But...” Shane let out another sigh. “I like you.”

“You like me?” Ilya asked, softly.

“Yes! Maybe a little too much.” Shane waved his hand through his hair. “And Oh God! I don't even know if you like boys.” Shane’s eyes widened as he realised what he was saying. “Im sorry. This was a bad idea. It's just that Rose said that you might have been jealous and I _”

Ilya moved, grabbing his face and shutting him up with a kiss. Shane, not expecting it, stumbled slightly but Ilya caught him, his arms around Shane’s waist now squeezing him

hard. Shane moaned in surprise, his hands going around Ilya's head, fingers squeezing at his soft curls.

"I like boys too." Ilya broke away and placed his other hand under Shane's jaw, guiding his head up. "And... I like you, Shane." he admitted, his voice barely a whisper between them.

"You do?" Shane asked, it felt like his brain was slow to catch up now that Ilya had his hands on him, kissing him.

Ilya smirked. He pressed his thumb against Shane's bottom lip. "Yes." Before he dived back in. Ilya tasted like cigarettes, Shane never thought he would grow addicted to a taste. But this. This he could have forever. A wave of giddiness arose from inside him, spreading across his body. Shane felt high. He let out a small giggle, pulling away from Ilya's lips to look him in the eye.

"Good."

"Good." Ilya parroted, his eyes shining with mirth, before he dove in and pulled Shane into another kiss.

"We still need to talk." Shane mumbled in between kisses. He felt Ilya nodded, their heads bumping, before Ilya kissed him again. "I have to go." Shane whispered, but made no move to stop kissing him. Ilya's hand on his waist tightened at the words. Shane smiled. "I have to get back to Rose and you need to get back to work."

That had Ilya pulling away, his eyes hard, his grip on Shane harder. "It's not a date!" Shane rushed out. "We're just friends... You really *are* jealous?" He giggled.

"I don't get jealous." Ilya muttered, resting his forehead against Shane's.

"No?" Shane whispered.

“No. Russians don't get jealous.”

Shane let out a small laugh. “Yeah right.” He slowly pulled away, for real this time, Ilya was slow to let go.

“Meet me at our place on the roof?” Shane asked, his voice hesitant. “Tonight.”

Ilya nodded, and smiled which reached his eyes. Shane didn't know how much he had missed Ilya's smile until then.

“Seen you then.”

Shane paced back and forth in his room, stomach in a twist. He'd kissed Ilya. They'd kissed! Shane let out a small laugh as he touched his lips. Ilya liked him too. Shane wasn't imagining it or reading into it.

He kept sneaking glances at his clock, nervously counting down the minutes until Ilya got back from work and climbed the roof. He had an idea of what he wanted to tell Ilya, what he wanted to ask him. But really, he just wanted to feel his lips on his again.

Shane felt he must have disassociated because as he paced a hole into his bedroom floor, night had fallen and he soon heard the familiar sound of Ilya climbing onto the roof. Shane's heart rate picked up and he dashed to his window, looking out to see Ilya already sitting there and looking up at the sky. The wind blew his curls, gently lapping them across his face. He looked serene. He looked beautiful.

Shane climbed out, as gracefully as he could and moved to sit next to him.

“Hi.” Shane whispered.

Ilya turned to look at him, his eyes soft. He smiled a shy smile, dimples showing. “You came.”

“Ofcourse.” Shane smiled, matching Ilya’s shy smile.

They just looked at one another for a few seconds, neither knowing what to say, neither knowing how to start, before Shane let out a small giggle and Ilya soon joined. Ilya’s eyes crinkled as he watched Shane laugh, until he could not take it anymore and dove to kiss him. Shane’s breath hitched as Ilya’s tongue softly prodded at Shane, begging to be let in. Shane did so happily, kissing back and matching Ilya’s pace.

Ilya’s hands around his waist kept him steady, otherwise Shane thought he would have ended up falling off the roof. Not that he would have minded, he idly thought, as long as Ilya kept kissing him like that. Ilya broke away, causing Shane to chase his lips, before he began to leave small kisses along Shane’s neck, trailing down slowly. Shane gasped and moved his head giving him space, the movement causing them both to tilt slightly.

Shane pulled back, eyes wide. “Okay. Maybe we shouldn't be doing this on the roof.”

“Yes, probably.” Ilya huffed a small laugh. “Come to mine?” he then asked, his voice hesitant.

“You sure?” Shane asked.

Ilya nodded, and gently tugged him. They made their way through Ilya’s window and into his bedroom. Shane had never been in here before, he looked around at the bare walls and the almost bare room, apart from the bed and a dresser. It had looked as if Ilya had just moved in. Shane decided not to comment on it.

Ilya pulled Shane until they were both laying side by side on the bed. “So...” Ilya started.

“So...” Shane parroted.

Ilya reached for Shane’s hand, putting their joint hands in between them. “Im sorry.” He whispered.

“What? Why.” Shane replied.

“For ignoring you all week. For getting drunk at the party. I just wanted to forget.”

“Forget what?” Shane whispered.

“Forget my feelings about you. That I was jealous.” Ilya grumbled, now not meeting Shane’s eyes.

Shane let out a small snicker. “So you *were* jealous.”

“Yes.” Ilya said, his voice low, Shane only heard it because he was staring at his lips. “But... I wanted to forget other things too.” Shane waited for Ilya to continue and squeezed his hand. “Like, why we came here.”

“To Ottawa?”

Ilya nodded.

“Is it... something to do with your father?” Shane asked, tentatively.

Ilya froze and swallowed nervously. “How did you...?”

“That night after the party you passed out and were yelling in your sleep, in Russian.” Shane explained.

“Ah, you speak Russian now?” Ilya asked, trying to lighten the mood.

Shane huffed a small laugh. “I know the word for father. And you kept repeating it.”

Ilya’s eyes filled with tears. “Hey. You don’t have to tell me anything you don’t want to.” Shane promised, he placed his other hand on Ilya’s cheek, gently brushing away his tears. “Im here for you, no matter what.”

Ilya shook his head slightly. “I want to. You’re my best friend.”

Shane smiled. “And you’re mine.” He leaned closer until their foreheads touched.

“My father... He’s not good man. He hurt us.” Ilya began, his voice soft. Shane froze but didn’t interrupt. “He was hard on my mother. He hurt her. He was hard on me and...”

“He hurt you?” Shane asked. Ilya nodded.

“Whenever, I would disappoint him.” Ilya continued. “One night, it got really bad. He hurt my mother to the point where she passed out. I took her to hospital, thinking she was dead.” Ilya’s voice cracked, a small sob coming out. Shane pulled him into his arms, Ilya’s face tucked into Shane’s neck. Shane weaved his fingers through his curls in a soothing manner. “My friend Svetlana, she and her father sorted our papers to come here. To run away and so I packed our things and came here.”

Shane gently kissed Ilya’s forehead. He could feel his heartache as he held Ilya whose body shook slightly as he cried. “I don’t want you to think we are weak. For running away.” Ilya murmured.

Shane shook his head. "I don't." He replied firmly. "I think you are the bravest and strongest person I've ever met."

Ilya's breath hitched and he pulled back slightly, looking Shane in the eyes. He shook his head and looked down again, avoiding eye contact. "I'm not brave. If I was brave I would have gotten her out much sooner, I would have-"

"You got her out. That's what counts." Shane interrupted.

Ilya stilled and swallowed. "I'm scared that he will find us." He admitted after a few seconds of silence. Shane gently stroked Ilya's face with his thumb, cleaning his tears away. "Svetlana messaged me today, just before history. She said he was looking for us." Ilya gulped. "That's why I didn't... couldn't go to class. I just needed to get out of school. To... to..."

"Take a breath?" Shane offered.

Ilya nodded. "Yes."

"Hey. Listen to me." Shane started. "You and your mum are not alone anymore. You have me, my mum and my dad. We are with you." Shane tilted Ilya's head up slightly so he could look him in the eyes. "I am not going anywhere." Shane swallowed, his voice just above a whisper. "And... if he were to find you. We will deal with it. Together."

"Together." Ilya echoed.

They lay like that, their heads pressed close and eyelids fluttering closed. "Will you stay with me?" Ilya asked.

"Ofcourse." Shane nodded. They slowly moved, getting under the covers and turned off the bedside lamps. Ilya lay his head on Shane's chest, arm wrapped tightly round his waist.

“Thank you.” Ilya whispered before he drifted off to sleep.

And for the first time in a while, Shane reckoned, Ilya slept through the night.

“Always.” Shane whispered into the night.

Irina smiled as she accepted the wine glass from Yuna. They both sat in her back garden watching the stars. “They’re both curled up together right now. Asleep” Irina stated, smiling into her wine glass.

She had gone up to check on Ilya a few minutes ago only to find him cuddled up with Shane. Irina had felt her heart settle at the sight. Ilya did not have many friends, he had been such an outgoing child but over the years, over the abuse he had endured at the hands of his father, the boisterous and loud child that Irina had raised had slowly been smothered away.

Yuna smiled and shook her head. “Me and David had a bet to see how long it took them to tell each other how they feel.”

Irina laughed. “Did you win?”

Yuna smirked. “Yes. I knew it was bound to happen soon. Especially after all the moping Shane was doing this past week.” Yuna rolled her eyes fondly.

“Yes. Ilya was also being strange.” Irina pondered. “Ever since party.” She sighed. “My baby has been through so much, with my ex-husband not being good to us.”

Yuna smiled sadly and placed her hand on Irina’s.

“But... Shane is good for him.” Irina continued.

“Theyre good for each other.” Yuna replied.

Irina nodded, thanking the stars for bringing them to the Hollanders.

Chapter End Notes

I need more fics where Irina is alive and her and Yuna are besties. 🥺

Chapter 4: You shape the feeling

Chapter Summary

7k worth of fluff... before the storm :)

Chapter Notes

So I didn't mean for this chapter to be so long but I couldn't help it. Which is why this update took so long! It was actually going to be longer but I thought I'd save all that for the next one.

Enjoy.

Chapter title from song: Garden life - Luke Hemmings

Ilya woke with the sun shining directly into his face. He scrunched his face at the light, trying to squirm away but stopped when he felt a heavy weight across his chest. Ilya opened his eyes, squinting in the light and looked down.

Shane.

Shane lay on Ilya's chest still fast asleep. His hair was all mussed, messily spread across his forehead. His freckles looked brighter as the sunlight softly grazed his cheeks. Ilya couldn't help but trace them with his thumb, lightly touching the dots, making sure not to press too hard; he didn't want Shane to wake.

As he watched Shane sleep, his thoughts drifted to the day before, and the events that had occurred. His fight with Shane at school had left him hollow, adding to the tightness he had already felt after reading Sveta's message. He hadn't meant to yell at Shane, was in fact on his way to post an apology into his locker for his behaviour in the past week, too cowardly to do it face to face. But then he had chickened out from doing that too. And instead he had argued with Shane, pretending they were nothing. Despite his heart practically thrashing against him, begging him to take his words back.

He had gone to work, forced himself really, partly because he needed the money and partly because he needed the distraction. He knew if he skipped work and sat at home, he would be overthinking and worrying.

But then, as he had walked to take the customer's order, his heart had stopped as he saw Shane. With Rose. Holding hands. Ilya didn't really remember what he had mumbled, some piss poor excuse so he could leave and run away, to seek comfort from a cigarette and calm his heart. He knew that he was being a coward, but he didn't care. He hoped the smoke in his lungs would travel down to his heart, soothing it in a way Ilya didn't know how. Or would travel to his brain and erase the image of Shane with her.

He hadn't expected Shane to follow. Had expected him to be too caught up in his new found love to notice Ilya. He should have known though. He should have known to not underestimate Shane Hollander, the boy with the freckles who had written his notes for him without being asked and woken him up in class, saving him from embarrassment, Ilya should have known what kind of person Shane was.

He had practically jumped with joy when Shane had admitted he liked him. Ilya, trying to keep up with what could only be described as word vomit spilling from Shane, had only seemed to catch one thing.

I like you.

The rest falling away like confetti across Ilya, scattering around him and creating a buzz in his ear. He had suddenly felt warm, as if Shane's words had enveloped him into a bubble. It had felt like the rest of the world fell away, until they were the only two people left.

I like you.

The words. Simple in nature. But to Ilya they felt like everything.

He had never felt such a rush to say he liked Shane too. The words spilling out of him faster than his brain could comprehend. He had desperately wanted to let Shane know that he liked him too! That Shane wasn't alone in his feelings. Ilya wanted to blurt out all his feelings, before Shane could decide that he changed his mind and decided Rose was better.

When they had kissed, Ilya had felt a jump in his heart. He had wanted to pick Shane up and spin him around, yelling in celebration. Screaming so everyone could hear. But he wanted to kiss him more. Again and again. Until they both couldn't breathe, until Ilya didn't need oxygen because having Shane was enough.

It was near impossible to finish his shift, but the ache in his heart had settled. He no longer felt like he was going to snap. Knowing Shane would be waiting for him at *their place*, settled his nerves and his anxiety and gave him the motivation to work faster. The faster he worked, the faster he could go home to Shane. He knew his logic was flawed but he didn't care.

And when they had finally met on the roof, when Ilya's lips were finally on Shane. Ilya felt like he could breathe again. He had realised that it wasn't the smoke from the cigarette that would ease his aching heart, it was Shane's kisses that travelled their way into Ilya and took his heart into tender hands, promising to take care of it.

He hadn't expected to tell Shane about his dad. Hadn't wanted to burden him, but Shane being Shane, the smartest guy Ilya had the pleasure of knowing, had figured it out. Ilya wasn't even mad. He was relieved. Now he could tell someone, maybe he could lessen the load on his heavy shoulders, maybe Ilya could lean on him and Shane could carry him for a while.

Shane had listened. He had comforted. He had been *there*, breathing next to him. And that's all that mattered.

And now, here Shane lay, his head heavy on Ilya's chest, snoring very slightly if Ilya listened hard enough. Shane had stayed because Ilya had asked him to.

Ilya, belatedly realised, he had slept through the night. He hadn't had any nightmares at all. He hadn't woken up in a cold sweat dreaming his father was standing over him, or worse standing over his mother. Maybe it was to do with Shane's presence, his calm breaths next to him, gently coaxing Ilya into a dreamless sleep, or maybe it was the burden Ilya had unloaded last night, either way he knew the common denominator had to be the sleeping boy next to him. The thought sent such a rush of emotion through his whole body so visceral, Ilya couldn't help but instinctively tighten his arms around Shane. He moved Shane's hair off his forehead, wanting to see his full face.

Shane awoke at the slight brush of his fingers and he too, scrunched his face away from the light, nuzzling into Ilya's chest and lightly rubbing his nose across the Russian's shirt. He let out a small contented hum, eyes not fully open but a smile starting to form on his lips.

"How long have you been watching me sleep?" Shane mumbled, his voice slightly rough from sleep. Ilya found it extremely sexy. Ilya could feel his lips move from where they touched Ilya's chest.

"I can't help it. You look so cute when you sleep." Ilya answered instead. He could feel the tips of his ears burn slightly at being caught.

Shane giggled, opening his eyes and looking up at him. "That's creepy you know?"

Ilya raised an eyebrow. "Oh. Are you complaining?"

Shane bit his lip, his big brown eyes soft as he stared at Ilya. "No." He lightly shook his head.

Ilya smiled, fingers tracing Shane's cheeks. "Good. And it wasn't creepy. Is romantic."

"Romantic?" Shane laughed. "Since when are you Mr romantic?"

Ilya scowled and blew a raspberry playfully. He pinched Shane's hip, causing him to giggle and squirm. "Since I have boyfriend." Ilya mumbled.

Shane stilled. "Boyfriend?"

Ilya shrugged the shoulder that didn't have Shane lying on it. "I mean yes. Probably." He carefully watched Shane's face, trying to see what his reaction would be. Shane broke out

into a huge grin and climbed on top of Ilya, straddling him, his hands on either side of Ilya's head, caging him in. Ilya looked up at him, and admired how Shane's hair fell, hanging off his forehead, his eyes sparkling with mirth. "Unless there are other boys you declare your love to in creepy alleyways?" Ilya added, just to piss off Shane, to see his flush.

Shane rolled his eyes and leaned down, lips inches away from Ilya's. "No, for them it's usually at the park, or the rink or--"

Ilya tackled Shane, cutting him off, rolling them around until Ilya lay on top of him. Shane gasped at the sudden change, giggling as he clung onto Ilya's neck, both arms wrapped around him. Ilya began to leave biting kisses across Shane's neck, moving down and onto his collarbone.

"Ah!" Shane moaned. "I'm kidding! It's you. Just you. Always been you."

Ilya froze and looked back up at Shane's face, a stupidly large grin plastered to his face. "You know I am a very jealous man, Shane. I have to claim what is mine."

Shane scoffed, his hands crawling to Ilya's hair where he tugged him up towards him. "You're ridiculous." Shane pulled Ilya forward, until their lips grazed. Ilya couldn't help but sigh into the kiss, practically melting into Shane, who didn't seem to mind and just opened his legs further, allowing Ilya to settle on top of him more comfortably.

"Hi." Shane whispered as they broke apart briefly.

Ilya felt his heart wobble at the soft sight in front of him. "Hi." Ilya replied, pecking Shane one two three more times, reveling in the way Shane giggled. "I want to take you on a date." He suddenly declared.

"A date?"

"Yes." Ilya nodded. "We are boyfriends, no? We should go on a date."

"Okay." Shane breathed, slightly distracted as Ilya began to kiss his way down Shane's neck again.

"It will be the best date you've been on!" Ilya murmured into his skin.

"I believe you." Shane moaned. Ilya grinned, it was like his mouth was stuck like that ever since he had woken up, Ilya didn't mind. He slowly moved down, nipping at the soft skin, loving the way Shane's breathing changed, the way he squirmed. As he moved, he couldn't help but graze his thigh against Shane's clothed cock, which was already starting to harden. Shane's eyes shot open, as he moaned, louder.

"Shhh." Ilya chided, not meaning it. He loved Shane like this. "You do not want my mother to hear?"

Shane shook his head and bit his lip. "Stop being a tease then." Shane argued.

Ilya snickered. He moved back up toward Shane's face. "Do you want?" He asked softly. Ilya tracked Shane's face, trying to memorise every detail.

Shane lightly nodded. "I want..." he trailed off.

"But?" Ilya prompted.

"But, we have school in..." Shane shot a look at the clock on Ilya's bedside table. "In half an hour." He finished, sounding dejected.

Ilya smiled, despite feeling horny and sad that they had school and couldn't spend more time together like this. "Okay." He whispered. "Next time." He pecked Shane again, intending to keep it short but Shane seemed to have other plans. Shane grabbed Ilya's hair, tugging him closer and kissed him deeper. Ilya moaned, as their tongues enveloped.

"You're not the only tease." Shane smirked, before letting Ilya go.

Ilya groaned, as he gently plonked his head on Shane's chest. "You will murder me."

Shane laughed. "Maybe."

Eventually, they pulled away from one another which felt like a crazy feat. Shane shot him one final look, reluctantly letting go of Ilya's hand before he slowly climbed out of the window.

"Bye." Ilya murmured as he watched Shane climb back into his own room.

Ilya quickly changed after taking a *cold* shower, before he made his way downstairs. He could hear his mother pottering about in the kitchen, lightly humming an old Russian song to herself. Ilya smiled. He liked his mother like this.

"*Morning mama.*" Ilya greeted. He went round the kitchen island toward his mother who stood near the stove and kissed her on the cheek.

Irina smiled as she turned around. "*Morning, my love.*" Irina eyed Ilya, her eyes swimming with amusement, taking note of his good mood. Ilya didn't notice, too busy opening the fridge, looking for something to eat.

"*You hungry?*" Irina asked. Ilya nodded. "*Good. I made you breakfast.*"

Irina placed the toast and eggs on the island. Ilya smiled gratefully and sat down, practically scarfing down the food.

"*Did you have fun last night?*" Irina asked innocently as she now sipped her coffee, hiding her smile behind her mug.

"*Last night?*" Ilya froze.

Irina nodded. “*Yeah.*”

“*I was home. Did nothing.*” Ilya shrugged his shoulders, feigning to be clueless.

“*Hmm.*” Irina merely stated.

Ilya didn’t reply, continuing on to eat, not meeting his mother’s eyes.

“*Ilya.*”

“*Mama.*” Ilya replied, copying her tone.

Irina placed her mug down and took Ilya’s hand. “*You know you can tell me anything.*” She squeezed his hand. “*I love you so much. I will always love you.*”

Ilya swallowed, eyes darting across his mother. Everyone said they looked alike. They had the same light brown/blonde hair, had the same shade of blue eyes, had the same nose. “*I know. I love you too.*”

Irina smiled and patted his hand. “*Okay. Finish your food. You’re going to be late to school.*”

Ilya smiled and complied, happy that his mother didn’t push. His mother was a smart woman, Ilya knew what she was trying to insinuate and so he played dumb. He didn’t really feel like telling her his *boyfriend* spent the night. The thought sent a giddiness through his body. He hurriedly ate his breakfast and practically skipped out the door, knowing he will be seeing his boyfriend soon.

All day at school, Ilya felt like he was walking on air. He wished he shared more classes with Shane so he could see him more.

When Ilya walked up to his locker, he felt a presence behind him.

“Hey.” Shane murmured. Ilya turned to look at him. Shane wore some blue jeans and a grey hoodie, he looked so soft and cozy, Ilya wanted to pull him into a nearby empty classroom and have his way with him.

“Hey.” Ilya smiled, not strong enough to contain it, not that he wanted to. Shane mirrored his smile and they just stood there for a moment, smiling at each other like they shared a secret.

“You’ve got English now?” Shane asked, he hoisted his backpack strap up onto his shoulder, fiddling with the strap.

Ilya, momentarily distracted with his fingers, took a second to reply. “Yes.” Then. “You’ve memorised my schedule, Hollander?” He teased.

Shane blushed. “No!”

Ilya raised an eyebrow.

“Maybe.” The admission made Ilya’s heart flutter. It asserted something, that he wasn’t the only one hopelessly invested in this with Shane. Ilya couldn’t help but lean closer to the other boy, smiling wide.

“I like it. Is like you’re my stalker.” He purred.

“I’m not your stalker!” Shane scoffed, but leaned forward as well.

“No?” Ilya taunted.

“No. And it’s not like you don’t know mine.” Shane rasped, his eyes falling to Ilya’s lips.

“I don’t.” Ilya lied.

Shane nodded. “Okay.” He took a step back. “I’m going to go to maths now.” He made to turn away.

Ilya shot out to grab his arm, “You don’t have maths right now.” Ilya replied automatically.

Shane smirked, eyes wide with glee. *Dammit*. Ilya let out a small chuckle at the way he had been played.

“Fine. Guess I’m stalker now too.” He relented. Shane laughed, eyes scrunched and teeth showing. Ilya’s eyes softened at the sight.

“Erm... did I miss something?” A voice interrupted. Ilya turned to look at Hayden who had now joined them at Ilya’s locker.

Shane quickly schooled his smile into a serious face. “What?” He asked, trying to act cool. Ilya placed his hand over his mouth, trying to conceal his laughter.

Hayden’s eyes suspiciously darted between Ilya and Shane. “You two seem *cozy*.”

Shane shrugged his shoulders. “We’re friends.”

“Yeah... but you seem *extra* cozy.” Hayden countered.

Ilya watched Shane, leaving it to him on how he wanted to play this. Shane could decide if he wanted to tell Hayden or not. Ilya didn’t mind either way. But, Ilya did like the idea of messing with Hayden a little bit.

“What? You think two guys can’t be cozy?” Ilya taunted. He shot Shane a subtle wink. Shane rolled his eyes.

“What? No!” Hayden sputtered.

“Hmm. These are the friends you keep, Hollander?” Ilya continued.

“Fuck off! You’re such an asshole.” Hayden scoffed, glaring at Ilya.

Ilya smirked, trying to contain his laughter. His amusement was interrupted by the school bell going off.

“I still think something is happening!” Hayden stated, pointing a finger between the two. “You can’t distract me with your asshole-ness.” And with that he walked away.

Shane shot Ilya a mock glare. “You’re such an asshole.”

Ilya laughed. “Maybe.”

“Definitely.” Shane confirmed. He leaned forward, fully this time, and placed his hands on Ilya’s chest. “You okay to tell everyone?” He asked, voice serious.

Ilya studied Shane and nodded. “I am if you are.”

Shane smiled and nodded. “Good.” He leaned forward to peck him in the lips. “See you at lunch?”

Ilya grabbed his waist, and deepened the kiss, momentarily forgetting where they were, standing in a busy hallway, and forgetting that they were going to be late to class. Shane moaned lightly, kissing back as if he too forgot where they were standing.

“Okay.” Ilya breathed when Shane pulled back.

“We’re going to be late to class.” Shane sighed.

“Worth it.”

Shane's laugh was muffled by Ilya’s lips.

“Oh before I forget!” Ilya took out a folded piece of paper and held it out in front of Shane, before moving his hand down to Shane’s back pocket and placing his hand inside, slipping the paper in.

“What does this one say?” Shane asked softly.

“Read it and find out.” Ilya wiggled his eyebrows and squeezed Shane’s ass lightly, making Shane’s breath hitch.

“You’re a menace.” Shane whispered before they reluctantly pulled away from each other, going their separate ways to class.

Ilya smiled to himself as he thought about Shane reading his note.

I’m glad I met you.

Be ready tonight for our date. ;)

“So what happened between you?” J.J asked at lunch. Ilya sat with Shane and his friends at their table. “You were both sulking and not talking all week.”

“I was not sulking!” Ilya retorted, offended. Shane chuckled and placed his hand on Ilya’s thigh under the lunch table.

“Yes, you were.” Shane smiled.

“Oh really?” Ilya drawled, leaning toward Shane.

“Yes.” Shane murmured, seeming to forget they were having a conversation with *other people* at the table, too caught up in their bubble. “You were all jealous.”

“I don’t get jealous.” Ilya lied. Shane hummed, not buying his bullshit.

“Yup. They’re dating.” Hayden concluded, breaking them out of their bubble.

Shane moved away from Ilya and sighed, eyeing his friends warily. Ilya squeezed Shane’s hand that was still resting on his thigh.

“Yes! We’re dating! Happy? You vultures.” Shane muttered.

Hayden snickered.

J.J laughed. “Finally our boy Shane can get laid!”

“Fuck off!” Shane yelled, throwing his carrot sticks at his friend, who laughed harder as he dodged them.

Ilya laughed alongside them. His heart fluttered like crazy, and if it wasn’t for his ribcage, it would have probably flown out already.

Later, when the boys settled, if Ilya pushed his own carrot sticks toward Shane, because the other boy had thrown his on J.J, no one needed to know.

“No it’s okay.” Shane tried to decline.

Ilya shook his head. “I don’t eat rabbit food.” Ilya whispered to Shane.

Shane shot him a glare but accepted them with a small gracious smile.

Ilya was nervous. Which was weird because he didn’t get nervous. He also didn’t go on very many dates to be fair. Ilya looked himself over in the mirror for the tenth time, fixing his hair wanting his curls to be perfect, fixing his shirt wondering if he should change? Then deciding

not to, finding the right jacket to wear. So to say Ilya was a mess, would be an understatement.

He finally let out a long sigh, and decided he was ready. He grabbed his wallet and walked downstairs.

"You look nice." Irina complimented as soon as he walked past the kitchen.

Ilya smiled shyly. *"Thanks mama."*

"Where are you going?" She asked, idly.

"Just... going out with Shane." Ilya rubbed his nose, eyes nervously darting across the room and not meeting Irina's.

Irina hummed. *"Like a date?"*

Ilya's eyes widened and his cheeks reddened. *"No! No... we are just... friends."*

"Ilya, we both know you have not been able to lie to me ever. Do you remember the cat incident?" She raised an unimpressed eyebrow at him.

Ilya huffed a small laugh as he remembered back when he was five and had brought a stray cat home, hiding him under his bed. He would sneak food up to him every night until his mother had caught him. Ilya had lied and said the cat had jumped in through the window before bursting into tears and confessing the truth, after one stern look from his mother; not being able to lie to her.

"Shane is not a cat!" Ilya argued.

"No?" Irina mused. *"So he hasn't been climbing into your window at night?"*

Ilya froze. *Shit.*

Irina smirked. She was too knowing for her own good.

"I... maybe." Ilya mumbled. *"I'm sorry mama. I wanted to tell you. But this is all so... new."*

Irina's eyes softened. *"It's okay, my love."* She took his hand and gave it a squeeze. *"I like him. And it's nice to see you like this, relaxed and happy."*

Ilya smiled. He searched his mother's face and noticed how at peace she looked herself, her cheeks had filled out in the past few months since they had arrived in Ottawa. Her dark under eye circles had disappeared as she now looked well rested.

"You really like it here? Don't you?" Ilya couldn't help but ask.

Irina smiled, her eyes now shining with unshed tears. *"I do."*

“Good. I’m glad” Ilya whispered, despite his heart suddenly hammering. He thought back to Svetlana’s message, how his father was trying to find them. He wondered if he should tell his mother, wondering what the right thing to do would be. But he couldn’t, not when she looked like that, finally happy and enjoying her life.

He had told Svetlana to let him know of any updates, and had promised himself that he would handle it. Alone. He couldn’t and wouldn’t involve his mother in this anymore. She had been through enough. He couldn’t protect her all those years of his father’s abuse, but he would protect her now.

“Right. Go before you’re late!” Irina urged Ilya out the door, interrupting his thoughts. *“Be safe!”*

Ilya stepped outside and immediately looked over to his right to Shane’s house. He shook out his hands before making his way over and rang his doorbell.

Yuna opened the door. “Hello, Ilya.” She said, her tone serious. Ilya swallowed. He didn’t know what Shane had told his parents, if he had told them anything to them. “You’re here to see Shane?”

Ilya nodded, mutely, before remembering his manners. “Hello. Yes!” He rushed out. “Is he... erm, ready?”

“Yes. He should be coming down any second.” Yuna replied and gestured for Ilya to come inside. Ilya nervously wiped his sweaty hands on his jeans and walked inside. “So.” Yuna began. “What are your intentions with our Shane?”

“I... what?” Ilya asked. Before he could say anything else, David walked toward them.

“Oh, stop torturing the poor boy, Yuna!”

It was then that Yuna cracked a smile before she let out a small laugh. “Aww sweetie. I’m just messing with you. But you should have seen your face.”

Ilya relaxed, and let out a sigh of relief. He let out a small laugh.

“Shane is just getting ready.” David stated.

“Yeah he’s been stressing about what to wear for the past hour. Every shirt is ‘the wrong one’ apparently.” Yuna smirked.

Ilya bit his smile and looked down at his shoes for a second.

“Ah! Here he is!” Yuna then declared. Ilya looked up at Shane now walking down the stairs, his cheeks already flushed.

“About time, son!” David teased.

“Can you guys please stop!” Shane groaned.

His parents merely chuckled. “Oh but it’s so cute! Our Shane, all grown up. Going on a date.” Yuna smiled.

“Okay, Ilya, let's leave before they embarrass me further.” Shane walked toward Ilya and took his hand, dragging him out the door.

“No! I want to hear more. I like when you look like tomato!” Ilya halfheartedly protested. Shane shot him a glare as they left the house.

“Have fun! And don’t be out too late!” Yuna yelled as Shane closed the door.

The boys climbed into Shane’s car, before he turned to Ilya. “Okay. Where are we going?”

Ilya smirked and silently put the address into the car’s navigation system. “Is a surprise.”

Shane narrowed his eyes at him but then nodded, not questioning him further. Shane drove and the pair chatted idly as he did. Talking about trivial things, anything and everything that came to mind. Ilya loved it, how he felt he could talk to Shane about everything whilst not feeling the need to fill the silences as well.

Before Ilya knew it, they had arrived.

“Lazer tag?” Shane asked, laughing as he looked at the building.

“Yeah. Want to beat you like I do on the ice.” Ilya shrugged his shoulders cockily and smirked as he got out of the car. Shane scoffed and followed Ilya out.

“You wish!”

They walked inside the building, and were quickly led into the arena by the staff. They geared up, both opting for opposing teams.

“Prepare to lose!” Shane yelled, as he took off into the maze. Ilya laughed to himself, his eyes looking around the room, eyes adjusting to the dim lights, as he tried to think of his strategy. To say they were competitive was an understatement, it almost felt like foreplay at this point.

Ilya walked into the maze slowly, following the direction Shane ran off too, his laser gun held out in front him, as he tactically looked round corners, just to see if Shane was lurking anywhere. Ilya’s adrenaline was spiked, his heart beating fast as he anticipated Shane’s next move.

Ilya’s head shot to the left as he heard the receding noise of footsteps, Ilya ran and could see the back of Shane’s head. He smirked and aimed his gun at Shane, but before he could Shane had already ran off. Ilya cursed, but before he could run after him, Shane had somehow rounded him through another path in the maze and came up behind him, shooting him in the back. The room burst into a loud sound of Shane getting a point, and Shane laughed. “One for me!”

Ilya turned and shot him a glare, before raising his gun and shooting Shane, who seemed to be too busy celebrating. “Tie.” Ilya declared and laughed at Shane’s annoyed look.

They both played, running through the maze, catching each other and shooting their shots. Ilya had never laughed this much, running around like he used to when he was a child. Shane’s cheeks flushed, his freckles still visible in the dim light of the room, Ilya felt his heart racing at the sight.

He cornered Shane, deciding to change his tactics since he seemed to be losing, into a dead end of the maze. And before Shane could aim his gun to shoot, Ilya grabbed his chin and kissed him, prodding his tongue deep, earning a moan from Shane.

Shane dropped his gun, the harness around his neck keeping it from falling on the floor, and grabbed Ilya’s hair with both hands, pulling him closer. Ilya moaned, and hand squeezing Shane around the waist, before he forcibly pulled himself back and without giving Shane a chance to recover, Ilya shot him in the chest and walked away smirking.

Ilya won.

Shane was pissed. “You played dirty!” He exclaimed when they looked at their scoreboard once the game ended.

Ilya didn’t even bother denying it, just shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

They made their way out of the building, decided to get food since they had both built up quite the appetite. After grabbing the food through a nearby drive through, Shane kept driving, shooting Ilya a smirk when Ilya asked where they were going.

“It’s a surprise.” Shane stated, repeating Ilya’s words back to him.

Ilya smiled and took Shane’s non-driving hand into his, giving it a squeeze.

“Ok.”

“This place is...” Ilya admired.

They were sitting on top of a giant hill, the city now below them. The stars were shining bright, and could clearly be seen. Shane had parked his car up, and opened up his boot which faced the view. They sat in the boot, a blanket wrapped around them as they looked out.

“Yeah. I found it accidentally one day. I was pissed off at something, don’t even remember what, and just kept driving until I came across this. The view took my breath away.” Shane replied. He looked out at the view, the stars reflecting in his eyes.

Ilya looked at him. “Yes, beautiful.” He whispered, not talking about the view at all and instead about the boy sat next to him. Shane must have felt his gaze and looked over, instantly blushing.

They sat in silence for a while, looking out at the city lights.

“My mother really likes it here.” Ilya whispered. “In Ottawa.”

“Yeah?” Shane shot Ilya a look, a small smile growing on his lips.

Ilya nodded. “She looks much happier, healthier here.”

Shane took Ilya’s fingers into his own, lightly kissing his palm. “And what about you?”

Ilya smiled as he looked out at the view. “Isn’t it obvious?”

“Maybe I just want to hear you say it.” Shane smirked.

Ilya huffed a laugh. “Yes,” he then said. “I love it here.”

“Good.” Shane squeezed his hand. “I love that you’re here.”

“It’s not like before... we can relax here. Is nice.” Ilya continued. He was not one to share details of his past, no one really knew except Svetlana and his mother. But with Shane, Ilya found himself not just wanting to tell him about his life, but needing to.

“Before?” Shane prompted, tentatively.

Ilya nodded his head slightly before he tilted it up to look at the sky. “Back in Russia and Boston. We never could just relax.”

He thought back to the constant shouting and screaming he would wake up to or come home to. How he had learnt to recognise his father’s tone to determine whether he was having a good day or a bad one. How he had learnt from such a young age to treat wounds on himself and his mother, when she was not conscious enough to do it herself.

“My father was police. In Russia.” Ilya continued. The light patterns that Shane drew on his palm with his finger, stirring him on. “So no one dared to question him. His treatment toward us. He was always angry, always shouting... And when we moved to Boston, he got worse.”

Shane leaned toward Ilya and put his head on his shoulders. Ilya automatically put his arm around Shane’s shoulders, bringing him closer. He couldn’t help but bury his face in Shane’s hair, sniffing the soft smell of his shampoo.

“My father is sick.” He admitted. The statement had felt like an open secret back when he and his mother still lived with his father. Everyone knew what was happening, no one dared to acknowledge it, especially his father.

“Sick like cancer?” Shane asked.

Ilya shook his head. “No. Alzheimers”

“Oh.”

“When he forgets things, it makes him feel lost, I think. Powerless. So he gets angry. And he would always take his anger out on my mother. Or me.”

“Ilya.” Shane murmured softly, his hand tightening around his own.

“And I tried so hard.” Ilya’s voice cracked. “To be strong for her. To protect her. But I couldn’t.” Ilya turned away from Shane, feeling his eyes well up, hoping to hide his face.

“Hey.” Shane moved his head off his shoulder so he could look at Ilya’s face. “Hey.” Shane gently took Ilya’s jaw in his own hands, turning Ilya’s face back toward him.

“I’m sorry. I’m ruining our date.” Ilya muttered, trying to wipe away his tears aggressively. Shane shook his head and took Ilya’s hands into his own and gently caressed them with his thumbs.

“You’re not ruining anything.” Shane replied. He leaned forward until their foreheads touched. “Ilya. I... I’m so sorry you went through that. You deserved so much better. And I’m glad you feel comfortable enough to share this with me. I want you to know I’m here for you.”

“Yeah?” Ilya asked, his eyes wide with tears and hope.

Shane nodded. “Yes.” He leaned forward again, lips meeting Ilya’s softly. It warmed something inside Ilya, spreading across his skin as if he was standing next to fire. “I’m here for you.” He repeated.

Ilya let out a shaky sigh and nodded slowly, letting himself believe it.

They stayed like that for another hour, staring at the stars and exchanging more stories between themselves. Until the air got colder, and by Shane’s fifth shiver, Ilya decided it was time to head back.

They slowly packed up their things and climbed back into the front seats of the car, Shane cranked up the car heater, rubbing his hands together as he warmed himself up. Ilya watched, amused. He was from Russia, so really the cold Canadian air was nothing.

He couldn’t help but lean over, stopping Shane in his tracks of getting warm, and pulling him into a kiss. Shane moaned in surprise before he sank into it, reciprocating passionately. His hands weaved through Ilya’s hair, taking hold of the curls and tugging them slightly. Ilya smiled into the kiss before he took hold of Shane’s chin in between his hand and guided Shane’s lips, kissing more ferociously.

Shane pulled away a few seconds later, catching his breath. His eyes had dilated and cheeks were flushed. “We should go...” he trailed off, his eyes filled with hunger and arousal, seemingly doing the talking for him and saying the opposite of what his lips were about to.

Ilya nodded. He too felt the same.

“Do you want to?” Shane whispered, not elaborating but Ilya knew.

Ilya nodded again. Words having lost him.

Shane smiled and his eyes crinkled. "Okay."

"Ok." Ilya echoed, and lightly rubbed his nose against Shane's, making him giggle and pull away. Ilya kept Shane's hand on his lap, though, gently playing with his fingers.

They drove in silence, the radio playing a slow love song in the background. The air around them felt charged in some way. Ilya felt on edge with anticipation, his heart beating slightly faster than usual as if it was expecting *something*. There was a pleasant buzz in his head, that Ilya thought was just him feeling happy. He liked the feeling.

Ilya looked out the window as Shane drove. He had never felt at peace the way he did in that moment. He admired the trees and the houses, all of it so boring, so mundane and yet Ilya couldn't get enough. He had read somewhere the people didn't appreciate the boring days enough, Ilya wished he had had more boring days growing up.

They arrived at their houses quickly, Shane parked up in his driveway but didn't get out straight away.

"I had fun." Shane murmured, his voice low, as if he had practiced on how to not sound turned on.

Ilya smiled. "Me too."

They sat there for a few seconds in silence. Ilya looked down at Shane's hand on his thigh, and squeezed his fingers, before he brought Shane's hand to his lips and began to leave small kisses across each finger.

Shane's breath hitched, his eyes tracing Ilya's lips as they moved across his hand. "Ilya." Shane mumbled.

Ilya merely hummed in reply and continued on with his caress.

Shane visibly gulped, much to Ilya's amusement. "Not here." He then whispered.

Ilya met his gaze, kissed his pinkie finger again before he nodded and let go of his hand.

"Come to mine?" Ilya asked, licking his lips nervously and Shane's eyes immediately dropped to them.

Shane was nodded before he could even process his answer. "Yes."

They quickly made their way out, Ilya practically running to his house, he would have been embarrassed if Shane too wasn't doing the exact same.

He let himself in, and walked past the living room. His mother was awake and watching TV. "*Hey. How was your date?*" She asked as soon as he walked in.

Ilya nodded, trying to act cool and casual. "*Yeah. It was fun.*"

Irina raised her eyebrow. *“Well? What did you do? Where did you go?”*

“We went to the laser tag place. It was fun. I won.” He couldn’t help but add, smirking as he replayed his victory.

Irina laughed. *“That’s good. I know how competitive you get.”* Ilya smirked.

“Can I tell you tomorrow? I’m kind of tired actually.” He lied.

Irina smiled and nodded. *“Ofcourse darling. Good night.”*

Ilya mumbled back the endearment and forced himself to walk up the stairs instead of running the way he wanted to. His mother already knew that Shane had visited his room, so he could not let her know of their plans for tonight.

He walked into his room, scanning to make sure it was clean and presentable before closing and locking his door. He looked himself over in his mirror, noting his flushed cheeks and he couldn’t help but smile to himself.

Ilya soon startled when he heard the light knock on his bedroom window.

Shane crouched on the roof outside, smiling at him. Ilya felt his heart flutter as he rushed to open the window and let him inside.

“Hey. Sorry that it took so long. My parents were... nosy.” Shane murmured, he rolled his eyes as he climbed into the room.

Ilya snickered. “My mum was the same.”

“They’re too invested in this, right? It’s so annoying!” Shane replied.

“Yeah.” Ilya nodded. “But also it’s nice.”

Shane smiled softly. “Yeah.”

Their conversation lulled and Shane’s eyes dropped to Ilya’s lips, involuntarily licking his own.

“So...” Ilya started. “What do you want to do?”

The eagerness from before had fizzled, and now there was just the quietness of the night. They had the whole night to do whatever they wanted. It felt nice. Peaceful, like they were on the same page. There was no need to rush.

Ilya took a step forward until he was nose to nose with Shane, who took a shuddering breath.

“I-” Shane began. Ilya didn’t let him finish. He leaned forward, taking his lips into his own. Shane gasped into the kiss, opening his mouth further and letting Ilya kiss him as if he was dying of thirst and Ilya was water.

His arms immediately came around Ilya, one hand in his hair, the other at his waist, tugging him closer. They moved slowly, Ilya guiding Shane slowly to his bed only stopping when the back of Shane's knees hit the bed frame.

Ilya pulled back, a smirk on his lips as he eyed Shane who already looked very disheveled. He gently pushed Shane until he got the message and fell back on the bed.

Shane's eyes shone with lust as he eyed Ilya. "I want to see you."

Ilya raised an eyebrow. "You can see me."

Shane huffed. "You know what I mean."

Ilya smirked. He climbed on top of Shane, nosing down his cheeks and neck, smiling into his skin. "I don't." He played dumb. "You're going to have to spell it out for me."

"Urgh! You're such an asshole." Shane groaned. He grabbed Ilya by his hair, tugging at the strands not so gently until Ilya looked up at Shane. "I want you naked because I want your dick in my mouth." Shane stated, purposefully emphasising each word just so he could see Ilya lose it. He was right. Ilya's eyes darkened, his pupils dilating as his breath hitched.

"Fuck." He moaned before he grabbed Shane's chin and kissed him, hard.

They stripped as fast as they possibly could without moving too far from each other, too caught up in not wanting to stop kissing. Between gasps and moans, they found themselves naked, and Shane making his way down Ilya's chest, kissing and biting at the skin.

Shane grinned as he nosed into Ilya's happy trail, biting lightly and enjoying making Ilya squirm.

Ilya huffed. "Any day now, Hollander."

Shane snickered but decided to move between Ilya's legs where he was wanted most. He gently mouthed at Ilya's dick, licking and teasing before, without warning, he took Ilya into his mouth. Ilya's hips stuttered, and moaned at the sudden warm sensation. "Shane!"

Shane met Ilya's eyes, moving his head back and forth, reducing Ilya down to mere moans and gasps, his body squirming, hands twitching at the bedsheets, until Ilya came.

Ilya was quick to return the favour, leaving Shane gasping for breath as he tried to keep his moans quiet.

Soon, they laid side by side as they caught their breaths, happy and sated.

"I like you." Ilya murmured. It wasn't like they hadn't said it before, but in that moment, it felt imminent for Ilya to voice. He wanted to say something else perhaps, something that felt stronger than *like* but then felt it was maybe too soon for that.

Shane turned his head to look at the boy beside him and couldn't help but smile. "I like you too."

“I should go. Before my parents realise I’m missing.” Shane whispered, not making any move to leave. Ilya tightened his arms around Shane anyway.

“Nooo.” He whined. “Stay.”

Shane huffed but he didn’t disagree.

“You can just sneak back in the morning.” Ilya suggested, his eyes wide and pleading. It didn’t take much to convince Shane, who smiled and nodded.

“Okay.”

They settled into bed, Ilya giving him a pair of comfy sweats and an old t-shirt to sleep in.

“Thank you for the date.” Shane whispered. “You were right. It was the best I’ve been on. Even though you cheated!”

Ilya huffed a laugh. “Told you. I’m the best at dates.”

Shane rolled his eyes and lightly pinched Ilya at his waist making him squirm and laugh. “Asshole.”

The man watched the house, waited for the lights to turn off as the residents inside went to sleep, before he quietly snuck inside. He had been watching the house for days, mapping out routines.

He quietly made his way across the house, looking for anything that could tell him what he wanted to know. He knew he would get the answers here. The man made his way upstairs slowly, and into the first bedroom he saw. He creaked the door open, not wanting to wake anyone up.

He smiled to himself as he saw the sleeping girl on the bed, oblivious to her surroundings. Perfect. The man walked closer, looking around before his eyes landed on the phone on the bedside table. He smirked and made his way to it, quietly grabbing it. He quickly combed through the phone, immediately finding the messages that were stored until his thumb froze over what he had been looking for.

You should come visit Sveta. I’ll send you my address.

He found it. The address that he had been looking for the past few months. It was here, written in plain sight in a message sent from his son. Grigori smiled as he took a photo of the address, before he placed the phone back where he found it and made his way out of the house.

Chapter 5: Trying to face all my fears

Chapter Summary

Some smut and a whoooooollleeeee lot of drama.

Enjoy :)

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone! We've made it to the last chapter!!!!

Firstly, just wanted to apologise for it taking me so long to write. Life got a little busy and I kind of lost my momentum to write. But alas, here it is.

Second, Im so grateful and thankful for all your lovely comments. They honestly helped me keep writing. I love you all and I really hope you like this chapter.

Oh and btw this chapter is dual POV from Shane and Ilya and will switch between the two.

⚠️ ALSO TRIGGER WARNING: homophobic slur is used ⚠️

Chapter title from: Are you still with him - Kina, Essence

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

“Sooo. How is it going with your boyfriend?” Rose smirked and wiggled her eyebrows.

Shane rolled his eyes. “It's good. We're good.”

“What! That's it? You've got to give me more details than that! I'd like to think I had a hand in you both getting together!” She exclaimed as she practically slammed her drink on the table. They were both sitting at one of their favourite cafes, catching up after a few weeks of not seeing one another.

Shane nodded shyly, because it was true, if it wasn't for Rose's push, then he wouldn't have run after Ilya that day at the restaurant. Maybe they wouldn't have admitted they liked each

other, and they wouldn't be where they were now.

"The past few weeks have been amazing. I love spending time with him." Shane thought back to dates they had been on. After their first date, when Ilya had *cheated* and destroyed him at laser tag and then everything that had followed, they had begun to take turns planning their dates. It was fun, and Shane felt so at ease.

And I think..." Shane trailed off, not really wanting to voice what his heart had been thinking for the past few days. He had realised that his feelings for Ilya had sharpened lately. Every look, every touch, made Shane want to blurt out the three little words that were at the tip of his tongue.

"You love him." Rose stated.

Shane's cheeks reddened and he couldn't help but nod. He wasn't surprised that Rose had seen right through him.

At his admission, Rose let out a loud shriek that got the attention of the people sitting around them. Shane rolled his eyes at her enthusiasm, trying and failing to conceal his smile. "This is amazing! I am so happy for you!"

Shane laughed nervously. "Thanks... I... I haven't told him yet. He fiddled with the rim of his coffee mug, not wanting to meet Rose's eyes. "I..."

"Shane." Rose gently prompted. "Are you scared he does not love you back?"

Shane flinched slightly at the words but nodded.

"Because that's crazy!" Rose continued. "I've seen the way he looks at you. Don't let fear dictate your actions. Tell him."

Shane slowly met her eyes, seeing the sincerity in her words reflect back. He nodded. "Okay... I'll tell him." Although the mere thought in doing so had his heartbeat increasing. "In fact we have plans tonight. Our parents are going out tonight, and he invited me over to his house."

Rose raised an eyebrow. "So you'll be alone, you say?" Her tone, suggestive.

"Shut up! We're gonna watch a movie."

Rose cackled. "Sure..."

Shane blushed further. "It's not like that... I..." he trailed off.

"Have you both...?" Rose asked, eyeing Shane as she smirked.

"No, not yet. I mean... we've done *stuff*. But we haven't fully." Shane replied, his words rushing out.

"Would you want to?" Rose asked, her voice now holding a gentle curiosity.

Shane nodded. "Yeah." He had been thinking about it ever since they had given each other blowjobs after their first date. Once his dick had learnt the wonder that was Ilya Rozanov, his dick demanded more. "Yeah. Ilya is..." Shane trailed off. He couldn't quite put into words how he felt toward Ilya, most of which felt too private to share with anyone who wasn't him.

Rose didn't push. She smiled and took Shane's hand. "I'm happy for you Shane. You deserve sunshine. And so does he."

Shane rubbed his sweaty hands against his jeans for what felt like the tenth time as he walked up towards Ilya's front door. His parents and Irina had left mere minutes ago, all excited to go see a new play in town, leaving Shane and Ilya alone.

Shane knocked on the door, and was grateful he didn't have to wait long. Ilya opened, wearing nothing but some cozy looking sweats. His chest was bare and on display. Shane's eyes couldn't help but trail down his chest, focusing on his pecks. Shane swallowed and looked back up to meet Ilya's eyes.

"Hi." Ilya greeted, moving to the side to let Shane inside. He had a small smile on his face, making Shane want to kiss him.

"Hi." Shane mirrored, and swallowed as he continued to eye down his boyfriend.

Ilya smirked and leaned forward, gently grabbing Shane's chin and pulling him for a kiss. Shane moaned as soon as he felt Ilya's tongue probing, practically begging for entrance. His hands wandered across the bare skin of Ilya's chest, squeezing at his pecks. Ilya moaned, his own hands grazing at Shane's waist.

"We should... watch the movie." Ilya eventually pulled back, leaving Shane feeling a little dazed. Shane could only nod back, as he willed himself to calm down, despite Rose's words still echoing in his ears.

He helped Ilya set the food onto the coffee table. Ilya had ordered pizza, so they both grabbed their slices before sitting down on the sofa. Ilya asked him what he wanted to watch, to which Shane had told him he didn't mind what he picked. Ilya ended up putting on one of the *Scream* movies.

Shane shot him a look.

"What! He's hot!" Ilya exclaimed.

"You find the guy in the mask going round killing people hot?" Shane deadpanned.

Ilya shrugged. "Is the mask. All mysterious."

Shane snickered and moved closer, their shoulders touching.

They sat, ate their pizza as they watched the movie. At some point, they had manoeuvred to where Shane's head rested on Ilya's chest with his hair being played with. Shane let out a sigh, the back of his neck tingling with Ilya's fingers. Halfway through the movie, his attention shifted and suddenly he couldn't care less about keeping up with it. Shane moved his head slowly, his hand now wandering across Ilya's leg, moving up towards his inner thigh. Ilya shifted slightly but didn't do anything else to stop him.

Shane smirked, deciding to have some fun and tease. He moved his hand further, inching closer to Ilya's dick, moving so slowly that Shane could play it off as innocent. He grazed his pinkie finger slightly, feeling a slight change in Ilya's breathing, before he fully placed his hand and gave him a gentle squeeze.

Ilya gasped. "Shane." He tightened his arm around Shane's shoulder, pulling his head up towards his own, hands now under his chin, holding his head up.

"What are you doing?"

"Hmm?" Shane asked innocently. "Nothing."

"Oh really?" Ilya asked, eyebrows raised.

"Really." Shane replied, failing to keep his smile hidden. "My hand slipped."

"Slipped?" Ilya said flatly.

"Yes. It happens. Accident." Shane shrugged and pretended to move away from Ilya, watching the movie.

"You're such a tease." Ilya groaned, pulling Shane back towards him. He cupped Shane's chin and rubbed his thumb across Shane's bottom lip before he pushed it inside. Shane's eyes dipped closed as he took Ilya's thumb into his mouth and began to suck on it. Shane moaned, his eyes shooting open wide as he looked at Ilya. His hand still on Ilya's dick, squeezed again.

Ilya moaned and bit his lip as he took in Shane. "You're so beautiful." He couldn't help but mutter. Shane's eyelids fluttered at the compliment, before he broke away from Ilya's thumb and pulled Ilya in for a kiss. Shane swallowed Ilya's moans, hands waving through his blond curls, tugging on the strands making Ilya groan louder. Ilya pulled Shane onto his lap, and grabbed his chin, angling Shane's head so he could take over the kiss.

"I need..." Shane breathed between their lips. Ilya broke away, eyes wide and pupils dilated. He kissed down Shane's neck, biting at the skin. Shane moaned, moving his head to give access.

"What do you need, Shane?" Ilya whispered into his skin.

Shane shivered at the way Ilya said his name, it somehow sounded so soft and hot at the same time.

"I think you know." Shane gasped, lightly grinding down on Ilya's lap.

Ilya's hands wandered across Shane's thighs before they stopped on his ass. Ilya squeezed and brought his hips down harder, making them both groan as their clothed dicks rubbed against one another.

"I need you to say it."

Shane groaned, and pulled away from Ilya so he could look into his baby blues. "You. I need you."

It was as if Ilya flipped a switch as soon as Shane murmured the words. His arms tightened around Shane's waist as he abruptly stood up, making Shane whelp and wrap his legs around Ilya's waist. Ilya smirked as he carried him to his bedroom, the strength doing nothing but turning Shane on even more. He could feel his hard dick press into Ilya's abdomen as he was carried and the way Ilya was smirking, he could feel it too.

Ilya dropped Shane onto his bed, making him bounce, and towered over him as he stood beside the bed. "Take off your clothes." Ilya demanded.

Shane gulped and quickly shed off his hoodie and jeans, Ilya doing the same. He scooted himself backwards so he could rest his head on the pillow and watched with anticipation as Ilya crawled toward him, arms coming on his either side and trapping him in. Ilya looked majestic, like a predator scouting out his prey. He smirked down at Shane, eyes shining with lust and Shane couldn't help a small moan at the sight.

"I want to fuck you." Ilya breathed, lips moving across Shane's neck, before he dipped his tongue in the curve of Shane's collarbone.

Shane gasped, both at the touch and Ilya's words. "Yes." He let out, the words coming out as a loud exhale, as if he had been keeping them in for quite some time. "Yes. I need you to fuck me."

Ilya groaned, nipping at his skin before he pulled away. Shane couldn't help but make a small sound in protest. "Shh, *тая любовь*. I'm just getting stuff we need." He reached over to his bedside table drawer and took out a condom and lube. Shane's cheeks flushed at the sight.

"You sure, you want?" Ilya checked, as he opened the lid of the lube.

Shane nodded. "Yeah."

Ilya smiled and nodded back, before he settled in between Shane's legs again, laying flat on his stomach and head where Shane wanted it most. Ilya kissed across Shane's inner thigh, leaving a wet trail. Shane arched at the touch, his hands flying into Ilya's hair in reflex.

"Hmmmm." Shane moaned, eyes drifting shut.

Ilya reached his cock, licking at the base before he popped one of his balls into his mouth, making Shane cry out. Ilya continued as if he wasn't making Shane see stars at the mere touch of his hot breath, and did the same to Shane's other ball, before he gently let go.

Shane could feel himself already leaking, his hands spasming across the sheets, as if they couldn't decide whether to grab or let go. Ilya squeezed his thighs, his grip hard and Shane revelled at the thought that there may be marks left.

Ilya licked up Shane's dick, his saliva making him even wetter before he took him into his mouth, his nose now pressed against the hair of his groin.

"Fuck... Ilya!"

Ilya set a punishing pace, his rhythm leaving Shane gasping, abdomen contracting harshly. He wrapped his left leg around Ilya's shoulders and couldn't help but pull at Ilya's hair. Ilya moaned at the manoeuvre, taking him deeper, until Shane sat at the back of his throat.

"Ilya... fuck. I'm gonna..." Shane gasped. "You have to stop."

Ilya pulled off, thick ropes of saliva now the only thing connecting his lips to Shane's cock. "You can if you want. I don't mind."

Shane shook his head. "No. I wanna cum with you inside me."

Ilya's eyes dilated further as he let out a small groan, moving up toward Shane, pulling him for a kiss. "Get on your stomach." Ilya lightly patted Shane's stomach, urging him into the position.

Shane bit his lip to suppress another moan and nodded. He flipped himself over with the agility of a baby giraff learning how to walk, and set his head on the pillow. He watched Ilya slither down his back, hands caressing his skin before they reached his buttocks. Ilya lightly pressed in between his cheeks, his fingers grazing at Shane's hole.

"Have you ever done this before..." Ilya whispered, moving so his head lay in between Shane's legs once again.

Shane whimpered at the slight touch, his cock leaking further and making a mess of the sheets. "No... but I have a thing..." He trailed off, his cheeks flushed with embarrassment.

"A thing?"

"A dildo." Shane bit out reluctantly.

Ilya huffed a small laugh as he spread Shane, his hole now on display and the cool air making it flutter. "What colour?"

"Fuck off." Shane groaned, his words cutting off as Ilya chose that moment to lick into him. "Oh god!"

Ilya licked at him, probing his tongue insistently until he pushed past the resistance and entered inside.

"Fuck." Shane dragged out, eyes wide. He peaked a look behind, watching Ilya's head bob as he ate into him and moaned louder at the sight.

“You like that?” Ilya murmured, not waiting for Shane’s response before he dove in again, pushing further.

Shane’s thighs trembled as he nodded his head furiously. “How are you so good at that?” He gasped out.

Ilya didn’t reply, only doubled his efforts, loosening up Shane until he felt a finger gently probing inside. Shane gasped at the new intrusion before he pushed back against it.

“Still okay?” Ilya asked.

Shane nodded, only able to muster a light sound that he was pretty sure wasn’t in English, or any human language, as words left him.

Ilya pushed a second finger in, now coated in lube, and spread them wider, making his hole clench around him.

“Fuck. You’re so responsive.” Ilya breathed, his voice sounding wrecked. “Can’t wait to be inside you.” Shane moaned louder as he too couldn’t wait. He pushed back onto his fingers, impatient.

Ilya tutted. “Shhh... patience *тоя любовь*.” He pushed in a third finger, easing them in and out slowly as if he had all day, playing with his food before he ate it. “Hmmm... look at you. The sight you make.”

Shane could only moan in response, pillow wet with his drool.

“Please... Ilya.”

“Ok. Ok.” Ilya murmured, deciding Shane was loose enough. He pulled out his fingers, making Shane suddenly feel empty. “Turn around.”

Shane complied, his limbs felt like cooked noodles but he wanted to listen to Ilya, wanted to look him in the eyes as he fucked him. Ilya quickly rolled on the condom, and settled in between Shane’s legs.

“Ready?” Ilya asked, checking one last time and at Shane’s small nod, he pushed inside slowly. Shane’s mouth dropped open in a silent moan as he pushed his neck back, facing the ceiling but seeing nothing but stars as he revelled in the feeling. His whole body felt the tingles as Ilya slowly pushed past the rim and entered inside as if he always belonged. His legs wrapped around Ilya’s waist automatically, and arms shot out bringing Ilya down so their foreheads rested against one another.

“Fuck. Shane.” Ilya breathed, he took Shane’s bottom lip in between his own, teeth grazing and tongue licking into him. Ilya stilled as he bottomed out, waiting for Shane to adjust.

“M-move.” Shane whispered after a few moments of nothing but their harsh breaths. Ilya obliged, slowly moving his hips and pulling out before slamming inside.

“Oh! Oh.” Shane spasmed underneath him and wrapped his arms around Ilya’s waist, digging his nails into his back. Ilya winced, the feeling shooting straight to his cock. Ilya moaned as he fucked Shane’s harder, now building a punishing pace.

Ilya moved back slightly as he changed the angle, hoisting Shane’s right leg a little higher from where it rested around Ilya’s waist.

“Ah! Right there!” Shane cried, back arching.

Ilya smirked down at the other boy. “Found it.” And Shane shivered at the way Ilya sounded, he couldn’t help but pull him down for another kiss which ended up them breathing into each other’s mouths, but Shane didn’t care. He never wanted this moment to end, he wanted for Ilya to consume him, wanted to crawl up inside him where he would be warm and safe.

Ilya, as if reading his thoughts, smiled down at him, his dilated blue eyes looking almost black. Shane felt his heart flutter at the way he was being looked at. He felt the words come upon his lips, but he held back. He didn’t want to say those three little words where they could be misinterpreted in the throws of passion. Instead, he caressed Ilya’s cheek, pushing his thumb inside his mouth. Ilya immediately sucked it in, tongue wrapping around it.

Shane’s thighs began to shake as he grew closer to his climax, his other hand still flexing across Ilya’s back. “Ilya... I’m close!”

Ilya grunted and doubled his efforts, hips slapping into Shane loudly. “Touch yourself.” He moaned around Shane’s thumb, the words garbled.

Shane nodded as he took himself into his hand, gasping at the touch. He pumped once, twice, before he threw his head back as he came across his belly, his hole clenching around Ilya’s dick.

Ilya groaned, as he could only last a few more seconds before he came into the condom, his hips jerking against Shane’s groin. “Oh fuck.” Ilya exhaled, before he slumped over Shane.

Ilya took a second for his breaths to calm down before he gently pulled out of Shane, making him wince.

“Be right back.” Ilya murmured before he made his way to his bathroom.

Shane smiled to himself as he stared up at the ceiling. That had felt amazing, and despite coming mere moments ago, he felt like he wanted to go again.

Ilya walked back into the room, now holding a small towel in his hands, he cleaned up Shane’s belly and between his legs, the touch making Shane gasp.

Ilya smiled softly before tossing the towel away to be dealt with later and laid down next to Shane, pulling him into his arms.

“You okay?” Ilya asked, placing gentle kissing across Shane’s forehead.

Shane nodded, not being able to contain his smile. “That was so hot.”

Ilya smirked. “Worth the wait?”

Shane smiled shyly, his cheeks flushed red. He placed gentle kisses across Ilya’s chest where he could reach, his fingers grazing the many moles across his chest. “Definitely.”

Ilya huffed a laugh in response. “So, what do you want to do now?”

“Hmmm.” Shane curled further into Ilya, feeling sleepy.

“We could finish the movie?” Ilya suggested teasingly as he watched Shane’s eyelids flutter. “Or... bake a cake? Or...”

“Shhh.” Shane interrupted. “I wanna sleep now.”

“Noo Hollander, don’t fall asleep.” Ilya whined. “We could go sit on the roof. Watch the stars?”

Shane opened one eye and sighed. “Fine. But if I fall asleep and fall off the roof, it will be your fault!”

Ilya snickered. “I’ll catch you, I promise.”

Shane rolled his eyes as they both got off the bed. They got dressed and were about to go onto the roof when Ilya remembered. “Oh wait, I forgot the blankets in the other room.”

“Can you bring the leftover pizza as well?”

Ilya laughed. “Worked up an appetite did you?”

Shane flushed. “Shut up!”

Ilya pulled Shane towards him and softly kissed him. “Okay, you go on to the roof, I’ll meet you there.” He pecked him one last time before he walked out of the room.

Shane bit his lip to stop himself from smiling like a maniac. His heart fluttered like crazy inside his chest. He sighed wistfully and fell back on to the bed, looking up and ceiling, wondering how he had got so lucky to have found someone like Ilya.

Their first time had been exactly what he had hoped it would be. And not that Shane needed the confirmation, but his heart settled knowing that Ilya was *it* for him. The thought seemed slightly daunting considering how young they were. But Shane didn’t care. His parents had been high school sweethearts and were still going strong, so why couldn’t they?

Shane, so lost in his thoughts, didn’t realise how much time had passed until he heard an odd sound coming from the living room. He frowned and stood up, wondering what was taking Ilya so long.

Shane slowly walked out of the bedroom and towards where Ilya had gone.

“You better not be eating my slices of pizza!” Shane joked but stopped abruptly when Ilya finally came into view.

Ilya stood frozen in the living room looking at something that Shane couldn’t see from where he stood. Shane’s eyebrows furrowed as he walked further, his heart beating faster as he watched how pale and scared Ilya looked.

“Ilya?” He gently called out.

“Shane. Run.” Ilya stated, still not taking his eyes off whatever he was looking at.

Shane followed his line of sight and froze.

A short bald man stood, his eyes so strikingly similar to Ilya’s, and in his hand, he held a gun.

“Finally! Ilya! I found you!” The man spoke in Russian, his tone gleeful.

“Papa.”

The one word made Shane’s heart drop, his blood run cold.

“Oh, how I’ve missed you! My dear son.”

Ilya took a step back slowly. *“What are you doing here?”* Ilya asked. *“How did you find us?”*

Ilya’s dad smiled, and waved his gun around like it was nothing. Both Ilya and Shane flinched.

“Oh it was easy. I knew your little friend Svetlana would know.”

Ilya’s eyes filled with fury in such a way Shane had never seen before. *“If you have hurt her in any way!”*

“Ah, relax. She is not who I want.”

“What do you want?” Ilya asked, he seemed to be slowly moving toward Shane.

“I want us to be a family again. Come now, we can find your mama and pick up Alexei from school.”

Ilya flinched at his father’s words. *“Alexei is dead, father. He died when he was a baby.”*

His father became rigid. *“Yes. Yes I know!”* His voice grew louder. *“This is your problem! You think you know better than me! I am your father!”*

Shane’s heart was in his throat. He didn’t know what was being said, but with the way Ilya’s father was now inching closer, the gun in his hand shaking, he knew it was bad.

“Shane.”

Shane flinched at being addressed, head swinging to Ilya, who didn't take his eyes off his father. "I need you to leave. Now!"

Shane shook his head. He was *not* leaving Ilya with this monster. "No."

"Shane, please." Ilya's voice broke, eyes red rimmed.

"No! I'm not leaving you."

"Shane--"

"Aah, so this is who you have found yourself with." Ilya's father interrupted. *"I always knew you were a fag."*

Ilya flinched at the words, his hands clenching into fists at his side.

"You're such a disappointment Ilya!" His father sneered his eyes dodging between Shane and Ilya. *"Playing house with this disgusting--"*

"Don't you dare bring him into this!" Ilya yelled.

His father's eyes filled with fury as he raised his gun at Ilya. *"You think you can yell at me?"*

Shane didn't think. He just moved.

Shane dove across the room, pushing Ilya out of the way just as his father pulled the trigger; the sound so loud it echoed around the room banging in his ears. Shane didn't feel the impact, not straight away, too high on the adrenaline. He only felt Ilya, only saw Ilya, who was now red faced and eyes wide as he looked in horror at what Shane had done.

"Sh-shane?" Ilya called out, his voice sounding far away. Feeling confused, Shane wondered why everything felt distorted suddenly. Maybe he somehow hit his head as they fell down. But just as he opened his mouth to ask Ilya if he was okay, Shane felt it. The wetness across his abdomen. Shane looked down, his fingers touching his soaked shirt and coming away red.

"Ilya?" He murmured, before his vision blurred. He stumbled, his breaths coming out heavy as the pain began to register, not that he had time to feel it before he saw everything darken around him and he passed out.

It was like his nightmares had come to life. His father, who had clearly been drinking. Here. In his house. Holding a gun. Ilya knew how disoriented and crazy his father got due to his alzheimer's but it was always much worse when he was drunk. He was the most violent when

he drank, and anyone who got in his way would face the brunt of it. In the past, it had been Ilya or his mother who were always at the other end of his wrath. But now...

It had been Shane.

Ilya watched Shane droop in his arms, bleeding out. Ilya shook, with anger or fear, he didn't know. Ilya tried to think of what to do, but all he could see was Shane, bleeding out after he had dove to save him. Ilya's eyes filled with tears, his heart beating so fast it hurt. This couldn't be happening. His heart refused to believe what his eyes were showing him. He wished for it to be a dream, for them to be back in his bed where he could be cuddled up with Shane.

"Shane? Shane! Stay awake for me! Shane please!" Ilya cried. He grabbed at the other boy, placing him down onto the floor. "Shane, baby. Please!" Ilya pushed at his wound, trying to stop the bleeding.

"It's okay, Ilya. Now it can be just us. Like old times." His father spoke, reminding Ilya this was not in fact a horrible dream. It was real.

Ilya's eyes shot to his father who stood watching them, standing nonchalantly as if this was just a regular day for him. His father, rather idiotically, put his gun away deeming Ilya to be harmless now.

Ilya felt sharp anger boil up in his chest, pushing him toward his father. His face contorted with rage, he charged across the room to where his father stood, pushing him until he fell onto the floor.

"You are the worst thing that has ever happened to us!" Ilya yelled. He didn't care that his father was still armed. That he could get hurt. All he cared about was Shane, bleeding out and how he needed him.

Ilya grabbed the first thing he could find, a glass vase that sat on the coffee table, and smashed it into his father's head, who screamed in pain before he passed out.

Ilya grabbed his gun, before rushing to Shane's side.

"Shane! Shane!"

Ilya frantically looked around him, trying to spot where he had left his phone. It was lying on the sofa from when they sat watching the movie, something that felt like happened eons ago. Ilya rushed to grab it, before he dialled for the ambulance.

If someone were to ask what he said into the phone, he would not remember, all he would remember was feeling his heart beating into his throat and his ears ringing so loud he couldn't think.

“Shane. Wake up for me, sweetheart. Help is coming. Shane, please.” Ilya begged, now pressing into the wound. He gently pushed Shane’s hair away from his forehead with his other hand, placing kisses upon kisses against the skin.

“Please. Shane, you can’t leave me.” Ilya cried. “I... I love you. You have to wake up! So I can tell you that I love you!”

“Oh my god! Ilya!” A voice cried, snapping Ilya away from Shane.

Irina. She stood at the entrance of the house, her eyes wide in horror as she took in the scene in front of her. Behind her stood Yuna, whose face had gone pale at the sight.

“Mama!” Ilya sobbed. “Mama. Help me. It’s Shane. He’s... he’s...” He couldn’t get the words out, his breaths coming out in short pants.

Yuna ran to the boys, leaning down to look at Shane.

“Shane!” She yelled, eyes wide with fear. “What happened! Have you called the ambulance?”

“I’m sorry!” Ilya sobbed. “Yes! I’ve called but-“

“They’re here!” Irina shouted just as three paramedics ran inside.

It felt like the world around Ilya was happening in slow motion. He felt numb, the voices around him sounding muffled as if he was under water. He must have told the paramedics and their parents what happened, not that he would remember later.

All he felt was the overconsuming feeling of fear, how it was bubbling up to his throat.

“...Is best that he comes with you. You can follow behind us. It will be-“

“No. I will go with him.” Ilya interrupted whatever the paramedic was saying. “I’m not going to leave him alone.”

“He won’t be alone sir. And it’s clear you’re in shock. It will be better to treat-“

“No! He’s my... Shane. I will not separate from him.” Ilya demanded.

The paramedic sighed but nodded. Ilya watched as they loaded up Shane into a stretcher and rolled him into the back of the ambulance. Ilya ran behind them, not taking his eyes off him for one second. He followed them inside, and sat beside him, taking his hand in his.

“You cannot leave me alone, my love.” He whispered in Russian, kissing Shane’s knuckles again and again.

The ride to the hospital felt like the longest journey he had ever been on. As soon as they arrived, Shane was rushed into the emergency ward, leaving Ilya standing in the waiting room, feeling at a loss.

“Ilya!” Yuna called, running into the hospital. Behind her was David and his mother.

“Oh my baby!” Irina sobbed and took Ilya into her arms, who immediately crumbled. *“Shh... it will be okay, Shane will be fine.”*

“Mama! I’m so scared. What if he’s... papa just came! I didn’t know what to do! I tried to get him to leave!”

“Shh. It’s okay. Shh.” Irina soothed her son. *“Take a deep breath for me.”*

Ilya only sobbed harder, shoulder shaking. *“I can’t. He’s in there because of me. It’s all my fault.”*

Irina shook her head, helplessly trying to get Ilya to calm down. *“Ilya. Shhh. Take a breath for me. He needs you to be strong for him.”*

Ilya swallowed but nodded. Irina took hold of her son’s face. *“We have to get you out of these dirty clothes. I’ve brought something you can change into.”* It was then that Ilya realised his own shirt was soaked with blood. Shane’s blood. The sight made his stomach lurch, causing him to stand up abruptly and run to the bathroom, where he emptied out the contents of his stomach into the toilet.

Irina followed him, eyes worried as she watched the state her son was in. After Ilya was done, he didn’t even bother getting up from the floor, merely just slumped against the cubicle wall. Ilya put his head between his legs, breaths heavy. Irina sat next to him and took his head so he could rest it on her chest.

“I love him, mama.” Ilya whispered, voice broken.

Irina hugged him tighter. *“Shhh. I know you do. He will be okay. We just have to have hope.”* She took off her cross necklace that she always wore. Ilya had never particularly been religious but his mother was. She took Ilya’s hand into her and gently placed the necklace into his hands. *“Every time we feel like we’re going to lose it. When our thoughts are too much, hope and faith is all we have.”*

Ilya brought the necklace to his lips and sent out a prayer to whoever was listening.

Please let Shane be okay.

Ilya eventually got changed and made his way out of the toilet and joined Shane’s parents in the waiting area. Every time he looked at Yuna and David, he felt his guilt rise up. *“I... I erm... just wanted to say. I’m sorry. It’s all my fault.”*

Yuna sighed. *“Oh honey. It is not your fault.”* Beside her, David nodded to his wife’s words. *“Your mother had told me what kind of man he was, but none of us could have expected this.”*

Ilya opened his mouth but he had no words.

“But you won't have to worry anymore.” Yuna continued, her tone matter of fact. “Your father is being dealt with as we speak.”

“Yes. But-” Ilya began.

“Are you Shane Hollander’s parents?” A doctor interrupted, walking up to Yuna and David, who quickly stood up and nodded. Ilya and Irina too turned toward the doctor, anxiously waiting.

“Yes! How is he?” Yuna rushed out.

“He’s been taken to surgery. The bullet didn’t penetrate but grazed him across the abdomen.”

“Will he be okay? Will he make a full recovery?” Yuna demanded.

“We can do the best we can. But yes, that is the hope.”

“He will be ok?” Ilya asked, needing reassurance.

The doctor faced him and gave him a small smile. “Yes. He will be fine.”

And finally after what felt like an eternity did Ilya feel like he could breathe.

It was the constant beeping sound that woke Shane up. Disoriented and confused, his eyelids fluttered and then immediately winced due to the bright lights around him.

Shane slowly took in his surroundings, his senses now coming back to him. He made to move his hand but something was holding him down. Shane turned his head slowly to the left and saw his mother holding his hand as she slept, slumped over the bed.

“Mom?” Shane rasped, his throat feeling all too dry.

Yuna shot awake, eyes wide as she took in Shane.

“Oh my! Shane, you're awake!” She gasped. “How are you feeling? Does anything hurt! We need to let the doctor know you're awake!” She rushed.

“Mom! I’m fine.” Shane interrupted, taking her in before the events of the night rushed back to him. His eyes widened in horror.

“Mom! Where’s Ilya? Is he okay? It was his dad! He broke into the house! We didn’t know!” Shane’s breath quickened, making the machines he was hooked up to beep faster.

Yuna gently placed her hand on Shane’s cheek. “Shh. It’s okay. Everything is okay! Take a deep breath for me. Come, follow my instructions.” Shane copied his mother and felt his breathing come down to normal.

“Where is he, mom?” Shane demanded. “I need to see him.”

Shane *needed* to see Ilya, needed to see if the other boy was okay. He felt he needed that more than he needed to breathe.

“He’s just-“

“Ok, sorry they didn’t have flavour you wanted but I got...”

Ilya walked in, holding a couple packets of chips. He trailed off as he took in the room, at Shane sitting up. Awake.

“Shane.” Ilya breathed. He dropped the packets to the floor and took a step forward.

“Ilya.” Shane could feel the tears well up in his eyes. He didn't care because there Ilya stood, safe and unharmed. “You’re okay!”

Ilya let out a huff of laughter, in disbelief, tears threatening to fall.

“I’ll give you two a minute.” Yuna smiled, picking up the chips and walking out of the hospital room.

Ilya didn't move, only stared at Shane. “Are you...” he swallowed. “Are you okay?”

Shane nodded. He held up his hand toward Ilya, beckoning him to come closer. “Hey... Hey.”

Ilya rushed forward, as if he had been waiting for permission, and took Shane’s hand into his own, tears now falling down his cheeks. “You scared me.”

“Shh... I’m okay. We’re okay.” Shane whispered, placing his other hand across Ilya’s cheeks, gently rubbing away the tears with his thumb.

“I thought he’d... I thought you were...” Ilya gulped, his voice shaking, not meeting Shane’s eyes as he continued to look at their joined hands. “I’m so sorry, Shane! It’s all my fault! If I hadn’t moved here, he wouldn’t have come and you would never have gotten hurt.”

Shane shook his head furiously. “No.” His heart shattered at how broken Ilya sounded, taking the blame as if it was his to take. “It is *not* your fault!” He took Ilya’s face in between both hands, and forced his head up so he could look him in the eyes. “Ilya. Listen to me. It is not your fault. You hear me?” His voice was firm, unmoving.

Ilya shook his head, and made to move away but Shane held his face, not letting him move, not letting him go to that place where he was alone and his demons got to him first. “The only person to blame is your father.”

“But if I’d never moved-”

“You know how unbelievably glad I am that you moved in next door? How lucky I feel that the universe chose to give me you?” Shane interrupted.

Ilya froze.

“I would not have it any other way. If you had never moved next door, we would have never met. I can't even bear that thought. Ilya.” Shane gently began to stroke Ilya's cheeks again. “So, don't you dare tell me you think I would have been better off.”

Ilya exhaled as his shoulder drooped, all the tension draining. Shane pulled him closer and they manoeuvred into a position where Ilya now rested his head on Shane's chest, ear pressed into where his heart beat.

“You being safe is all I care about.” Shane murmured, his hands in Ilya's curls. “It's what you do for the people you love.”

Ilya gasped and slowly moved away so he could look Shane in the eye. “You love me?”

“So much.” Shane whispered. “So much it scares me.”

“Fuck. Hollander.” Ilya's voice cracked as he gently plonked his head into Shane's chest for a moment. “I love you too.”

Shane's heartbeat sped up as he pulled at Ilya's head up so he could pull him into a kiss. They both sighed into the kiss, sinking into the feeling that they were both safe. “We're okay.” Shane kept murmuring.

“So the police have arrested him and he will not be getting out anytime soon.” Yuna stated.

Shane was surrounded by everyone he loved the most. Ilya at his side, never leaving. His dad was standing by the window behind his mother who sat on the chair beside the bed, and Irina stood at Ilya's side.

“But what if he tries to use his connections?” Irina asked, as she nervously played with the rings on her fingers.

Yuna shook his head. “He shot a minor. There is no getting out of this one.”

Shane squeezed Ilya's hand, who he could feel was also feeling as anxious as his mother. “I told you that we were in this together.” Shane murmured.

Ilya smiled, his eyes crinkling. He nodded, not quite having the words to express his gratitude. Shane smiled back.

It had been a few hours since he had awoken, greeting everyone and being told what had happened after he was shot. Once the adrenaline had calmed down, Shane had begun to feel the painful effects of being shot. His eyes drooped, feeling a sudden tiredness fall upon him.

“Come Yuna. We should give Shane time to rest.” David suggested. Yuna smiled at her son, kissing him on the forehead before his parents made to move out of the room.

Ilya nodded and moved to follow out his mother and Shane’s parents, but Shane stopped him. “No. Don’t leave me.”

Ilya froze, taking in how vulnerable Shane looked. He nodded and got back into bed, somehow fitting into the small bed. Shane exhaled as he placed his head on Ilya’s chest. “Better.” Shane whispered before he shut his eyes and fell asleep.

When Shane awoke again, the sun had risen, creating a soft glow around the room. Ilya was asleep beside him, his head resting on Shane’s chest, mouth agape. Shane couldn’t help but smile as he watched him, knowing Ilya felt safe enough to fall asleep, it sent a rush of emotions across his whole body.

“Hey.” a voice broke Shane out of his thoughts. He turned to look at Irina who was sitting on the chair beside Shane. “You’re awake.”

Shane smiled but he didn’t move, not wanting to disturb Ilya. “Yeah.”

“How are you feeling?”

“A little sore. But it’s better than before.”

Irina nodded, as she chewed her lip anxiously. “Shane. I wanted to say. I’m sorry. I feel terrible that it was my ex husband who did this. You and Ilya are both children, you didn’t deserve this.”

“You didn’t deserve it either.” Shane replied. “All of what he did to you.”

Irina startled at the words, as if the statement had never occurred to her. “Still... I have to thank you. For protecting my Ilya.”

Shane smiled softly. “I’ll always protect him. He’s my world.”

Irina’s eyes filled with tears. “You know for the longest time, I hadn’t seen Ilya smile. The big wide ones he would give when he was younger.” She took Shane’s hand into her own. “I hated it. He always looked so angry, with himself, with the world. And I tried to do my best but...”

She wiped her tears and shook her head. “But then he met you. I saw a change that first night after we moved. He had come in after smoking and his eyes... they held this spark? That I hadn’t seen in a long time.”

Shane smiled as he thought back to that night.

You know, you shouldn't be smoking." He had stated.

Ilya had merely looked him up and down before he had said "Ok" and had continued to take a puff as if Shane hadn't spoken.

Shane had found him to be so rude at the time but now all he could do was think back to that memory with such fondness.

"Is every parent's dream for their child to find a partner who treats them good." Irina continued. "I'm so grateful, Ilya found you."

Shane's heart wobbled at her confession. "Me too."

As if he sensed that he was being talked about, Ilya shifted awake. Shane still didn't move his head, letting the other boy wake on his terms.

Irina and Shane watched as he slowly awoke, and took in the room. Ilya raised an eyebrow at being watched. "Everything ok?"

Irina smiled and nodded.

"Yes. Your mom was just telling me embarrassing stories from your childhood." Shane lied, smirking.

Ilya's eyes widened and shot Irina a semi panicked look.

Irina only laughed. "Did I tell you about the time he would not take off his dinosaur pyjamas? He wore those to school! Everyone looked at us funny!"

"Mama!" Ilya complained, before hiding his face into Shane's chest, who was shaking with laughter.

It had been a few days since the 'incident' as they had all taken to calling it. Shane had been discharged, ready to go home, and he looked forward to sleeping in his own bed.

"Ready?" Ilya asked as he watched Shane grab the last of his things from his hospital room.

Shane nodded and took Ilya's hand. He pulled him into a kiss, just a gentle peck of their lips. "I love you."

"I love you too."

Ilya led Shane out of the hospital and into Yuna's waiting car. They kept holding hands during the journey, and Ilya couldn't help but think back to the journey he had made in the

ambulance just a few days ago, and how he had held Shane's hand then. The thought made Ilya pull Shane closer, placing a soft kiss in the middle of his palm.

"You okay?" Shane asked.

"I'm perfect." Ilya smiled.

They quickly arrived home, where Ilya and Yuna helped Shane inside.

"I can walk by myself guys!" Shane complained as he was guided towards the sofa.

"Yes, we know but just let us fuss over you!" Yuna retorted, rolling her eyes to Ilya, who snickered.

"Enjoy special treatment whilst it lasts." Ilya teased.

"Fuck off!" Shane replied, but pulled Ilya onto the sofa next to him.

"Ilya, you staying for dinner sweetie?" Yuna called, making her way to the kitchen.

"Yes. But I've got work so I might leave a little early." Ilya called back.

When Ilya turned back to look at Shane, he was being watched with a soft look in his eyes.

"What?" Ilya asked.

"Nothing." Shane murmured, his eyes still soft.

"You're looking at me weird."

"No I'm not!"

"You are!" Ilya argued, smirking.

Shane sighed and pulled Ilya's face towards his own so he could rest his forehead against his. "I'm just so grateful that we can have this."

"This?"

"This! This domesticity. These normal *boring* things, like you staying for dinner." Shane explained.

"Ah."

"When I walked into that room and saw you, I felt so scared for you, Ilya." Shane whispered, his voice wavered. Shane kept his eyes closed and Ilya was a little grateful, he knew once he saw the look in Shane's eyes, he would not be able to hold himself together.

"You looked so scared. I had never seen you look like that and I hated it."

"I'm sorry-" Ilya began.

“Don’t apologise.” Shane stated firmly. “I’m just grateful you’re okay.”

“Me too.” Except Ilya was grateful for so much more. All his life he had protected his mother from his father, or tried to. And when he couldn’t, when his father had still found ways to get to his mother, Ilya had always felt like he had failed.

And then that night, when Shane walked in at the worst possible moment, Ilya knew he needed to protect him. It was all he knew how to do. But when Shane had dove to protect *him*. Ilya had realised that in all his time learning to protect others, he had forgotten what it felt like to *be* protected.

Later, Ilya ate dinner with the Hollanders, Irina joining them. And for the first time, Ilya enjoyed a family dinner. The Hollanders didn’t have rules where no one could talk at dinner, or that David being the supposed parental head could be the only one who sat at the head of the table. The Hollanders spoke over each other, gently jabbing one another with light teases and jokes. There were no rules over who sat where, or angry glares being thrown over the table.

After dinner, Ilya had to leave for work so after kissing Shane goodbye with the promise to see him soon, he and Irina made their way back to their house.

As they walked inside, Ilya made his way to his room to get into his uniform.

“*Hey.*” Irina called.

Ilya stopped in his tracks and faced his mother.

“I just wanted to say... I know about the threatening messages your father was leaving.”

Ilya winced. He had never wanted his mother to find out. “*How?*”

Irina smiled like she always did when she caught Ilya doing something he shouldn’t have been doing.

“Svetlana’s father. He called to check in after he found out what happened. He told me.”

Ilya nodded. He opened his mouth to apologise but before he could his mother spoke.

“I get why you didn’t tell me. But I wish you had, Ilya.”

Ilya shook his head. *“I wanted to protect you.”*

Irina’s eyes softened as they filled with tears. *“I’m sorry Ilya... that I put you in a position where you felt you had to protect me. I am your mother!”* She wiped away his tears, Ilya hadn’t realised he had started crying. *“You are my son, I am supposed to be protecting you!”*

“You did mama.” Ilya argued.

“I tried.” Irina shook her head. *“Everytime he’d get angry at you, I tried to divert his attention. But it still wasn’t enough. He still dug his claws into you. I’m sorry my love. It’s all*

my fault I should have- “

“No. Mama, no. It’s not your fault.” Ilya interrupted. *“And it’s not mine either.”* He added, and maybe it was Shane’s words repeating in his ear, or Shane’s unwavering confidence in Ilya, but Ilya actually believed his words.

The only person to blame was his father. *“It’s his.”* Ilya stated firmly. *“You did the best you could to take care of me.”*

Ilya pulled his mother into his arms. *“And we need to stop blaming ourselves if we are to move on.”*

Irina sighed but nodded. “I love you, my Ilya.”

“I love you too, mama.”

Two weeks later:

“There they are!” Someone yelled. Cheers rang out as soon as Shane came out onto his backyard, followed by Ilya. All his friends stood grinning at them.

His parents had decided to have a barbecue and had invited all their friends. It was a way to let off some steam, and since Shane hadn’t been going into school, too busy recovering, it was nice to see all his friends again.

Shane laughed, pulling Ilya along with him, as he walked over to greet Hayden and JJ.

“Hey guys.”

“Hey!” Shane was pulled into a hug from each of his friends.

“We’ve missed you man!” JJ said.

“Yeah we’ve had to deal with a grumpy Rozy by ourselves!” Hayden teased.

Ilya scowled, standing behind Shane, his arms coming around him. “You love me really!”

Shane leaned back into Ilya’s arms and smiled.

Hayden shook his head. “But seriously, how are you doing?” He asked Shane.

“Good. I’m getting better everyday. I should be able to play soon.”

“Can’t believe you got shot dude!” JJ exclaimed.

“Let’s see the scar!” Hayden grinned. And before Shane could comply, Ilya interrupted.

“Erm no! No one sees Shane naked other than me!”

Shane blushed, whilst Hayden and JJ snickered.

“Aww Rozy don’t be jealous. It’s nothing we haven’t seen before.” JJ laughed, wiggling his eyebrows. Nudity was not something to be shy about when one played hockey and had to share a locker with a room full of guys.

Ilya only glared back.

Thankfully, they were interrupted by a loud shriek before Shane was being hugged by a mop of red hair.

“Shane!” Rose exclaimed. “I’m so glad you’re alright.”

Shane huffed a small laugh as he hugged back. As he answered Rose’s million questions, Ilya moved to go make a plate for himself and Shane, leaving him to his friends.

The whole afternoon was spent with smiles and laughter. His friends updated him on what had been going at school to which Shane listened intently, having missed his friends and their shenanigans.

“Yeah and we saw Mr Hunter making out with his boyfriend!” JJ laughed. “He dropped him to school one morning.”

“And not gonna lie but his boyfriend is hot.” Hayden muttered. Everyone shot him a look. “What! I have eyes!” Hayden argued and everyone dissolved into giggles.

“Yeah apparently he’s called Kip.” JJ continued.

“Wait. Kip?” Ilya asked. “He works with me.”

“Oh no way! You have to get the details out of him about Hunter!”

“Er no. I don’t want to hear about old people sex.” Ilya grunted. Shane snickered and rolled his eyes.

Eventually, he excused himself to use the bathroom before he found himself sitting on the roof outside his bedroom window. Shane watched the view, the sun high and the sky cloudless. He could hear the noise from the party, and his heart fell full.

“Found you.”

Shane turned to look over as Ilya climbed onto the roof and smiled. “So you were looking for me.”

“Ofcourse not.” Ilya sat next to him.

“I just needed a minute.” Shane explained after a few moments of silence.

“Hey, it's your party. Take all the minutes you need.”

Shane smiled and nodded. They sat and watched the view, could hear Anya barking from down below, could hear Hayden and JJ laugh at something Rose said. They could hear Irina and Yuna asking for refills.

Shane couldn't help but think how he wanted this for forever. For every birthday, Christmas and other celebrations, he wanted it exactly like this; with Ilya and Irina by their side.

“Do you ever think about the future?” Shane asked, turning to look over at Ilya.

Ilya's eyes softened and he nodded.

“Yeah?” Shane prompted. “Am I in it?”

Ilya took Shane's hand and gently stroked the back of it. “You *are* it.”

- Fin -

Chapter End Notes

AND THATS ALL SHE WROTE.

Disclaimer: I don't actually know how long it takes to heal from a bullet graze and I couldn't be bothered to search it up. But for all intents and purposes, let's pretend my timeline is correct 😊

Ending a story is actually harder than starting it. It always feels incomplete somehow. 😊 maybe I'll write an epilogue. Maybe I won't, but in the mean time I hope you all enjoyed this.

End Notes

Please leave comments and kudos!! I love to chat :)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!